School Management

Learning from Successful Schools in Bangladesh

National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM)

Brac Research and Evaluation Division

School Management:
Learning from Successful Schools in Bangladesh

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Proceedings of a National Seminar

National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM)
Brac Research and Evaluation Division

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Acronyms

ACR	Annual Confidential Report
AD	Assistant Director (in divisional primary education office)
ADEO	Assistant District Education Officer
ANTRIEP	Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning
AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BISE	Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education
BU-IED	Brac University Institute of Education and Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
C-in-Ed	Certificate in Education
DD	Deputy Director (in zonal education office)
DEO	District Education Officer
DIA	Directorate of Inspection and Audit
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GPS	Government Primary School
HSC	Higher Secondary School Certificate
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
MEB	Madrassa Education Board
MEd	Masters of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MPO	Money Payment Order
NAEM	National Academy for Educational Management
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIEPA	National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration
PO	Programme Organiser

PSPMP	Primary School Performance Monitoring Project
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RED	Research and Evaluation Division
RM	Regional Manager
SMC	School Managing Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
TTC	Teacher Training College
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
URC	Upazila Resource Centre

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

Samir R Nath

This proceeding is an outcome of a national seminar jointly organised by two Bangladeshi member institutions of the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP). The institutions are the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) under the Ministry of Education of the Government of Bangladesh and Brac – a national private development organisation. These two institutions participated in a multi country study on *Successful School Management* with other members of ANTRIEP. The findings of the Bangladesh studies were disseminated through a national seminar.

The ANTRIEP

With support from the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP/ UNESCO), a number of national and regional institutions of Asia involved in training and research in educational planning created the ANTRIEP network in 1995. Including the IIEP, the network has 20 member institutions from ten countries, three of which are from Bangladesh. In addition to NAEM and Brac, the third Bangladeshi institution is Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). The networking revolves around following four activities:

- Collaboration on themes of common interest;
- Exchange of information among member institutions;
- Organisation of a regular ANTRIEP members meeting and policy seminar; and
- Staff exchange programmes.

Origin of the Studies

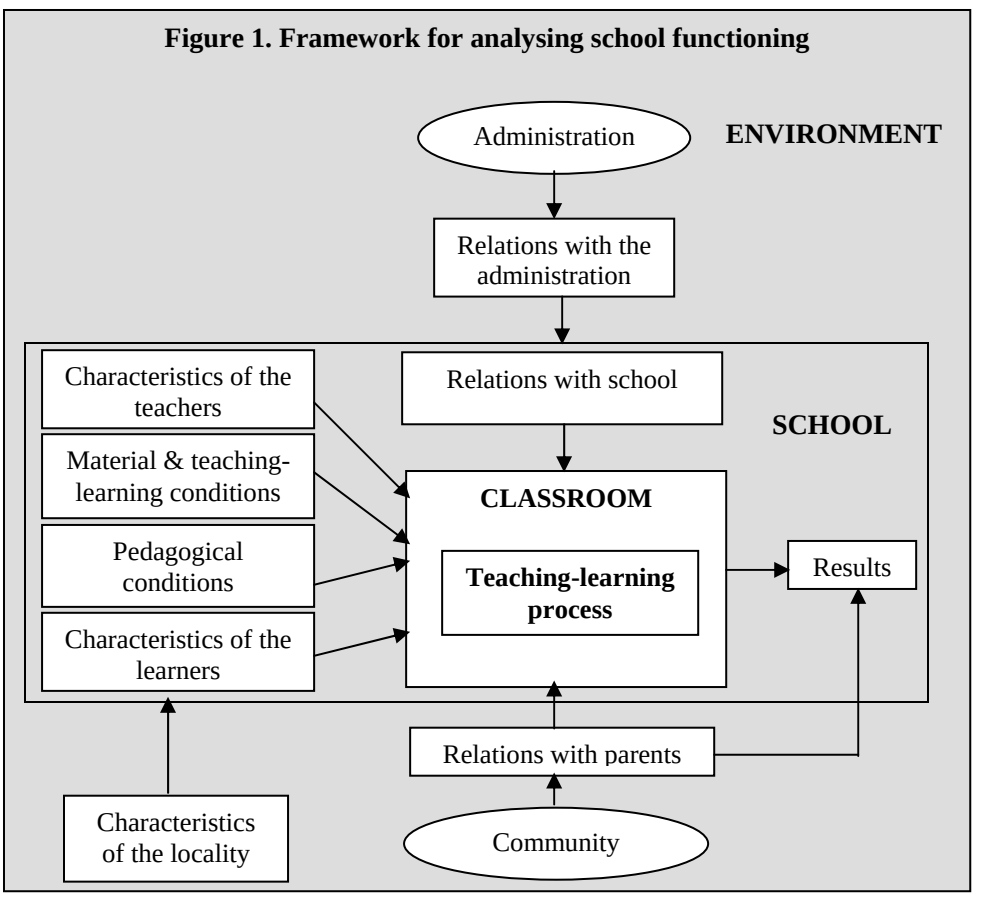
The study entitled *Case Studies of Successful School Management* was initiated in an annual ANTRIEP meeting held in Kuala Lumpur in July 2002. The participating organisations independently prepared their own research proposal under a broad guideline provided by IIEP, which were then finalised in a workshop held in Dhaka in April 2003. An analytical framework was also prepared in this workshop. On completion of the fieldwork by all the participating organisations another workshop aiming to prepare the reports was held in Kathmandu in December 2003. The draft reports were then presented in a policy seminar held in Manila in July 2004. The reports are now in various stages of finalisation. This

study is an excellent example of capacity building through networking. The following nine institutions from seven countries participated in the research.

Bangladesh:	National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), Brac
India:	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT)
Malaysia:	Institute Aminuddin Baki (IAB)
Nepal:	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
Pakistan:	Institute for Educational Development, Aga Khan University
Philippines:	Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology, South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SAMEO-INOTECH)
Sri Lanka:	National Institute of Education (NIE)

Using qualitative research techniques a total of 30 case studies on 30 successful schools (both primary and secondary) were prepared under this research study.

Figure 1. Framework for analysing school functioning



The analytical framework developed in the Dhaka meeting has six broad components. These are school profile, school management structure and organisation, role of head teacher, management of specific processes, relations with the administration, and selected management devices. Each component includes a set of sub-components. The case studies were broadly based on this framework, however slight modifications were allowed if necessary. Figure 1 presents the analytical framework.

The Bangladesh Studies

Under the above common framework prepared jointly by the member institutions of ANTRIEP, NAEM and Brac conducted two separate studies in Bangladesh. A four-member NAEM research team worked on secondary schools and a two-member Brac team worked on primary schools. A total of eight case studies on eight successful schools were prepared – four by each research team. Of the four case studies prepared by the NAEM research team one was on a government secondary school and three were on three non-government secondary schools. The Brac research team also prepared four case studies – two on two government primary schools and two on two Brac schools. Brac study covered both formal and non-formal schools. The schools are located in both urban and rural areas.

Some Features of the Studies

Educational studies in Bangladesh are mostly quantitative in nature – broadly based on survey methods. However, the cases prepared for this study employed qualitative research techniques, where an ethnographic approach was emphasised. The case studies focused on the factors that made certain schools more successful than others. A number of issues related to school, community, administration, teaching, attitudes and leadership, along with other associated links came out from the research. The in-depth case studies identified key critical factors behind the success of these particular schools. The study has practical implications, as the lessons learned from the successful schools can be applied to other schools that are not doing as well. Policy makers and planners in education can be benefited from these studies. In addition, the research project in Bangladesh is unique because it includes both primary and secondary schools, as well as formal and non-formal schools. No other country was able to cover such a vast area in their study. As a result, the findings from the Bangladesh study create an opportunity to learn from one sub-system to another, nationally as well as regionally.

The Seminar

The national seminar was held at Brac Centre on 19 September 2004 (see Annex 1 for the programme). The Honourable Minister for Education of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dr. M. Osman Farruk, graced the seminar as the Chief Guest and Mr. Ichiro Miyazawa, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Dhaka was the Special Guest. Prof. Md. Khalilur Rahman, Director General of NAEM Chaired the seminar, where the Director Research of Brac, Dr. Imran Matin, offered an

official welcome and introductory speech. Professor Roohi Zakia Dewan, Director (Planning and Development) of NAEM and me presented the key findings of the studies. A number of participants took part in the open discussion session, which was moderated by Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Director of the Brac University Institute of Education and Development (BU-IED). A total of 92 persons from various institutions under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, university departments, research institutions, civil society organisations, NGOs, development partners, national dailies and electronic media participated in the seminar. Annex 2 provides the list of participants. A number of national daily covered the seminar news.

The Present Report

This report contains five papers in addition to this part. The first one is based on the introductory speech by Imran Matin. The following two articles are based on the studies done under the ANTRIEP umbrella. Manzoor Ahmed wrote an article based on the comments and discussions made by the participants in the open discussion session. Finally, the Education Minister wrote an article bearing his thoughts on school management, quality of education and research needs in these issues. A photo gallery is added afterwards. The seminar programme and the list of participants are annexed at the end of the report.

About the author

Samir R Nath is a Senior Research Fellow and Coordinator of the Educational Research Unit in Brac. He is one of the principal researchers of the Education Watch. His research interests include primary and basic education, and pupils' learning achievement. He has contributed many journal articles and book chapters at home and abroad.
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SCHOOL MANAGEMENT FOR QUALITY EDUCATION: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Imran Matin

Our shared commitment to provide quality education for all has brought into focus several challenges we need to address—decentralization of educational governance, introduction of school and learner centred management, and the importance of effective school management in general and the role of the school head in particular. It is widely acknowledged that we need to pay serious attention to improving the school management framework if we are to bring about sustainable improvements to the quality of education. This has implications for in-school management processes, community school linkages, the role of the head teacher, as well as external support and accountability mechanisms. While some measures to improve school management could be initiated through system-wide reforms, others require a focus on local level efforts nearer to the school site.

The research papers that constitute this report have emerged out of Brac and NAEM's collaboration with the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning or ANTRIEP for short. This network is an exciting example of practice focussed, South-South partnership among educational research institutions in Asia. ANTRIEP is a network of national institutions in Asia with a vision to create synergy between the participating institutions in order to reinforce their capacities to respond to the growing and increasingly diversified needs for skill development in educational planning and management in the region. It currently brings together 20 Asian institutions with a view to offer innovative answers to the question of how to strengthen national capacities in training and research in educational management.

Against the backdrop of the crucial importance of better understanding of school management practices, the ANTRIEP programme undertook case studies of successful school management in selected countries of Asia. The specific objective of the case studies is to develop a critical understanding of the characteristics of successful school management practices and strategies in different countries and to clarify how such practices and strategies can be adopted in different contexts. The ultimate objective of the research programme is to inform institutions on how to build school leaders' capacities in order to improve school management. It is envisaged that the case studies would subsequently help to design training activities appropriate to different country contexts.

The research findings emerging out of the two case studies are important from three perspectives.
First, they deal with the nitty-gritty details of successful school management. This can help us begin to understand the complexities, contextual realities and the many innovative practices undertaken to deliver quality education despite the constraints. Such focussed examination of successful school management practices is relatively rare in the context of Bangladesh.

Second, the research is quite expansive in its scope covering both formal and non-formal schools at the primary and secondary level, which will allow us to draw implications for a good section of the education sector. Brac's Research and Evaluation Division carried out the case studies dealing with primary level school management; while the case studies on the secondary level school management was carried out by NAEM. This is a good example of research partnership—between a NGO and a government research and training centre. We hope that such partnership will grow stronger in the future, not least because we strongly recognize that while NGOs can develop and demonstrate innovations, when it comes to meeting national needs, it can only complement and support government programmes. This is also true when it comes to influencing policies through research.

Third, the methodology used is qualitative with a focus on in-depth understanding of management practices, most of which take place through day-to-day lived experiences of the schools, and cannot be captured only through quantitative surveys. We strongly feel that if the quality of education and other public goods provision are to be improved in a sustainable way, the research community should pay more attention to qualitative methodologies and mixing methodologies.

This also has implications for the mind set of policy makers, as qualitative research operates under different epistemological principles and can only be useful when the mind set is opened up from looking beyond only numbers and statistical representativeness. As we focus our attention on themes such as quality, rights-based service provision, inclusiveness etc., such a shift in the mindset of researchers, development workers and policy makers is very important.

I want to raise a few questions that we could help us organize our thoughts as we reflect on the case studies. What measures really lead to a significant change in the school management process? How have various measures influenced the role of head teachers? Do the changes have system-wide implications? Are they sustainable in the long run? Which of the changes are school specific innovations? Are there elements emerging from these innovations that could be adopted on a large scale? These questions are of direct relevance for relating the micro case studies to the macro structures and processes, which is what will be needed if we are to take the agenda of improving school management forward.

The 'moment of truth' in education is what children learn. Research and experience both show that learning is not attributable to one particular factor such as textbooks, curriculum or even teachers. It depends on the whole context of

learning, the combination of an ensemble of inputs. The outcome of schooling is contextual. It is more like an orchestra rather than a solo performance.

Improving the overall performance of an orchestra does not depend on improving isolated components, such as a better instrument or a better musician; it mainly depends on how the ensemble performs together and how all the different elements are orchestrated. Just as an orchestra's performance relies largely on the quality of its conductor, so school or student performance depends mainly on the head teacher. Good schools require good teachers and principals, high standards, adequate resources and real accountability. Demands must be followed by assistance so that they can be met, standards must be followed by insistence so that they will be kept. Head teachers must therefore be placed in a more enabling environment, by training, support and supervision.

I hope that these papers will help us get a better understanding of the elements of this enabling environment. I hope we will also not end there. We will also think of actions, however small and local that we need to take together to offer such an environment for all schools of the country.

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MANAGEMENT IN SUCCESSFUL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Samir R Nath
Mirja M Shahjamal

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the management of successful primary schools in Bangladesh. Two types of primary schools were considered – government and non-formal. Only the Brac schools were taken into consideration as non-formal school. Four case studies on four schools, two from each type, were prepared. The schools were selected purposively from among the successful schools identified by the upazila education officers and the regional managers of Brac education programme. It was evident that the schools had their own way of being successful, where the head teachers in the government schools and the programme organisers (POs) in Brac schools had a significant role. The SMC, the community and parents had active participation in school matters. Head teachers/POs personality, honesty and devotion to education were also important. They knew how to make others active and capable. The annual plan, regularity of staff and SMC meetings, and teachers' accountability to SMC were found as significant features of the government schools. Classroom performance of the teachers was excellent. The government schools received extra favour from the upazilas, besides they had their own income sources; no such favour or extra income was present in Brac schools. The government schools enjoyed certain autonomy in financial matters and temporary staff recruitment. Significant attention to the scholarship examinees improved government schools' reputation, however, deprived the majority of the learners of interaction with the good teachers. Slow and first generation learners could not be well cared due to bigger class size and the short duration of periods. Such difficulty was less in Brac schools due to small class size. Some policy recommendations are made based on the findings.

Key words: School management, primary education, successful school, leadership, head teacher, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

The main function of schools is to teach. Teachers and pupils jointly participate in teaching learning in a classroom environment. However, teaching learning occurs outside classroom as well. Improving the quality of teaching learning is a major concern in providing education. In this regard, classroom teaching was the key area of investigation for many years. During this period, the provision of education was considered as a unit and system management was the prime concern of educators.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the business community in the west first showed their dissatisfaction with the skills of high school graduates. At the same time, the taxpayers and the policy-makers began to pressure individual schools and school systems to reform their policies and practices (Pipho 1999; Farkas *et al* 1997). This fuelled the ministries to make laws holding schools more accountable to the pupils' learning. This resulted in the privatisation of public schools around the world and increased parental choice in admitting their children in school (Chubb and Moe 1990). Moreover, the concept of community participation has arisen as a major concern and the role and responsibilities of the school heads have been redefined (Adu-Duhau 1990). Because of its role in educating the members of the society, schools are expected to position themselves in the centre of contemporary changes in society, the economy, politics and technology. As a result, a diversified role of the schools has emerged – from awareness growing against teen pregnancy to technological literacy (Ballet *et al* 2000; Barnett undated). The challenge is thus how effective the school heads can successfully respond to this new environment.

Reform that took place in several education systems drew attention towards strategic focusing on school functioning, rather than the overall education system. It is argued that the reform measures, which had little emphasis on school intervention, did not achieve the objectives of enhancing quality education (De-Grauwe and Varghese 2000). The necessity to jump form the classroom teaching level to school organisation level was emphasised by some policy planners in the early 1990s (Cheng 1996). Reform of structural system and management style of schools are considered important in this regard. Decentralisation of educational governance at the local level has become the norm in the quality improvement process. As a result, school-based management, shared decision making, and self-managing schools have become common practices among educators and community members (Caldwell and Spinks 1992, 1998). In some cases, this resulted in increased local control over budgets and staffing decisions, and on the other hand, more centralised accountability measures by the government (Caldwell and Spinks 1998, Barnett undated) – a paradox of simultaneous centralisation and decentralisation.

Primary Education in Bangladesh

Children aged 6-10 years are supposed to enrol in primary education in Bangladesh, and a five-year cycle of primary education is compulsory and free by law (Government of Bangladesh, 1990). A kind of pluralism exists in the system with at least eleven types of primary schools in the country (DPE 2001). These may be formal or non-formal, religion based or secular, and Bangla or English medium. Curriculum of these schools also varies with the type. The provision has expanded much during the last decade; however, the quality did not improve with that of access. The net enrolment rate at primary level is about 80% and nearly three quarters of which complete the full cycle (Chowdhury *et al* 2002). This means that over 40% of the children cross their primary schooling age without getting the full course of primary education. On completion, only a small

proportion (below 2%) can achieve all the attainable competencies and nearly a third remain non-literate or semi-literate (Ahmed *et al* 2003; Nath and Chowdhury 2001). Gender, area and school type-wise variation exists in achievement. Over crowded classrooms, lack of discipline and managerial skills and poor teaching learning process are major factors in such poor performance of the pupils (Nath and Chowdhury 2001).

State owned schools are the major provider of primary education in the country. Of the total children enrolled in all types of primary schools, about two-thirds is covered by the government primary schools (Chowdhury *et al* 2002). The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) implements primary education through a directorate. Division, district and *upazila* (sub-district) level education officials are responsible for field level implementation. The u*pazila* education office is the lowest level in this line. Each *upazila* office consists of one officer and 6-8 assistant officers. The number of schools in an *upazila* ranges from 150 to 200. Each assistant *upazila* education officer is responsible to supervise 25-30 schools. The responsibility of an officer is to inspect five schools a month and each assistant ten schools. Each school has a managing committee responsible for day-to-day management. The teachers are fully paid by the government, but the managing committee members are not – they provide voluntary service. The total number of schools of this type is 37,709. These schools follow the curriculum of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of the government.

The non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been supplementing the primary education initiatives of the government through their non-formal primary schools. Over seven percent of the students at primary level are enrolled in these schools, of which about three quarters are in Brac schools (Chowdhury *et al* 2002). These schools are not similar to that of the formal system in the country, however it follows the formal school curriculum of NCTB. Brac schools are one-teacher schools with a classroom and 33 students. A cohort of 33 students enrol in Brac schools in Class I at the beginning of an academic year and completes the whole curriculum of five academic years within a time span of four calendar years. This means that one teacher teaches all the subjects of five academic years to a cohort of 33 students. Brac's own textbooks are used for Classes I to III, however NCTB prepared textbooks are used for Classes IV and V. The teachers are mostly female with at least ten years of schooling, generally taken from the same village. They are provided a foundation training of two weeks and refresher courses once a month. A cadre of programme organisers (PO), each having responsibility of 12 to 14 schools, directly supervises the school activities. There are also area, region and head quarter level officials for implementation of the programme. A parents committee oversees the school activities. Children aged 8-10 years, affiliated with non-educated and economically poorer families are the targets of the Brac schools. A total of 34,000 schools are currently in operation covering 1.1 million children.

Studies on quality of education show that schools vary substantially in the achievement of the students (Nath and Chowdhury 2001, PSPMP 2000). A question may arise why some schools are doing better and others are not, even

when all are under the same umbrella of a certain management. Multiple regression analyses predicting competencies achievement identified a number of factors, which lack how management functions in students learning achievement. Moreover, a school's success is not only the achievement of its learners, the process of such success is also important. Internal and external support system in managing the schools, role and functions of the management bodies, role of the school heads, their accountability and role of the school evaluation system in school improvement are missing in the above mentioned studies.

Education Watch studies show that students of Brac schools come from poorer families than those of other primary schools in the country. Brac school students do not require help from the private tutor as much as the formal school students. However, the students of Brac schools acquired more competencies than those of other schools. On the other hand, government primary schools are the prime means of providing primary education in the country. Success and failure of these schools impacts much on the overall situation of primary education in the country. Thus, research on both types of schools is important in the context of Education for All.

The main objective of this paper is to explore how the primary schools in Bangladesh are being successful. Successfulness of schools was explored in terms of academic and administrative management, school head's management quality, teaching learning environment, community participation, system management, and academic and other performance of the students.

RESEARCH METHOD

Of the eleven types of primary schools, only two were considered for this study – government and Brac non-formal primary schools. However, the concept of school is not the same in both systems. Schools are well defined in the government system, which is traditional and has similarity to other countries. In addition to curriculum and teaching learning provision, a government school comprise of a head teacher, a number of assistant teachers, at least five groups of learners with some infrastructure facilities within a demarked area. On the other hand, in the Brac system, a small group of learners and a teacher with some infrastructure facilities is called a school. The provision of a programme organiser (PO) who is responsible for 12-14 learner groups is an added element here. In order to maintain similarity to some extent, PO-centric education provision of a number of learner groups with similar number of teacher set in the same number of campuses is considered a school. This was necessary because the study was designed broadly based on the concept of school widely used in the formal sector around the world.

To select successful Brac schools we discussed the issue in a monthly meeting of the regional managers. Along with the earlier mentioned criteria of successful schools they applied their own judgement and finally prepared a short list of six schools, three of which had female POs. Two schools were selected from this list – a female PO-centric school in Narail sadar *upazila* under Narail district and a male

PO-centric school in Paba *upazila* under Rajshahi district. Similarly, two successful government schools were selected from two different areas – Narail sadar *upazila* under Narail district and Godagari *upazila* in Rajshahi district. The respective *upazila* education officers (UEO) and their assistants jointly identified 4-5 successful schools in their *upazilas* considering the issues mentioned above. Two of those were selected subjectively – one from each *upazila*. It should be mentioned that the intention was not to select the best schools but the successful schools. For confidentiality, instead of real names, the schools would be called according to the names of the *upazilas*.

Table 1. Techniques used and sources of information

Techniques	Narail GPS	Godagari GPS	Narail Brac	Paba Brac
In-depth interview	• Head teacher • Teachers • SMC chair • Parents • AUEO • UEO	• Head teacher • Teachers • Volunteer teachers • SMC chair • SMC members • PTA chair • Students • Parents • AUEO • UEO • Divisional AD	• Programme Organiser • Teachers • Team-In-Charge • Regional Manager • Students • Parents	• Programme Organiser • Teachers • Team-In-Charge • Quality Assurance Specialist • Regional Manager • Students • Parents
Focus group discussion	• SMC members	–	• Parents committee members	• Parents committee members
Non-participant observation	• Classroom • Teachers room • Staff meeting • SMC meeting • Mothers rally	• Classroom • Teachers room	• Classroom • Refresher training • Parents meeting • POs monthly meeting	• Classroom • Refresher training
Participant observation	• Classroom	• Classroom	–	–
Documents review	• Attendance register • Students result sheet	• Attendance register • Students result sheet	• Attendance register • Students evaluation report • Resource register	• Attendance register • Resource register

Qualitative research techniques were used in this study. The techniques included in-depth interview, focus group discussion, participant and non-participant observations, and review of documents. Table 1 shows the sources and techniques used for collecting information.

Two field researchers, one male and one female, were appointed and trained adequately for three weeks to do the fieldwork. They gained both theoretical and practical knowledge through the training. The field researchers spent ten weeks in the school areas and collected necessary data. Data were collected in six major areas under a broad analytical framework, which was jointly developed by the ANTRIEP member institutions (see Figure 1 in page 2). The areas are school profile, school management structure and organisation, role of the head teacher, management of specific process, relations with the administration, and selected management devices. Each area was divided into a number of sub-areas. For validity purpose, crosschecking of information and triangulation was done. The field researchers firstly took notes in rough copies and then transformed these notes into fresh copies. They prepared the first Bangla version of the cases. The research team visited the schools several times and also collected some data on subsequent visits. Three review meetings were held during the fieldwork where the key researchers and the field researchers participated. Besides, the researchers had continuous telephonic communication with the field researchers. The fieldwork was done from the fourth week of August to the first week of November 2003. After preparing the cases the schools were revisited with the drafts for verification in April 2004.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The Government Schools

School Profile: The government schools were established in two different periods – the Narail school in 1947 and the Godagari school in 1905. The Narail school is three kilometres and Godagari school is 25 kilometres away from the respective *upazila* towns. The respective district education office and the *upazila* resource centre are adjacent to the Narail school, however far away from the Godagari school. Both the schools were established under a community initiative, however, they were nationalised in 1973.

Each school has its own catchment area determined by the respective *upazila* education office. The catchment area of Godagari school is bigger than that of the Narail school. The catchment area of Narail school is comprised of four villages and it is eight *paras* for Godagari school. The number of eligible children for primary education (6-10 years) is 518 in the catchment area of Godagari school and 311 in that of Narail school. The majority of the residents in both the areas are poor – the main source of income of the population is agriculture. There are also a few rich people in both the areas.

Both the schools were established in their own lands donated by the community. Each has a pond in the school compound. The Narail school has a fruit garden and a playground too. Each school has 2-3 structures with a sufficient number of classrooms and a teachers' common room. The schools are comprised of tube-wells, toilets and electricity facilities. Both the schools are single shift school –

daily school hour is from 9.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. with half an hour lunch break at noon. Both are open for five and a half days in a week.

A relatively favourable teaching learning condition is present in the Narail school. The Narail school has 431 students with ten teachers and the Godagari school has 320 students with six teachers. Thus, the number of students per teacher is higher in the Godagari school than the Narail school (53:1 vs. 43:1). The proportion of girls is 49.9% in Narail and 46.3% in Godagari school. The Narail school has nine learner groups and Godagari has six. Students from outside the catchment areas are also enrolled in both the schools. All the eligible students in the catchment area of the Narail school are enrolled in this school, which is not the case for Godagari. Mostly all the students in the Godagari school are Muslims, but there are 44% non-Muslim students in the Narail school. The majority of the parents in both the schools have no schooling. Attendance rate of the students is higher in Godagari than Narail (81% vs. 75%), however both are much higher than the national average. On the other hand, the promotion rate of the students is 88% in Narail and 70% in Godagari School. Five to six percent of the students drop out every year. The Godagari school has 29 students from an ethnic minority group. Two disabled students read in the Narail school.

Table 2. Number of sections and learners by grade in government schools, 2003

Grade	Narail school		Godagari school	
	Number of sections	Number of learners	Number of sections	Number of learners
Pre-primary	1	60	-	-
I	2	89	1	88
II	1	62	1	55
III	1	59	1	43
IV	2	94	2	73
V	2	67	1	61
Total	9	431	6	320

Including the head teachers, the Narail school has ten and the Godagari school has six full time permanent teachers. One of the teachers in Godagari school is on deputation. The number of female teachers is seven in Narail and only one in Godagari. In addition, the Godagari school has recruited 12 volunteer teachers and the Narail school has appointed a cleaner cum bearer.

General educational qualifications of the permanent teachers vary from secondary school completion to Masters degree. However, all of them have completed a Certificate-in-Education (C-in-Ed) course – the minimum requirement for primary teaching. Seven teachers of the Narail school and two in the Godagari school

received subject based training in English and mathematics. Three teachers of the Narail school have special training on scouting and another is trained in library operation. The teachers also received a number of other trainings and they are involved in other activities beyond the curriculum. Average duration of service in present school is eight years (with a range from six months to 15 years) for the teachers in Narail school, while all the teachers in Godagari school joined the school during the preceding year. Residences of about half of the teachers in both the schools are outside the school catchment areas. Most of the volunteer teachers of Godagari school are below 25 years of age. All of them completed at least higher secondary education (HSC) and only one is female. None of them have received any training in teaching. All are permanent residents of the school catchment area.

The Narail school has a library with 25,500 books. The Godagari school has no library, however, have some unused books. Both the schools are actively involved in Cubing (junior scouting). However, the Cub team is much stronger in Narail. On the other hand, Godagari has a strong cultural troop.

School Management Structure and Organisation: According to the government rule, day-to-day management of the schools is the responsibility of the head teachers. The heads along with their staff (i.e., the teachers) are collectively responsible for both pedagogical and administrative management of the schools.

School Managing Committees (SMC) are active in both the schools. SMCs are comprised of people with various backgrounds; they are educators, social workers and businesspersons. For strategic reason, two local leaders of the two large political parties are SMC members in Godagari school. Although not all, the chair and 5-6 members are active in the committees. The SMC chairs in both the schools have long involvement with the committees. The Godagari school SMC chair has been involved with the committee for the last eight years. On the other hand, an uncle of the present SMC chair held the post for the last two terms in Narail, while the present chair was a member. However, both the chairs are undoubtedly active and sincere in school matters and they have special feelings for the schools. They also use their personal influence for the benefit of the schools. The residences of both the SMC chairs are close to the school compound.

The committees meet regularly once a month and the attendance rate is higher in Narail than Godagari. Due to the inactivity of some SMC members, 5-6 community people were involved with the activities of the managing committee in Godagari. The Rajshahi divisional assistant director of primary education is very active in the management of the school. A few years ago, with the intention to build a good school in the *upazila*, he started community mobilisation in the school catchment area. He succeeded because he was born and brought up in the community and is a former student of the school. The *upazila* education office is also linked with the process. No such involvement is present in Narail school. In the meetings, the SMC members discuss various issues beyond learners' absenteeism. Head teachers detailed reporting in the meetings clearly shows their

accountability to SMC. Such reports include students' absenteeism and performance in examinations, financial condition of the school, overall teaching learning situation, and general development of the school. The members actively participate in discussions. Box 1 provides a case of a SMC meeting in Narail school.

Box 1. A SMC meeting in Narail government school

Eight members are present in the meeting – only four came on time. The meeting started about 30 minutes later. The vice chair has presided over the meeting. The chair is absent because of his involvement with the election of the local chamber of commerce, where he has been elected as chair of the forum. The agenda for the meeting included pupils' attendance, their performance in the second semester exam, financial condition, and the overall environment of the school. The head teacher made a presentation on the former two issues and the others took part in the discussion. The members asked questions to the head teacher in order to identify the reasons behind failure of some students in the examination and the absenteeism of some other students. They also shared their experiences and observations during occasional school visits. The meeting has decided on the following actions:

- A meeting will be held with the parents of failed students after the *Puja* vacation;
- Pupils' home visits by the teachers and the SMC members will be increased;
- School visits by the SMC members will be increased; and
- Tk. 400 will be provided collectively to the school funds to pay the electricity bill on time.

The members also saw the need for a boundary wall surrounding the school area, but could not find a solution. However, they agreed to request the people living nearby the school to cooperate with them in protecting the playground from cattle.

It was observed that the SMC members are very serious in discussion and finding possible solutions. They were found to be caring and responsive to the school's demands and needs. The members also criticised the drawbacks. The head teacher is accountable to the SMC.

There is no formal relationship between the schools and the communities or the parents. There is a provision of parent teacher association (PTA), however it is not active in any school. In Godagari, only the chair of the PTA is active with the managing team. On the other hand, there is no such committee in Narail school. However, three mothers' rallies were arranged during the preceding year in Narail to motivate the mothers on education. There is no official or unofficial link between the school and the local government authority (here the Union *Parishad*). However, one Union *Parishad* member is a member of the SMC of the Godagari school.

The communities have significant material or financial contribution for specific school activities in both schools. The activities include annual sports, fencing school boundaries and general development of the school. On request from the schools the community came forward to donate money to the Narail school and some construction materials to the Godagari school. The school management committees and the head teachers play very active role in making such events a success.

There is no provision of regular income to the government primary schools in Bangladesh. The only source of income for the schools is the subscription received from the education department of the government. But it is unlikely that both the study schools have their own sources of income. The Narail school has three sources of regular income viz., leasing out of some land of the school, fish culture in the pond and selling fruits from the school garden. On the other hand, the Godagari school has started a stationary shop and plans to start a fish culture and establish a poultry farm. The management of the Godagari school is exploring other sources of income as well. In addition, both the schools collect donations from the community. Two SMC members are keeping the financial accounts in the two schools.

Head Teacher's Roles and Responsibilities: Both the head teachers are male and over 50 years of age. They have extensive experience in teaching and as head teacher (30 and 35 years respectively). One of them completed higher secondary education and the other has received a BA degree. Both have done C-in-Ed course and a good number of short training courses including educational administration and management. Some of this training is not directly linked with education. The head teacher of the Narail school has been in this school for the last eight years and the head of the Godagari school joined during the fieldwork of this study. Godagari school's head teacher lives in the school compound, whereas the other lives outside the school catchment area. Both are strongly involved with the teachers association.

Before joining the present schools both the head teachers knew that they were going to take on responsibility for improving the schools. Moreover, they were already famous for their work. The head teacher of the Narail school was granted a best teacher award twice before joining to this school. The head teacher of the Godagari school had previously built a school from one of very poor condition to a good one. Such reputation helped them in rapport building with the parents and the communities in their present schools.

Before 1995, the Narail school was not as good as it was found to be during fieldwork. The journey in improvements started in 1995 after the hiring of the present head teacher. Upon joining, the head teacher took massive initiative to make it a good school. First he met all the household heads in the catchment area, the local elite and the business community. He had a number of motivational meetings with the teachers and he also discussed his wishes with the *upazila* education officials. He was able to convince everyone that it was possible to

develop the school if collective measures were taken. The community responded positively and the stakeholders worked together under the leadership of the head teacher.

On the other hand, upon joining the head teacher of the Godagari school received a community that was already motivated towards school development. The divisional Assistant Director made the following comment about the change of the head teacher: "The earlier head teacher was also good, but was incapable of taking decisions independently, which is not the case for this head teacher. This head teacher has implemented a larger share of my vision during these months."

Both the head teachers are very good at teaching, and this is easier for them to demonstrate good teaching practices to other teachers. They are friendly, responsive, honest and liked by the stakeholders i.e., students, parents and teachers. The heads see the value in hearing from others, especially the staff and the community. They regularly observe the classes of other teachers and provide feedback. They distribute classes effectively considering capacity, expertise and the willingness of the teachers. Due to their reputation and work in the schools they are well accepted by the community and the parents. The heads are very happy with their teaching career. Some comments about the head teacher of Narail school are provided in Box 2.

Box 2. Some comments about the head teacher of Narail government school

It reduced my workload a lot since we have got him as head teacher, he is very sincere, a good man and honest. – The SMC Chair

Our head teacher is cream. – A member of SMC

As the head teacher is excellent, the school is doing very well. – Respective AUEO

Because of this particular head teacher our school is the best one in the district. He made it the best from its mediocre position. – Teachers in FGD

I was in a nearby school, however took a transfer to this school particularly to learn from this head teacher. – One Assistant Teacher

The head teachers also take classes, however, the number of classes conducted by the heads is not equal. The head of the Narail school has to take 3-4 classes a day and the head of the Godagari school has to take 7-8 classes daily. The Narail head teacher has to spend 30% of his official time at teaching, but for the Godagari head it is nearly 100%. Office hours also differ: the head teacher of the Narail school is suppose to complete his work during official school hours, but the head of Godagari keeps very long working hours because of an inadequate number of permanent teacher and the start of coaching classes beyond school hours. Box 3 provides the opinions of Godagari school head teacher about his school.

Box 3. Opinion of the head teacher of Godagari government school about the factors responsible for school improvement

- *The students are fond of education. The parents are motivated too. Morning and evening classes would have not been started without their cooperation.*
- *The school has a long history of about a century. Once it was the only school in the community. People want to reanimate their heritage. Their consciousness is the biggest hope.*
- *All the teachers are very much sincere in their duty to school improvement. With some exceptions all of them teach well.*
- *More importantly, the higher education authorities (both upazila and district levels) want to make it a quality school. The school is in their good book.*

A very good relationship between the head and other teachers is found in both the schools. Weekly staff meetings (held on every Thursday, after official school hour) play a very important role in teacher management in Narail school. No such meeting is present in Godagari, but the head has informal discussions with his staff continuously. The head teacher of Narail school opined that "School is a special community, it's a team – teamwork is important for its improvement. I praise the teachers for their good works and try to provide remedies for their mistakes." Both the heads have informal communication with the higher officials such as UEOs and the AUEOs. The divisional AD, who has used his power and authority for the benefit of the school, is an added advantage in Godagari.

Management of Specific Processes: Both the schools follow the national curriculum and no book published outside the NCTB is used as text material. There is a library in the Narail school, which the teachers and the learners use regularly. There is no such arrangement in Godagari school.

Most of the teachers in both the schools are very good at teaching. It is known that the good teachers in the *upazilas* were primarily brought here in these schools with an intention to make the schools good. This means that it is not the schools themselves that have improved the calibre of the teachers. At the same time the current environment of these schools is so teaching learning friendly that there is the potential for any staff members to become a good teacher. This environment has been developed due to the strong leadership of the head teachers and other favourable conditions. The teachers, in general, try to take care of the learners in the classrooms. The presentation of lessons, example setting, the use of aids and involving the learners in the process are of good quality in Narail school, although simply present in Godagari. The classes are enjoyable to the students. The teachers are also careful about the weaker students and the girls. Neither schools uses lesson plans. One important difference between the schools is homework: no homework

is given in Narail, but it is in Godagari. Both the teachers and the students are disciplined in Narail school, which is not the case for the students of Godagari. However, the situation is improving. Surprisingly, none was found thinking in this line, moreover they (students, parents, SMC members, upazila officials and the community in general) all are happy to see the arrangements.

The teachers of both the schools try hard to ensure that all students are learning, but it is difficult for two reasons. Firstly, due to big class sizes the teachers are unable to cover all the material with every student within a period of 40-45 minutes. Secondly, in order to do the syllabus justice, home teaching is required, but a good number of students are unable to do this because of non-literate patents and their inability to keep a private tutor. In order to overcome this, the Godagari school management team arranged special tutoring in the mornings and evenings, where the students of each grade are divided into 2-3 subgroups and a teacher is responsible for teaching a small group of learners for 3-4 hours. The volunteer teachers, the head teacher and a former head teacher of the Godagari school take on these classes. The head teacher and other responsible persons monitor the activities, and continuously provide feedback to the volunteer teachers. Although there is no such initiative in Narail, two teachers voluntarily teach two groups of students at their home after school hours. It can be noted that because of a larger student teacher ratio the difficulty of this is greater in Godagari than it is in Narail. Actually, considering the number of students and the duration of periods, both the schools need a higher number of regular staff.

In order to smooth over the process of teaching learning, the role of volunteer teachers in Godagari is significant. They were not paid for their contribution initially, however, a token remuneration has been provided since January 2004. Each of these volunteer teachers is responsible for teaching a small group of learners similar to that of the non-formal schools of Brac. Each volunteer teacher has 20-25 learners to teach. The role of these teachers is to help the students learn lessons that could not be taught during official school hours and the students also do their homework during these classes. In Narail, two members of the SMC occasionally take classes in absence of regular teachers, a task that the volunteer teachers in Godagari are able to tackle.

It was interesting to observe that both the schools have special arrangements for teaching the students who has been selected to appear in scholarship examinations at the end of grade V. This is because students' performance in these examinations is one of the two achievement indicators for school evaluations by the AUEOs, the other indicator being promotion rates in grades III to V. Scholarship examinees are identified from the learners of grade V through a rigorous assessment at the beginning of the academic year and separated from other students for special coaching. The best teachers in each school are involved in teaching these learners. In the Godagari school, along with general classes there are two separate coaching classes arranged for the scholarship examinees, one in the morning and the other in the evening. On the other hand, the Narail school scholarship examinees are separated at the beginning of the academic year and daylong coaching classes are

arranged throughout the whole year. The head teacher and two other top teachers are assigned to these learners in Narail and a former head teacher has been assigned to the task in Godagari. Such arrangements help a few students do better in scholarship examinations and contribute to increasing the schools reputation, while at the same time other students are deprived of quality education.

Some parents are active in keeping in touch with the schools. They often come to school and meet the head teachers or the respective class teachers. The teachers welcome the parents, and in general the parents discuss examination results, and the strengths and weaknesses of their children. Parents have found that this type of one-to-one correspondence is fruitful for their understanding about their children's progress. Such meetings are limited to the few parents who are willing to meet; a large portion of the parents has not made these attempts to meet the teachers. The schools have no plan to make it compulsory for all parents.

Relations with Higher Authorities: For government schools, higher authorities refer to the *upazila*, district and central level administration. The schools are directly supervised by the *upazila* education offices and both the schools are in good standing with the respective *upazila* education offices. The UEOs and the AUEOs provide more visits to these schools than others. It is frustrating to observe that the visits of the AUEOs are mostly administrative, not pedagogical, and that the visiting authorities do not really interact with the teachers or the students. The SMC and the head teacher communicate with the *upazila* office regarding school matters regularly. Both the schools have also received favour from the UEO in various occasions, especially in resource allocation. The head teachers and the school managing committees have both formal and informal links with the authority. The reason behind this strong relationship could be the limited number of good schools in the *upazilas*, and the resulting prestige these schools carry. Such a relationship probably helps the reputed head teachers of the study schools be autonomous to some extent. Recruiting a bearer cum cleaner in Narail, recruiting volunteer teachers in Godagari and initiating financial activities in both the schools are some of the examples where the schools took decisions independently. Nonetheless, the respective *upazila* education authorities know all about these activities.

The district education office is located on a peace of land owned by the Narail school and the upazila resource centre (URC) is on the top floor of the school building. This was possible because of a desire by the chair of the SMC and his colleagues, as well as presence of community support. The community wanted, lobbied for and succeed in bringing the district education office and URC closer to them. These facilities have an indirect affect on the school – the teachers always keep them alert to keep everything all right. On the other hand, implementation of the divisional assistant director's (AD) vision to build at least one high quality school in each *upazila* started with the Godagari school. Such an external wish helped to attach the respective UEO and the AUEO with this school. They provide additional visits to this school and allocate greater resources (both human and

financial). The AD is on the frontline of community mobilisation, and his continuous monitoring is an additional support to the school's improvement.

Students' Performance: There is no provision of standardised achievement testing at the primary level, so it is not possible to compare the learning achievements of the students of these schools with those of others. The performance of the students is good in both school finals and primary scholarship examinations. In the school final examinations, the average pass rate is about 88% in Narail and 70% in Godagari. The Narail school has a glorious performance in the scholarship examinations – 2-3 students get scholarships each year. During the last five years, all examinees passed the scholarship examinations with high scores. Out of 13 examinees, six students received scholarships last year, of whom three were in the talent pool. On the other hand, the scholarship scores of the pupils of Godagari school are not high like those of Narail. The students of Godagari have been known to receive scholarships, but not on a regular basis.

The schools are also reputed in their cultural performances and sports. Both schools received recognition in the district level cultural competition for several years. The Cub team of Narail is reputed in the district for its good performance.

The Brac Schools

School Profile: Both the Brac schools are located outside the *upazila* towns. The Narail team office[1] is three kilometres away from the *upazila* town while the Paba team office is about 15 kilometres away from the *upazila* town. This being said the distance between the team and the respective regional office is less in Paba than in Narail and road communication from team office to regional office is also better in Paba. There are five PO centric schools in Paba and only two in Narail containing 85 and 25 learning centres respectively.

This study has concentrated on the schools under the supervision of two programme organisers from above two teams located in rural villages. There are 13 learning centres spread across seven villages in Narail and 12 learning centres in nine villages in Paba. Average distance of the learning centres from the respective team offices is not equal – 11 kilometres in Narail and nine kilometres in Paba. The majority of the villagers are poor with a livelihood based on agriculture, although a few rich people also live in the villages. The learning centres are situated in the part of the villages where non-schooled children are greater in number.

Of the 13 learner groups in Narail, two are in grade V, seven in grade IV and four in grade I. In Paba, of the 12 learner groups, two are in grade V, six in grade IV, three in grade III and one in grade I. There is no learner group of grades II and III in Narail and none of grade III in Paba (Table 3). The number of students in the

[1] Cluster of schools headed by a Team-in-Charge. Each team has a number of POs.

learning centres of Narail is 416 and 386 in Paba. The proportion of girls is higher in Narail than in Paba (65% vs. 59%). About 34% of the students of Narail are non-Muslims, a figure of only one percent in Paba. The average age of the students is similar to that of the formal schools in the areas. The majority of the parents have no schooling and are illiterate. In terms of economic status, the families can be categorized as lower than the average; however, a few are from the better off families. No mentionable difference can be noticed between the schools.

Table 3. Number of centres and learners by grade in Brac schools, 2003

Grade	Narail school		Paba school	
	Number of centres	Number of learners	Number of centres	Number of learners
I	4	132	1	33
II	-	-	3	99
III	-	-	-	-
IV	7	226	6	190
V	2	58	2	64
Total	13	416	12	386

The number of teachers is equal to the number of learner groups in both the schools – 13 in Narail and 12 in Paba. Thus, the teacher student ratio is essentially equal in both the schools – around 32 students per teacher. The attendance rate of the students is much higher in both the schools than the national average at primary level (95-97%) and dropout rates are negligible. There is no provision for repetition in the Brac school system. Due to the absence of any national examinations it is not possible to compare the performance of the learners of these schools with those of other schools in the community.

All the teachers are female; the Narail PO is also female, while the Paba PO is male. Only the POs are full time professional staff and the teachers are paraprofessional. The teachers of the Paba school are comparatively younger than those of the Narail school (26 years vs. 30.5 years). Four teachers in the Narail school and none in Paba are non-Muslim. On average, the teachers have 10.4 years of schooling. Two teachers of the Paba school and four of Narail are unmarried. On average, the Narail school teachers have six years of teaching experience; this is five years for Paba school. All the teachers have received basic training at the beginning of their job and some have received subject-based training as well. Ten teachers in Narail and eight in Paba live in the villages where their learning centres are situated, other teachers live in the neighbouring villages.

The age of both the programme organisers is similar – about 32 years. They are married. One joined Brac in 1995 and the other in 1996. The Narail PO is a BA

graduate while the Paba PO completed higher secondary schooling (HSC). Both have received basic teacher training as well as some other training on management and supervision, monitoring and evaluation, community mobilisation, and survey methods. Both are equipped with subject based training. The Narail PO is a master trainer for mathematics and Bangla and she is expecting to become a core trainer for Bangla in the near future. On the other hand, the Paba PO is neither a master trainer nor a core trainer. None of them live in the villages where the learning centres are located. The average distance between the PO's residence and the learning centres is 11 kilometres in Narail and nine kilometres in Paba. Both the POs use bicycles to travel to the learning centres.

Each of the learning centres is a single roomed made of tin, bamboo, mud or thrash. The houses are rented and established among other habitants. There is no playground in front of any of the centres. Two thirds of the schoolrooms are very good with enough windows to allow for natural light and air. Curious people sometimes pry into the classrooms through the windows, which is bothersome for the teachers and the students. The schools do not have their own toilet and drinking water facilities, however through an agreement with the community the teachers and the students can use neighbours facilities. Such arrangements have been made for each of the centres.

The learning centres of both the schools are homogeneous with respect to their material condition – there is no bench, chair or table in the classrooms, mats covered the floors and the students take their seats on the mat in a U-shape. A tool, trunk, blackboard, some pictures, and a map of Bangladesh are common items in each learning centre. Some of the classrooms are decorated with the artwork of the students and teachers. Despite minimal materials the schoolrooms are well decorated. With the exception of the artwork and some hand made teaching aids, all the materials are supplied by Brac central office.

The centre start time varies from one to another. Most of the centres start between 8 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. A small number of the centres under both the schools start in the afternoon. Irrespective of the school, the duration of class time is three and a half hours for the first two grades and four hours for grades III to V.

School Management Structure and Organization: Unlike the formal schools, there is no school managing committee for Brac non-formal primary schools; however, a seven-member parents committee exists for each of the learning centres. Only the parents of the learners of a particular centre are eligible to become members of the committee for that centre. This means that there are 12 such committees for the Paba school and 13 for Narail. In other words, 84 parents are involved with the committees of Paba and 91 parents with those of Narail. Most of them are the mothers of the learners.

There is no regular formal meeting of these committees. However, each member visits the respective centre once a week. This task is not difficult seeing as they live within short distance from the centres. These parents are either illiterates or have little education, thus, it is not possible for them to observe the pedagogical

aspects of the centres. Instead, they have three things to monitor – that the teacher starts the centre on time, that the teacher teaches and the students follow the instructions in a disciplined manner, and that the centre does not close before the right time. The parents ask the teacher to explain any deviation that they observe, and the parents' observations are discussed in the monthly parents teacher meeting.

It is the responsibility of the parents committees to organise the parents' teacher meeting once a month separately for each centre. All the parents of the learners are invited to attend the meeting. The POs keep them present in all these meetings. Although all the parents are invited to attend, the attendance registers show that the average attendance varies from 25 to 30. Through observations of these meetings it was understood that these are arranged to keep the parents in touch with the centres. The issues discussed are common for all the centres; these include learners' attendance, learning environment in the centre including teaching, and learning environment at home. One interesting observation is that one or two social and public health issues are discussed in each meeting. Generally the POs are the main discussants, however the teacher and some parents also take part in discussion.

Role of Programme Organiser: According to the system, the POs do not stay at the premises of the learning centres all the time. Each teacher and her learner group is the strength of the centre, and thus the teachers play a key role in the day-to-day functioning of the learning centres. The POs visit each learning centre at least once a week.

The programme organiser of the Narail school was brought to the team because of her good work in other teams. The respective team-in-charge and the regional manager stated that the quality of education of the centres in Narail had been deteriorating day by day and the regional manager was searching for a good PO. Thus, the current PO was transferred to Narail over a year ago. On the other hand, no such story was found about the PO in Paba, who has been working with the team for last seven years.

The main responsibility of the POs is to ensure smooth operation of the schools. In order to do so, both perform the following activities.

- Prepare their teachers through a monthly refresher course;
- Oversee the classroom activities and provide feedback to the teachers;
- Prepare school evaluation reports fortnightly and send them to higher authorities;
- Visit the homes of the students;
- Participate in the monthly parents teacher meeting; and
- Participate in weekly staff meetings in the team office.

The monthly refresher training plays a very important role in the preparation of the teachers in both the schools. Both the POs are skilled in conducting this training. They have good knowledge of textbook contents and appropriate ways to teach them. Moreover, the ability of the Narail PO in identifying some of the mistakes

and gaps in the textbooks is impressive. The teachers have many things to learn from the POs, who as good teachers and have a strong command over the training classes and the teachers. They are able to prepare teaching aids and lesson plans. The POs often help the teachers in preparing lesson plans.

Both the POs regularly visit the learning centres and observe classroom activities, in general, through non-participant observation. Sometimes they take classes to help the teachers. They never show their anger to the teachers, even if they find teachers doing something wrong in the classrooms. The Narail PO spent a lot of her time to observing classroom activities during her initial at the school. She spent hours and hours assessing the existing capacity of the teachers, which helped her understanding the potential strengths and weaknesses of the teachers. The PO provided her feedback accordingly. This also helped her in fixing strategies for monthly refreshers training. Otherwise, the Paba PO has been working with this team for the last seven years and did the same type of observation at the beginning of his work with the team. The POs argued that the teachers' wages are too low, which makes it hard for them to motivate the teachers to work hard. In order to provide motivation, the POs give the teachers oral praise for their work. A good relationship between the teachers and the POs, as well as mutual respect, is another important factor.

Although the teachers are mainly responsible for home visit of the students, both the POs also participate in this activity. Their home visits motivate the parents significantly in sending their children to school. This helps the POs to get involved with the community, and both POs are very much liked by the students, parents and the community at large. They recognise all the students and their parents and know the names of many students. They never forget the parents teacher meetings and through these they are able to communicate Brac policies to the parents and also get feedback from them. By improving the relationship through home visits and parents meetings, the POs are able to resolve social problems related to the schools much easier.

The learning centres are far away from the offices of the POs, thus, they are to travel a long distance daily. Difficulty arises especially during the summer and rainy seasons. They sometimes express their dissatisfaction with slow promotion in their profession. On the other hand, both of them are committed to their job and are very much aware that they are working to create education facilities for a poor community where most of the pupils are first generation learners. They also know that it would not be possible to teach these poor learners without continuous hard work by both the teachers and them. The respective team-in-charges and the regional managers also recognise the excellent contribution of the POs. According to them the POs are sincere, hard working, committed and punctual.

Apart from discussing the issues of attendance and performance of the learners in the parents meeting, the POs also discuss issues related to life in the community, including cleanliness, general health care and hygiene, nutrition, environment, early marriage, dowry, rights, etc. As the PO in Narail is a female, the adolescent

girls in the community (former students of Brac schools or any other girl) often visit her to talk about things like puberty and early marriage. She is accepting of them and the community people call her *Didi* (sister). The Paba PO is also referred to *Bhai* (brother).

Management of Specific Processes: The national curriculum prepared by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is followed in both the schools. Brac prepared textbooks are used for the first three grades and NCTB prepared textbooks are used for remaining two. In addition, a number of supplementary reading materials made by Brac are given to the learners of each grade.

The teachers and the students are, in general, sincere in attending their classes on time. Although a few teachers and some students come to the centres 5-6 minutes later than the actual start time. Usually the centres start with physical exercise and recitation of the national anthem. The classrooms are neat and clean. The pupils living closer to the centres come earlier than others and assume the responsibility of cleaning the classrooms and surrounding areas everyday.

The teachers start each period by assessing what was taught in the previous day. A lecture method is primarily used to teach the students, however, group work, peer work, question answer, demonstration, etc. are often used as needed. Most of the teachers are good in teaching and were prepared through continuous training by the POs. The teachers prepare lesson plans everyday and use teaching aids. Classroom teaching is mostly pupil centric and the teachers are able to reach each of the learners. This is primarily because of small class size and secondly due to the system itself. The teachers are very careful in ensuring participation of all the students in every event in the class activities. If the teachers are not able to teach everyone equally, they often stay in the centre for some additional time to provide extra care to the weaker students. The teachers are expected to do so especially for the pupils of grades IV and V. Homework is given regularly, especially for mathematics and handwriting. Considering parents educational status there is no new work is provided for home learning. Pupils are only asked to redo work at home that they have already done in the classroom.

In order to repeat the lessons that are taught in the usual class time and do the homework, the pupils are accustom to getting together for peer group learning after school hours. A small group of five to six learners living closer to each other get together at a convenient place. The respective teacher often visits them and provides help as needed. Weaker students can learn from the good students in these sessions. These sessions are popularly known as a study circle.

There is no provision of mid-term or final examinations in any of these schools. The teachers continuously assess the students while they teach. Moreover, the POs do some random assessment in order to understand the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Box 4. A science class in a Brac school

In a science class of grade V the teacher is teaching about plants. She has started the class by asking the students some general questions relevant to the topic. The students replied spontaneously – the boys are more responsive than the girls. However, the teacher noticed this and invited some girls to respond to her questions. She also showed various types of real plants to the students, although none of these plants were new to them. Then the teacher asked the students to open their textbook and read out the chapter one by one. She often stopped the students to discuss the issue. In this case, she also tried to involve the students of both sexes equally. After that activity was complete, the teacher divided the learners into five groups and asked them to read from the textbook. At this stage the field researcher asked the teacher about the grouping system. The teacher said, "I am trying to distribute both strong and weaker students in each group and also to ensure a proportionate share of boys and girls in the groups." It was observed that the strong students did help the slower learners. The teacher moved from one group to another and helped them to understand the topic. The students identified some difficult words and the teacher helped them understand the words. Later the teacher asked questions to the students to assess whether or not they understood and have learned about the plant. Some students could not reply correctly. The teacher helped them to understand by discussing the topic again. The teacher advised the learners to read this chapter again at home and told them she would ask these questions again the next day. The field researcher observed that majority of the students have learned the lesson. The period lasted one hour and five minutes.

Day to day management of the learning centres falls upon the teachers, while the POs have a supervisory role. However, the teachers and the PO are collectively responsible for school management. As already mentioned, the monthly refresher training, weekly centre visits by the POs, and the provision of feedback to the teachers is the main factors in good quality of the schools.

The teachers report to the POs and the POs to the team-in-charges. There is no regular teacher meeting. However, all teachers dealing with the learners of a certain grade meet together once a month for refresher training. Thus, the teachers under various POs can meet during monthly training. The refresher training courses are very important in the Brac school system. The teachers prepare for the following month through these trainings. Strengths and weaknesses gathered through the POs month long observation of the classroom teaching is discussed in the refresher training and used for further development of the teachers.

Community participation is a necessary part of Brac school operation. It is difficult to run Brac schools without continuous support from the communities. The parents and others in the communities actively participate in school activities. The learning centres are situated in rented houses – without support from the communities it was not possible for Brac to rent these houses. In some cases, by request from Brac

the people have built new houses and rented them to Brac in order to establish learning centres. The parents committees carefully oversee the activities of the teachers, especially their timely presence in the centres and the use of time effectively. The learning centres receive toilet and drinking water facilities from nearby houses. The POs and teachers have a good relationship with the parents. The teachers are recruited from the villages, so the community knows them beforehand. The POs also know many of the students and parents personally. The parents sometimes visit the centres to talk with the teachers or the POs. An example of one such visit is given in Box 5.

Box 5. A mother's visit to a Brac school

A mother came to visit a centre, where her daughter is a student. On seeing the mother, the teacher greeted her first. Their conversation was as follows:

Teacher: "Hi aunt! As-salamu-alikum. How are you doing?"

Mother: (with joy) "Wa-likum-assalam, I am fine. What about you? My daughter did not attend the afternoon group learning yesterday. Because she had to help me with household work."

Teacher: "That's all right! I would take care of her."

Mother: "Thank you very much for your kindness."

Teacher: "But remember, don't allow her to miss it again. Please, be careful about not disturbing her schooling. Your daughter has a good brain. She will do better in future."

Mother: "Your good wish will help her a lot."

The mother and the teacher talked about various social issues for about two to three minutes and as the mother left the school she said "good bye" to the teacher. The teacher requested the mother to come again.

Relations with Administration: Except for a few management decisions at the grassroots level major decisions regarding management, administration, pedagogy and finance of the schools come from a higher level. Thus, there is little or no autonomy regarding these issues at the PO or the centre level. The POs and the teachers can only take measures regarding class time, class routine, etc. Neither the POs nor the teachers are autonomous in financial matters. The POs can sanction leave of the teachers and both the POs are independent in taking decision about the supervision time of the centres, monthly refresher training, parents meeting, etc.

The weekly staff meeting is an activity at the team level in which all the POs under a team participate. The objective of this meeting is to review the activities of the week and plan for the week ahead. It is not a problem for the POs to discuss any issue with the respective team-in-charge, as they all share the same office. The POs

prepare bi-weekly status report on their schools for their team-in-charges. This report is also send to the respective regional managers.

At the regional level, the regional managers (RMs) are responsible for the administrative duties and the quality assurance specialists are responsible for the pedagogical aspects. Both of them visit the schools. The monthly meeting of the RMs is held in Dhaka where they review the existing activities and plan for the future at the national level. The regional managers enjoy some autonomy regarding decisions at the team and school levels. They can appoint teachers and transfer POs within the region. The team-in-charges enjoy autonomy regarding team activities. Unlike to the government schools, none of the team-in-charges, regional managers or the quality assurance specialists pays special attention to the study schools.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident from the above findings that the schools, whether government or Brac operated, have their own method of being successful. The start-up of the two government schools differ from one another – one has the active leadership of a new head teacher and the other is under the initiative of a divisional assistant director of the primary education department. However, they have two common features – firstly, both the schools started with community mobilisation, and secondly, two experienced head teachers were involved in the initiatives from the beginning. On the other hand, the Brac schools are operated through a structured system where rigorous monitoring of the central management exists. Both Brac schools simultaneously prepared the teachers and engaged the parents in school activities.

The role of the head teachers is very important in the improvement of government schools. On the other hand, it is the teachers and the programme organisers who jointly play key roles in Brac school development. However, in both the systems, the parents and the community participated actively in the improvement process of the schools. It was possible for the particular head teachers and the programme organisers to play such a role because of their personality, honesty and devotion to education. They are good teachers and care for the education of others. They know how to make others active and capable. Although, at the beginning, good teachers were brought to the government schools, during the last few years a culture of creating good teachers has begun in one school and a positive sign of such an atmosphere can also be seen in the other school. Otherwise, in both the Brac schools, the programme organisers had to spend month after month preparing the teachers. There is no provision for transferring the teachers from one school to another in Brac system. One government school head teacher's over night staying in the school premises is a significant event in the school development process.

Classroom performance of the teachers is excellent in all four successful schools under study. Teaching is mostly pupil centric and the teachers use teaching aids as and when necessary. The teachers take care of the pupils as much as possible in the

classroom and they are also aware that a good proportion of their pupils are first generation learners who need special care and attention. However, because of a higher student teacher ratio, it is more difficult to do this in the government schools than it is in the Brac schools. The schools have initiated teaching beyond official school hours, which is helpful for the slow learners and those having no one to oversee their education at home. In Brac schools, the students meet in study circle in the afternoon or the evening, and morning and evening classes have been arranged in one of the government schools. The provision of volunteer teachers in one government school and SMC members taking classes in another can be considered as good practice.

The Brac schools are under close monitoring of the parents committee – the members do it in turn. The monthly parents' meeting ensures their participation and keeps them up to date on school activities. On the other hand, the managing committees are very active in the operation of the government schools. The committees meet regularly and actively participate in school activities. Unlike the Brac schools, the local elite is involved in the managing committees of the government schools and they often provide financial support to various activities of the schools. These schools also seek monetary support from other solvent persons in the community. An additional initiative of the government schools is income generation. Otherwise, it is totally prohibited in Brac schools to take financial support from the parents or the community, and do income generation. Thus, none of the study schools received any financial support other than from Brac central office. The schools have a good relationship with the higher authorities. Through this connection the government schools receive more visits from the education officials and financial benefit. However, none of these occurs in the Brac schools.

The successful government schools provide attention to two other things; preparation of the scholarship examinees and participation in cub and other cultural activities at the *upazila* level. Success in these areas brings a good name and fame for the schools. As these are very competitive, only a small number of the students are provided long term coaching by the best teachers of the schools. Thus, other students may be deprived at this. Here the question of equity comes to play. It should be a serious concern of the schools to provide quality education to all the students.

It is difficult to develop policy recommendations from only four cases. However, it is apparent that these successful schools are much more responsive than others in providing quality education to the learners and general improvements to the schools. In order to accomplish this they have taken certain initiatives, which are distinct in nature and can also be tried in other schools. At the same time it should be recognised that each school has its own distinct features and thus has its own method of success. The followings are some policy suggestions for the schools in general:

1. *Only those good in teaching should be appointed as head teachers or programme organisers. Strong managerial and administrative capacity of them is essential.* Characteristics of a good school head include a capacity to teach in the classrooms and a very good understanding of the curriculum and textbooks. The heads/POs of the study schools played a key role in all school activities. It may not be possible for a head to set an example for other teachers without having such qualities and it may be necessary for the junior teachers to see someone in front of them doing things correctly. A good head teacher can play this role through his/her presence in the school.

   It is the head teacher or the programme organiser who leads the smooth operation of a school. This capacity can be built primarily through specific training on school management, educational administration, etc. More can be learned through practical experience. At present there is no recognised position of assistant head teacher in any government primary school. *It is important to create assistant head teacher posts in the government schools*. The head teacher's personal characteristics are also important for strong management of schools.

2. *Observation of classroom teaching and feedback to the respective teachers should be a regular task of the head teachers and the POs*. This has several implications. Firstly, it is helpful for the head teacher/PO to be updated on the performances of the teachers and take initiative to correct mistakes. Secondly, regular monitoring by the head teacher ensures school discipline. The head teacher can provide feedback informally to the teachers individually. Brac schools have a similar system in place, which provides significant improvements to the schools, even though daily observation is not possible.

3. *Each school should prepare an annual plan at the beginning of the academic year; a regular staff meeting should be arranged at the school level.* Brac schools are lacking in both these areas. The teachers need to formally exchange their views on the activities of the previous week and take decision accordingly, and planning for the next week can be accomplished in this meeting. Issues affecting the students, the teachers or the school in general can be considered for discussion in weekly meetings.

4. *Steps should be taken to reduce the teacher student ratio in government schools – this would help in taking care of slow and first generation learners.* It was observed that the teachers do not get much time to prepare for a class, since, in most cases they are taking on 6-8 classes daily. Large class size is another problem in teaching the learners equally. If the number of teachers can be increased the class size would automatically be reduced. This may create opportunity for the teachers to take care of every learner. In order to make up with the scarcity of teachers, volunteer teachers can be considered for the time being. Financial requirements of this may be a barrier for the schools, a place where the community could intervene.

5. *Schools should take an initiative to ensure community participation in school activities and accountability to the communities*. Community participation can help in many ways by ensuring access of all children to school, providing material and financial support, requiring responsibility at the household level to name a few. Schools accountability to the community can help keep school on the right track in achieving this.

6. *Each school should have its own source of regular income with a transparent accounting system.* Both the government schools studied have some source of regular income, which helps them in their development activities. Payment of volunteer teachers, expenses for co-curricular activities and incentives to the students and teachers can be accomplished easily if there is some source of regular income for the schools. However, in order to maintain transparency, a small sub-committee of SMC members, teachers and parents is needed to oversee the fund. Better school community relationship can be helpful in this regard. If community participation can be ensured in school activities, solving financial problems is easier to accomplish.

7. *Increased monitoring and supervision of Upazila Education Office should be ensured. AUEOs capacity in pedagogical supervision needs to be increased*. Although the *upazila* education officials do not provide any pedagogical supervision, their regular presence is important for better operation of the schools. The AUEOs visited these successful schools more than was expected, and it was also observed that the *upazila* offices provided more support to these schools, most likely at the expense of other schools, which should not occur. *The government should allocate more resources to the upazilas and these should then be allocated to the schools as per their need and performance*.

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MANAGEMENT IN SUCCESSFUL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the factors relating to successful school management at the secondary level in Bangladesh. Using both qualitative and quantitative research techniques four case studies were prepared on four secondary schools located in urban, sub-urban and rural areas. Three of these schools are non-government and the remaining one is government. The respective communities initiated the non-government schools and the education department initiated the government school. Thus the school managing committees and the parents in general have contributed enormously to the success of the non-government schools. The non-government schools have a separate school managing committee, which the government school does not have. The leadership of the head teachers in all the four schools is significant, as they play the central role in all activities of the schools. They are committed, motivated and dynamic. A participatory and transparent system has made school management efficient and effective. Except for one, none of the schools have a mission statement or school development plan. The head teachers also identified some challenges before them. Thus, there is potential for improvement. A number of policy suggestions have been made to this end.

Key words: School management, secondary education, leadership, head teacher, Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Management of school is instrumental to its quality. School management is the outcome of the functioning of a number of factors – both in-school and out-of-school. Successful school management is the concerted effort of all these factors or inputs. But the single most important and hence the most critical input is the head teacher. The head teacher is central to in-school management and also the bridge between in-school management and the management structure outside the school. So, the issue of improving school management boils down to a considerable extent to building the capacity of head teachers.

However, a head teacher alone cannot make a school successful – s/he needs both internal and external support. Students and the teachers are two groups of people who play a vital role in in-school management. Moreover, the school managing committee, the community and the system managers are very relevant to the external management of the schools. In an ideal case all these elements go along with the leadership of the head teacher in ensuring good school management and delivery of quality education.

Secondary education management

In Bangladesh, a seven-year cycle of secondary education for those children from 11-17 years old is divided into three stages. These are junior secondary (for grades VI-VIII), secondary (for grades IX-X), and higher secondary (grades XI-XII). It has three major streams: general, technical-vocational and religious. The general stream is taught in the government and non-government secondary schools, the technical-vocational stream is taught in the technical and vocational schools and the remaining one is taught in the dakhil madrassas. The large majority of the institutions (98%) at secondary and higher secondary education levels are non-governmental and constitute the mainstream. It may be mentioned that 90% of the basic salary of the teaching and non-teaching staff of the non-government schools are provided by the government, which is cent percent for the government schools. Over 8.9 million students are currently enrolled in 21,557 secondary level educational institutions. The number of teachers in these institutions is 230,791(BANBEIS 2002).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is the policy making body and also the apex body for educational administration, management and planning for the secondary and higher education levels. A Minister assisted by a State Minister heads the MoE. The Ministry executes its functions through the secretariat, which is headed by a Secretary of the government. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) assists the Secretariat in implementing government policy and planning. The DSHE is responsible for the followings – (i) project planning and implementation; (ii) payment of salary subvention to teachers and employees of the non-government institutions; (iii) recruitment, appointment, transfer and promotion of teachers and non-teaching staff of government schools; and (iv) overall responsibility for ensuring quality and enforcement of academic standards. At the central level the DSHE has a Director General, four Directors and a number of other officials. It has zonal and district level offices as well. Each zonal office is comprised of a Deputy Director (DD) and a number of School Inspectors. The District offices are headed by District Education Officers (DEOs) who are assisted by the respective Assistant District Education Officers (ADEO). The DEOs and ADEOs perform the function of academic supervision. There are some staff organisations, which extend support to the administrative functions of DSHE, each of which has specific functions.

Curriculum development and the publication of textbooks are the functions of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). Six Education Boards called the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) and one Madrassa

Education Board (MEB) are responsible for accreditation of non-government secondary education institutions and administration of public examinations. These Boards are autonomous bodies. There is a Directorate of Inspection and Audit (DIA) to inspect the schools to ensure mainly financial accountability. The National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) provides training and research support to the teachers and education functionaries. The Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) offer undergraduate and postgraduate level courses.

One important feature of the management of non-government secondary schools is school-based management through the School Managing Committees (SMC). These committees are responsible for all management issues except academic matters. The head teacher is the academic head of the school and the Member Secretary of the School Managing Committee, which also includes teacher representatives as members. There is no such committee for the government secondary schools.

There is no public examination at the end of junior secondary level. The first public examination is held at the end of tenth grade and the second at the end of twelfth grade. These are the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) examinations. For internal evaluation of the pupils, schools take three term examinations for each grade.

The secondary schools in Bangladesh vary in several ways – pupils background, infrastructure and other physical facilities, resource mobilisation, teacher and teaching quality, community participation and hence pupils achievement in public examinations. Based on these indicators some schools can be treated as successful. The aim of this paper is to explore the management of successful secondary schools in Bangladesh.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective: As already mentioned, the main objective of this study is to explore the factors relating to successful school management at the secondary level in Bangladesh. The following are specific objectives in this regard:

i. Analyse in-school management focusing on the role of head teacher;
ii. Identify successful management determinants – both in-school and out-of-school;
iii. Understand the dynamics of community participation in improving school quality;
iv. Assess the importance of school evaluation mechanisms in establishing school accountability;
v. Identify the distinctive characteristics of successful school heads;
vi. Furnish a base for policy actions for improving the quality of education through the improvement of management practices; and
vii. Examine the extent to which the head teacher and the in-school management conform to the principles and functions of management as enunciated in the theoretical literature.

School selection: Of the three streams at secondary level only the general stream was considered for this study. However, the schools were selected from various locations. These are rural, urban and sub-urban. Both government and non-government schools were covered. The following five performance indicators were considered in selecting the schools:

i. Achieving 'A' grade in the last three years of evaluation;
ii. Success rate higher than the national average in the public examination;
iii. Higher promotion and lower repetition rates;
iv. Dropout rate below the national average; and
v. Good reputation of the school in the locality and at the national level.

A list of the schools fulfilling the first criterion was prepared first, and then divided into four groups – urban government, urban non-government, rural non-government and sub-urban non-government. It was thought that only the schools having an 80% success rate would be considered for the second stage of selection, but this was not possible due to lower pass rates in the rural and suburban areas. Thus, the schools of the first two groups with an 80% success rate, and 65% and 50% for the third and fourth groups respectively were considered to shorten the previous four lists of schools. At this stage, four schools from the above four groups were selected considering the suitability of fieldwork. Information on promotion, repetition and dropout rates of the students of these four schools shows that the promotion rates are far above and the repetition and dropout rates are far below the national averages. The schools are also termed as “good” schools by the community. For confidentiality reason, instead of the real names of the schools, the selected schools will be named after the sub-districts (*upazilas*) where these are located. The selected schools are, Motijheel government school, Uttara non-government school, Savar non-government school, and Chunarughat non-government school.

General approach: Four independent and in-depth case studies were prepared for the four selected schools. Both primary and secondary data were resorted for this. For primary data, a number of respondent groups were considered. Existing literature on school management, available school profiles, and other school documents were reviewed as secondary sources. The researchers attempted to cover all major events that take place in the schools throughout the whole academic year.

The respondent groups: Data were collected from five respondent groups in three non-government schools, including the head teacher, the teachers (including the assistant head teacher), the learners, the school managing committee members, and the parents. As there is no managing committee in the government school, the other four respondent groups were considered instead.

The head teachers of all four schools were interviewed several times through questionnaire. The teachers profile was collected from office records, attendance registers were scanned to examine their attendance, and teaching capacity was evaluated through classroom observations. A sample of 8-10 teachers in each

school was randomly selected to collect data relating to the management of specific relations, and external supervision and support. Teachers who have been serving the schools since inception or for a long period (3-4 in each school) were interviewed to know the historical background of the schools.

Review of office records such as the attendance register, result sheets of internal and public examinations and pupil admission registers provided data on the pupils. For other data on the pupils a sample of learners were chosen from each school (comprising 70-117 learners of grades VI-X). Learners of the primary classes were not included in the sample, as they were considered too young to fill in a questionnaire.

Focus group discussions were arranged separately for the school managing committee members and the parents. Seven to nine members were present in each FGD of the managing committees, and 10-12 parents were present in each parent FGD.

The instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire, interview schedule and checklists for observation and focus group discussion. Information gathered through observation were utilised for triangulation of data collected through other methods. The researchers themselves collected all information through several visits to the schools and the communities – each of them was responsible for one school. The number of visits in each school ranged between 21 and 35. The fieldwork was done from June to November 2003.

FINDINGS

The School Profile

As already mentioned, of the four study schools one is government and three are non-government. The government school is located in the urban area and the non-government schools in urban, suburban and rural areas. The schools vary not only in location but also in other educational and non-educational factors.

Establishment of the schools: The schools were established in different years and in various ways. The non-governmental schools were established with the initiative of the communities and the government school by the State. Of these schools, Chunarughat is the oldest, established in 1928. On request from the community, a local landlord founded the school and the school was named after his father. Although it was started as a co-education school with only 4-5 pupils, the school is presently (2003) a boys' school with 615 pupils and 20 teachers. The University of Calcutta accredited it as a secondary school in 1940. This school is about 200 km away from the capital city of Dhaka. The Uttara school, which is 18 km from the centre of Dhaka, was established in 1983 through the initiative of the community. The school was started with only five pupils and four teachers in a small space rented from another secondary school in the area. It passed through many challenges to come to its present position. The School Managing Committee

formed in 1984 and manned by dynamic, well-off and philanthropic persons contributed greatly to the formation of the school. The Savar school was established two years after the Uttara school. This school was started as a junior secondary school with 80 students and six teachers. Seven years after its initiation, it was accredited as a secondary school in 1992. At present it has 731 students and 16 teachers. This school is 40 km away from Dhaka.

Unlike the above three schools, the Motijheel school was established by the government in the capital city of Dhaka with a mission of creating productive and patriotic citizens for the country. The school serves an urban middle class community having socio-cultural and religious homogeneity, but difference in occupation and profession. Table 1 presents some basic information about the schools under study.

Table 1. Some basic information about the schools

Indicators	Schools			
	Uttara	Savar	Chunarughat	Motijheel
Year of establishment	1983	1985	1928	1957
Enrolment at the beginning	5	80	5	-
Number of shift	2	1	1	2
Grades	I–X	VI–X	VI–X	I–X
Number of pupils at present	3417	731	615	2213
Percentage of girls	47.8	43.6	nil	Nil
Learner groups	53	11	14	32
Number of classroom	39	12	16	27
Number of teachers	76	16	20	55
Percentage of female teachers	28.9	12.5	nil	49.0
Teacher pupil ratio	1:45	1:46	1:31	1:40

Infrastructure: At present, all four schools are situated on their own lands. Uttara school has 2.3 acres of land, Chunarughat school has 4.79 acres, and Motijheel has 7.83 acres. The present infrastructure facilities adequately accommodate the pupils, teachers and all teaching-learning and co-curricular activities of the schools. For instance, the Uttara school has a total of 39 classrooms, Chunarughat has 16, Savar has 12 and Motijheel school has 27 classrooms. Each classroom is equipped with adequate sitting arrangements and teaching-learning materials. Separate rooms for the head teacher and assistant head teacher, and teachers' common rooms are found in three schools – Uttara, Chunarughat and Motijheel. The Savar school has a teachers' common room only. Only the two city schools have library, science and computer laboratories, while the other two have spaces specified for the purposes, they don't have any separate room for this. Playground, drinking water and

sanitation facilities are adequate in all four schools. In addition, the Uttara school has a small cafeteria, Chunarughat has a students' hostel and a mosque in the school compound, and the Motijheel school has an auditorium. Surroundings of all the four schools are very good.

The learners: Uttara and Motijheel schools run for the students of grades I-X, however the other two schools are for grades VI-X. The former two are double shift schools and the later two are single shift schools. The schools provide single stream education up to grade VIII and three streams of education afterwards – science, arts and business studies. The number of students varies from school to school and so do the number of teachers. The Uttara school has the highest number of students (3417) followed by Motijheel (2213), Savar (731) and Chunarughat (615). The proportion of girls is 47.8% in Uttara school and 43.6% in Savar. Chunarughat and Motijheel schools are for boys only. The number of learner groups is 53 in Uttara, 32 in Motijheel, 14 in Chunarughat and 11 in Savar. Thus, the average class size is over 60 in Uttara, Savar and Motijheel and below 45 in the Chunarughat school. The numbers of teachers are more than the number of learner groups in all four schools. Therefore, the teacher pupil ratio is much less than the actual class size. Break-up by grade shows that the learners are mostly homogeneous in terms of age in three schools. Some degree of heterogeneity is seen in Motijheel school, the range of variation being three years in almost every grade. Although the official age for grade I is six, in the two urban schools, which have a primary section, pupils below six constitute the majority.

Regarding economic background, the learners of the two urban schools (Motijheel and Uttara) come from comparatively well-off families having parents who are mostly service holders. Nearly two thirds of the parents of learners in these two schools are service holders and 27-32% are businesspersons. The rest are engaged in various types of economic activities. About a third of the parents of learners in the suburban school (Savar) are service holders, 54% are businesspersons and 14% are engaged in agriculture. In Chunarughat, agricultural activities are the sources of income of almost all parents. As income from this source is inadequate most of the parents (72% of the fathers and 28% of the mothers) are engaged in lower subordinate services with various government and non-government agencies. Educational level of the parents of the two urban schools is higher than that of the other two schools. Eighty-two percent of the fathers and 43% of the mothers in one urban school, and 91% of the fathers and 65% of the mothers in the other urban school have at least a graduate level of education. Fifteen percent of the parents of the pupils of Savar school have this level of education.

Seventy-seven percent of the pupils of one urban school and 81% of other live within three kilometres of the school, while the remaining lives within five kilometres. The pupils of the other two schools live within a distance of one to two kilometres from the school and almost all of them come to the school on foot. On an average, learner absenteeism in these schools range between 15%-20%. The reasons cited have been sickness, inclement weather and family problems. The

teachers said that the absenteeism increases at the beginning of the academic year and during post examination periods.

The teachers: Table 1 shows that the schools vary with the number of teachers. The highest number of teachers is in Uttara (76) and the lowest is in Savar (16). About half of the teachers of the Motijheel school are female. Thus, the rate of female teachers is 28.9% in Uttara and 12.5% in Savar. There is no female teacher in the Chunarughat school. The teachers of the schools vary by age. Fifty-five percent of the teachers in the Chunarughat school and over two thirds of the teachers in the remaining three schools are below 45 years. A small portion of the teachers in all the schools is over 55 years of age.

A good proportion of the teachers of Motijheel, Savar and Uttara schools have Masters degree – 43%, 45% and 58% of the total number of teachers in the schools respectively. On the other hand, none of the teachers in Chunarughat have a Masters level education – 35% of the teachers in this school have a bachelor degree and 20% has a diploma in technical-vocational education. All the teachers in the two urban and the suburban schools are trained – over 80% of the teachers in these three schools have either BEd or MEd degree and the others have training in physical education or educational management. Nearly 45% of the teachers of the Chunarughat school have no training at all.

All the teachers in these schools are full time and have permanent posting. Teachers having up to five years of teaching experience vary between 25-42% and those having more than 20 years of experience vary between 5-36% in the four schools. A small portion of teachers in the non-government schools has been teaching in the same school from the inception of the school. Workload of the teachers is not equal. They are involved in teaching, coaching and co-curricular activities. The majority of the teachers in these schools have a teaching workload of 3-5 hours daily. Each teacher spends 1-4 hours per week for co-curricular activities.

Over 80% of the teachers of the three non-government schools live in the nearby areas; this is only 15% for the government school. Teachers in the urban schools are less involved in community activities than those in the suburban and rural schools. Involvement refers to participating in local literacy programs, relief work during disaster, resolving local dispute, cleanliness drive, etc.

Teaching learning conditions: The numbers of classrooms in all four schools are more than the numbers of learner groups, which means there is no inadequacy of classrooms. Classrooms are airy and hygienic, and have adequate light and favourable surroundings. The classrooms in the urban schools seemed to be a bit congested, a little more space would make the learners more comfortable. The average pupil-teacher ratio varies among the schools – the lowest was calculated in Chunarughat school (1:31) and the highest in the Savar school (1:46). These averages hide the real classroom situation. For example, in Uttara school, the smallest class size is 49 and the highest is 84 while in Motijheel school, these are

50 and 110 respectively. Contact hours vary from five to six hours with half an hour to an hour break for assembly and recess. The duration of the teaching periods vary between 30 and 50 minutes in all the schools.

Classroom equipments like benches, blackboards, chalk and dusters are adequate in all four schools. Maps, charts, globes etc. are kept in the teachers' rooms of two schools and are used when required. In the other schools, these items are kept in the classrooms. NCTB prepared curriculum, syllabus and teachers' guides are made available to the teachers by the school authority. Teachers' guides are not widely used in two schools. Laboratory equipments and materials are adequate in all the four schools. The learner textbook ratio is 1:1 and so is the ratio with other reading and writing materials. The two urban schools have computer labs where the teachers as well as the students have access. The sub-urban and rural schools have one computer each to be used for official purpose only.

Teaching-learning process: All the teachers of the Motijheel school and 85% of those of the Savar school prepare lesson plan regularly and teach accordingly. The teachers hardly prepare lesson plans in the other two schools. However, teaching is structured in all four schools. At the start of the period most of the teachers review the previous lesson, brief the learners about the day's lesson, and then start teaching. They also try to understand the level of learning of the pupils through questions from the lesson imparted. Class work is assigned particularly for mathematics.

The teachers generally follow lecture and question-answer methods while teaching. However, in focus group discussion they claimed that they use other methods but this is not the case in reality for majority. Teaching is learner centred and sometimes interactive. In most cases one-way deliberations occur. Two-way interaction happens when the teacher asks questions and the students are to provide answers. Learners do not talk much in the classrooms. Learners asking questions were found in only 10% of the classrooms observed. However, the teachers were found to encourage the learners to come up with queries.

The learner groups are created based on student performance in the previous annual examination. This ensures heterogeneity among the learners within group and homogeneity among groups of the same grade. The sitting arrangement however is such that the best learners generally occupy the seats in the front rows. Measures taken for slow learners are limited in all the schools studied. Class work and homework are regularly assigned. The teachers check these with adequate attention and return to the learners for their and their parents' perusal.

In addition to the three terminal examinations, three schools have introduced class tests in between the terminal examinations. The scores obtained by the learners in these tests are added to those obtained in the terminal examinations. Thus, a cumulative assessment is done, meaning that the scores in all the terminals and class tests are added to produce annual performance. There is a very strong feedback system in all four schools. The checked answer scripts are returned to the learners. They then have them checked and signed by their parents and submit to

the teachers. If there is any objection regarding the scores awarded, the learners and their parents can meet the teachers to have the matter settled. Table 2 shows that the schools are very good according to various performance indicators.

Table 2. The schools by various performance indicators

Indicators	Schools			
	Uttara	Savar	Chunarughat	Motijheel
Average percentage of repeaters	5-7	10-12	1	1
Dropout rate (%)	Nil	4-5	5	1
Transition rate from primary to secondary (%)	100	na	na	100
Success rate at SSC, 1998-2003 (%)	97-100	67	53	91-95
National success rate, 1998-2003 (%)	35-54	45	45	35-54

na = not applicable

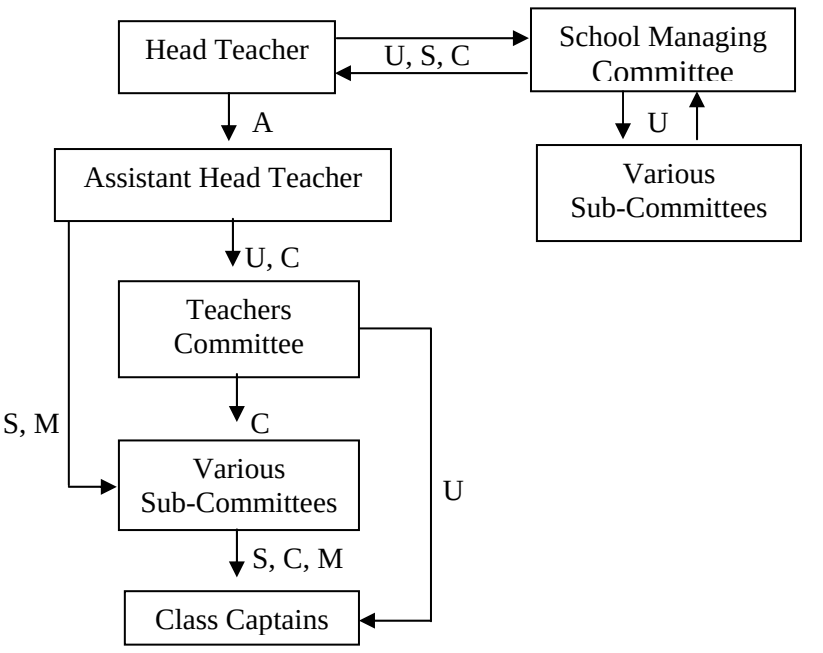
School Management Structure and Organisation

Generally the head teacher along with the assistant head teacher and the SMC are responsible for the management of non-government secondary schools. Senior teachers also come within the purview of the management in large schools. According to the Managing Committee of the Recognised Non-government Secondary Schools Regulations 1977, a managing committee comprising 11 members is to be elected for each school. It includes a chairperson, the member secretary, two teacher representatives, four parents, one founder member, one donor member, and one person nominated by the zonal deputy director of secondary education. The chairperson is nominated by the respective Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), the head teacher is the member secretary (ex-officio), teacher representatives are elected by the teachers from among themselves, parent members are elected by the parents, and so on. The committee has the power to: (i) raise and manage funds; (ii) appoint, suspend, dismiss and remove teachers subject to prior approval of BISE; (iii) grant leave to teachers other than casual leave (iv) approve the annual budget; (v) make provisions for all physical facilities and teaching materials; and (vi) ensure regular payment of salaries and allowances to the teachers and other employees. The head teacher, however, is in charge of the school funds, all legal documents and all other records relating to the school. The Regulations declare the head teacher as the "academic head" of the school in the day to day administration and any matter relating to the academic affairs of the school with which the "members of the committee shall not interfere." The secondary schools under study have their own

ways of managing the schools internally within the framework of the relevant rules and regulations.

Following the broader framework of rules and regulations of the government, mostly a similar type of in-school management structure is followed in all four schools. However, slight deviation was noticed in this regard. The head teachers are at the centre of all in-school management. They are also the member secretaries of the school managing committees. In case of double shift schools (Uttara and Motijheel) the respective assistant head teacher assists the head teacher during his/her tenure. Figure 1 presents the in-school management structure of the study schools at a glance.

Figure 1. In-school management structure of the study schools



Notes: A = All schools, U = Uttara school, S = Savar school, C = Chunarughat school, and M = Motijheel school

A number of sub-committees have been formed in all the study schools to perform various aspects of school management. The number of such committees varies from one school to the other. For instance, there are seven sub-committees in each of Uttara and Motijheel, and five in Chunarughat. Three sub-committees are common in all the schools – these are academic, disciplinary and internal audit. The non-government schools have a financial sub-committee, which the

government school does not – instead, it has a budget sub-committee. Each school has sub-committees with different names for cultural and co-curricular activities. For instance, the Uttara school has one sub-committee called 'literature and culture', while the Motijheel school has two committees for this – one is a co-curricular sub-committee and the other is a debate sub-committee. Each of these committees comprises three or four teachers. A number of observations can be made regarding the formation of these committees, which varies from school to school. For instance, the SMC forms the sub-committees in the Uttara school and the head teachers in other schools. Again, in Uttara, one SMC member is attached with each sub-committee, who acts as the convenor. On the other hand, in the other schools there is no place for SMC members in the sub-committees and one senior teacher heads each sub-committee. Chunarughat school formed a small committee of senior teachers, which plays a kind of advisory role to the head teacher. In Chunarughat, this committee is placed in between the assistant head teacher and the sub-committees. The above description clearly shows that the teachers in all the four schools are involved in various aspects of school management.

The learners are also partners in the management of the schools. They actively take part in the management of classroom and co-curricular activities. The class teachers, from each learner group, select two to three pupils based on their good performances in internal examinations and leadership quality. They are popularly called 'class captains'. These captains assist the teachers in maintaining classroom discipline, and organizing co-curricular activities. They inform the teachers and head teachers of any untoward event or any activity of any learner, which is harmful to other learners. In maintaining the overall discipline of the school boy scouts and girl guides assist the teacher-in-charge. They also help in organizing annual cultural competition and sports. They have a role in ensuring the cleanliness of the school. The teachers feel that this participation is needed for growing leadership qualities among the pupils and also helps the teachers in ensuring efficiency of management. This should continue, but the schools do not have any plan to widen learners' participation in school activities

Each non-government school has a separate appointment committee. The appointment committees appoint the teachers and other non-teaching staff. Placement, development and evaluation are done by the head teachers. No formal teacher evaluation exists in the three non-government schools. The head teachers do teacher supervision. The teachers in all four schools are punctual. The head teachers are very particular about this. Attendance register of the teachers is maintained in all schools. Teacher motivation is provided through giving general increments and festival bonus in Uttara, and festival bonus and free education for children in Savar. In Motijheel, the teachers are sent to participate in training/workshop/seminar as a means of motivation. Oral appreciation and recognition for good work is used in all the schools.

Class routine and academic calendar are instruments for curriculum and pedagogue management. The daily activities in the schools centre round the class routines. The academic committee in all four schools monitor the implementation of the

class routines. In general, no class in these four schools goes without a teacher. There is a stopgap arrangement in two schools – Uttara and Motijheel. The assistant head teachers in these schools, at the start of the day, collect names of absent teachers, find out teachers with leisure period and assign them the classes of the absentees. Teacher, classroom and school supervision by the head teachers and assistant head teachers take a considerable proportion of their daily working hour. Meetings of different committees and staff meetings provide the directions.

Class work and homework are extensive and individualized feedback is given to the pupils in these schools. One school introduced tutorial and class tests, and two schools use class tests in between terms. The scores obtained in all types of examinations and tests are added to obtain the final result. The Uttara School has introduced coding of the answer scripts in order to ensure an un-bias assessment. Parents are informed and given suggestions on ways of improving for slow learners. Co-curricular activities are more pronounced in the Motijheel and Uttara schools. These two schools have teachers specifically designated for cultural activities.

Financial management is the responsibility of the finance/budget/purchase committees. Preparation of budget, making purchases, monitoring accounts, maintaining different account books, raising funds are the responsibilities of these committees. The schools demonstrate some innovation in financial management. In Uttara, the tuition fee has been increased twice during the last three years, which enhanced the school fund considerably. The school also introduced a building charge to finance construction. The Savar school has explored new sources of fund raising such as leasing in a local hat, renting out rooms etc. The government school only executes the budget allocated by the government.

Finance, project and security sub-committee in Uttara, SMC in Savar, a committee headed by the assistant head teacher in Chunarughat, and the concerned committee in Motijheel are responsible for the management of physical resources. The committees procure and allocate funds for construction, maintenance, repair, renovation, and security of the physical resources.

The parents and the community are involved in the management process through the SMCs. A parent teacher association is present only in Savar school and it is not very active. The Uttara school observes a parents' day twice a year and the Motijheel school has parent teacher meeting three times a year. Parents are less interested in school affairs in Chunarughat – a small portion of the parents attend in a parent teacher meeting organized by the school authority.

Head Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities

In-school management comprise the SMC and the head teacher. Other teachers and even learners are partners in management, but the centrality of the head teacher to the management scenario of the school features prominently as he is both a part of the SMC and also the academic leader of the school. The head teachers in the study

schools have been playing very dynamic role in their respective schools. Before presenting their roles and responsibilities let us provide their profile (Table 3).

The head teachers of the three non-government schools are all male and over 50 years of age. On the other hand, the head teacher of the government school is a female of 40 years of age. The heads of the Uttara and Motijheel schools have Master's degrees and the other two have Bachelor's degrees. In addition to their general educational qualifications, the head of the Motijheel school received a Masters of Education (MEd) level training and the other three have received a Bachelor of Education (BEd) level training. Teaching experiences of the three non-government school head teachers are longer than that of the government school head. Only the head of the Chunarughat school has started his career with the present school, but the others came from other schools.

Table 3. The head teachers' profile

Characteristics	Schools			
	Uttara	Savar	Chunarughat	Motijheel
Age	52	56	58	40
Sex	Male	Male	Male	Female
Educational qualifications	MA	BA	BCom	MA
Training received	BEd	BEd	BEd	MEd
Years of experience as teacher	30	36	38	14
Duration in this school	7	1	38	1
Other achievements	Treasurer of regional scout committee	Chairman of Union *Parishad*	-	-

The Uttara school head teacher has subject training and he is the treasurer of the regional scout committee. He had no plan to become a schoolteacher, but now has grown a strong passion for teaching and school leadership. On the other hand, the Savar school head teacher was elected the Chairman of the local Union *Parishad* twice (for nine years). His experience as the peoples' representative and community leader helps him a lot in the successful running of the school. The Motijheel school head teacher has training on computer application, and curriculum and textbook preparation.

The head teacher of the Uttara school confidently terms his school as a "good" school, but he believes that there is still a long way to go. He justified his opinion by mentioning that teachers in his school are qualified and trained, physical facilities are very good, the teaching learning process is effective, and the success rate is high. The head teacher of the Savar school also terms his school as

"successful" compared to other secondary schools in the locality. The school was not in good shape when he joined. The head teacher identified the areas of intervention. He introduced changes in many areas of management. The head of the Motijheel school thinks her school is "very good" and that it has been a well-organized school since the beginning. The inputs and processes are very good, former students are contributing to the development of the country and learner performance in curricular and co-curricular activities are high. She attributes the efficiency of the school to the long-established work system and to teachers associated with the school for long periods. The head teacher of the Chunarughat school terms his school as a good one as the teacher quality, infrastructure, and the success rate are better and higher than many rural schools.

The head teacher at Uttara played a dynamic role in bringing success to the school. During his tenure of seven years in this school the following improvements have been made under his initiative.

- Number of classrooms increased from 7 to 28;
- Number of teachers increased from 26 to 76;
- Introduced transparent and competitive teacher appointment procedure;
- Delegated authority to the assistant head teachers;
- Introduced monthly staff meeting for sharing experiences and solving problems faced;
- Introduced monitoring of teacher attendance and classroom supervision by the assistant head teachers and himself;
- Stopped collection of tuition fees by the teachers to allow them more time for teaching;
- Introduced two class tests between the terminal examinations, and coding system for un-biased assessment of answer scripts;
- Established a strong feedback system (to the teachers by the head teacher and to the students by the teachers);
- Introduced debate as teaching period in the class routine;
- Increased school fund through enhancing tuition fees and building charges; and
- Strengthened scout activities in the school.

Upon joining to the school, the Savar school head teacher made a work plan for school development. The following are the steps taken by the present head teacher of Savar for quality improvement of the school.

- Started visiting the houses of the pupils in the evening and asked the assistant teachers to do the same. This created a great enthusiasm among the learners and the parents as well;
- Constructed a two-storied building and toilettes, sank a tube-well, and developed the playground;
- Ensured all utilities in the school;
- Recruited new teachers and provided in-house training and incentives to them;

- Enforced discipline, ensured timely and regular attendance of pupils and teachers;
- Ensured internal supervision by himself and the assistant head teacher;
- Introduced two class tests and tutorials between two terms as well as cumulative assessment system;
- Ensured supply of teaching learning materials;
- Diversified the sources of fund raising and also increased the amount.

The head teacher of the Motijheel school claimed that she took the following improvement measures that contributed to school improvement:

- Introduced three parent teacher meetings a year;
- Initiated sending the teachers for training on various issues;
- Ensured participatory management in school;
- Brought changes in the learner assessment system;
- Introduced class test in between the terminal examinations; and
- Ensured timely supply of laboratory equipments, furniture and teaching aids.

The majority of the teachers agreed with her, however they mentioned that the success also had to do with the long-established management system of the school.

The head teacher of the Chunarughat school at present strives to construct a new building, boundary wall, library and laboratory rooms. The parents and the community hold a very high opinion about him. The parents and the SMC are of the opinion that it is the capacity of the head teacher that brought the school success. He involves local people, if needed, to resolve any problem relating to the school. The head teacher works, on an average, for six hours a day. He considers his function to make the learners more attentive a priority. The challenge before him is to improve the quality of education.

The main challenge for the Uttara school, as the head teacher perceives it is to turn the school into an ideal example and improve the attainment level of the learners. He intends to do so through making the teaching learning more effective, introducing innovative teaching methods, and enhancing the motivation level of the teachers. The challenges that the Savar school faces, according to the head teacher, are accommodating an increasing number of pupils, constructing rooms for library, science and computer laboratories, and improving the relationship among stakeholders. The other challenges he mentioned are improving the academic environment, providing incentive to the teachers and enhancing the competitiveness of the school. The head teacher firmly believes in the participation of all stakeholders in school affairs for quality improvement. The head teacher perceives his role as both the administrative and the academic head and also as the trustee of the local community. He also perceives his role as one of an agent to implementing the government's educational plans. The head teacher of Uttara school perceives his role as the lead teacher and the chief executive of the school and says he has to strike a balance between the two. He also says that he is aware of the societal demand that the school will produce good and productive citizens for the country. The Motijheel school head teacher considers her priority functions

to be that of providing effective teaching herself and ensuring quality education to all learners.

The head teacher of the Uttara school identified teacher management as the most difficult area of management – as he said that a small portion close to 5% is always unmanageable. The main problem that the Savar school faces relates to the SMC. The illiterate members of the SMC pose a great problem for the head teacher. They create undue pressure on him in respect of some management issues. On the other hand, the head teacher of the Motijheel school identifies insufficient fund, large class size, inadequate furniture and equipment, lack of subject teachers and adolescence problems to be the most difficult areas of management. Box 1 shows a case of problems with adolescent pupils and an instance of participatory management.

Box 1. Head teacher dealing with adolescent problem in Motijheel school

One day while the respective researcher was discussing with the head teacher, she was informed that a group of 8-10 boys of two different grades played truant and were engaged in watching videos in a nearby shop. The head teacher stopped the discussion, sent two teachers to catch the boys and bring them back to school. On returning to school, they were identified and their parents were requested over telephone to come to the school. Most of the mothers turned up. The head teacher, in presence of the parents and some of the teachers, talked to the pupils. She displayed the attitude of a great motivator. The boys gave their word that they would not repeat the deed. Their parents, very much depressed, committed to give more attention to their sons. The pupils were warned that the incident would be recorded and a repetition of the same would lead to their expulsion from school.

The head teacher of Uttara school works for more than 12 hours a day, beyond office hours and even during weekends. On the other hand, the head of the Motijheel school works for ten hours a day and she had made the suggestion of having two head teachers for two shifts in her school. The head teacher of the Savar school works, on an average, nine hours a day.

The parents, SMC members and the majority of the teachers highly appreciated the dynamic leadership of the head teachers of the Uttara and Savar schools. The parents of the Uttara school lauded the management style the head teacher has adopted and their easy accessibility to him. Most of the parents refer to this head teacher as indispensable for the school. On the other hand, a small portion of the teachers (5-6%) in both the schools blamed the head teachers for nepotism and undemocratic behaviour.

Box 2. Head teacher's meeting with the class captains in Uttara school

Head teacher:	Last one month you did not work properly. I observed many anti-disciplinary things happening in the classrooms. You have been given the responsibility of maintaining discipline. What are you doing?
Class captains:	We are doing our duties properly.
Head teacher:	If so, why do your friends start running as soon as they enter the school gate to overtake others to get a seat in the front row? And they make great noises while doing so.
Class captains:	We try to prevent them from doing so, sir.
Head teacher:	You did not succeed. Well, why is there littering in the classrooms? There is the paper bin in each classroom.
(The class captains remain silent)	
Head teacher:	I saw the paper bin being used as a football by your fellow classmates. What do you do when this happen?
Class captains:	Yes, sometimes they do. We try to .....
Head teacher:	I noticed some boys getting on the roof of this four-storey building. There is no railing, anything could happen. Who will be answerable?
(The class captains remain silent again)	
Head teacher:	Some of the pupils wear dirty shirts. You are supposed to bring this to the attention of the class teachers or the disciplinary committee. Did you do that?
(Some of the class captains nodded their heads positively.)	
Head teacher:	Ok. Very good. Boys bring tennis balls in their pockets and play in the classrooms. Why? There is the playground.
Class captains:	Yes sir. We forbade them. They don't listen.
Head teacher:	Give me the report. Do your duties properly. If there is any problem report to me. Do you believe your school to be a good one?
Class captains:	Yes sir.
Head teacher:	Then be very vigilant. I will form a three-member team of teachers to observe your performances and to identify the most disciplined and cleanest classroom. The captains of these classes will be awarded attractive prizes.
Class captains:	Ok, thank you. We will try our best, sir.

The Uttara school head teacher meets the class captains once every two months. The objective is to activate the captains and ensure discipline in the classrooms as well as in the school. One such meeting was held during the fieldwork of this study. Two class captains from each learner group of the day shift, totalling 54, participated in the meeting. Two teachers of the disciplinary committee were also present. Box 2 presents a case demonstrating the involvement of learners in management and classroom supervision by the head teacher.

Management of Specific Processes

Management of pedagogical processes: Pedagogical management is the prime concern of the school management in all four schools. All other activities focus around the pedagogical processes, classroom activities and learner evaluation procedures. The management of pedagogical processes in these schools is characterised by strict discipline and punctuality.

Teachers are assigned different grades for teaching on the basis of seniority and specialization. The general principle is to distribute the workload, particularly the teaching load equally among the teachers. However, it is not always possible as a varying number of teaching periods are needed for compulsory subjects like Bangla and English, and optional subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Economics, etc. The official timetable (i.e., the daily class routine) is strictly followed in these schools. The official time and the real time uses is identical excepting for one hour, which is earmarked for recess and assembly in all these schools. Teachers are particular in attending classes and they don't waste time.

One remarkable factor common to all four schools is that classes of absentee teachers are managed well ahead of time and no class goes without a teacher. This is not always possible in the Chunarughat school. In this case, the assistant head teacher keeps an eye on the students so that they do not come out of the classroom. Teachers are instructed to give special attention to slow learners during class time.

The teaching methods followed are mainly lecture and question-answer and sometimes interaction. Teaching is mostly learner centred but is one way – learners seldom ask the teachers for clarification or for other purposes. Homework is used as an important mechanism for improving teaching learning and making it effective in all four schools. All teachers assign homework on almost every topic, check it and give individualized and group feedback. Other than the prevailing mechanism for learner assessment set by the Education Board, the head teachers in three schools have introduced class test and/or tutorials upon completion of every one or two topics in each subject. The marks obtained in these are carried over to the terminal and annual examination results. The checked answer scripts are given to the learners and then returned to the teachers duly signed by the parents. Preparation of question papers is also given special attention. A scrutiny committee has been formed in one school and in the others the academic committees take care of the question papers to make it innovative and exhaustive.

Management of Teachers: The teacher evaluation system is not very formal. The head teachers evaluate the teachers through observation of their classroom performances and other out-of-classroom activities. Teachers are awarded a higher scale on the basis of seniority and performances. In the government school, however, there is the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) a formal mechanism for assessing the teachers. As far as positioning teachers is concerned, generally junior teachers are assigned lower grades and senior teachers the upper grades for teaching.

The head teachers and the assistant head teachers perform the teacher supervision function. The issues of teacher attendance, punctuality, classroom performance, teaching style and methods followed by the teachers, holding class tests and assigning homework, and performance in other activities assigned to teachers come under the purview of the supervision. The mechanism or instruments used are: attendance register, classroom inspection, observation, visiting the classrooms during breaks and at the beginning of every teaching period, and monthly meeting of teachers for discussing the programmes and problems. The head teachers, during their visits observe the teaching method, the preparation of lesson plans (in schools where it is mandatory), students' attention and reactions, cleanliness, and discipline. Teachers are grouped for different out-of-class activities, and supervised and monitored by the head teacher.

External teacher support is almost non-existent. The national and zonal management structure is inadequately manned. There is no monitoring and supervision unit in the structure. Also the management structure extends only up to the district level, so teachers rarely meet any school inspector or teacher supervisor. However, in the government school, there are visitors from different directorates, and in the other urban school, the DEO made two visits in the previous year. But all of these were short visits.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) publishes teacher guides on each subject. Teacher guides have been made available to the teachers in three of the schools, but they are not widely used. The teachers themselves collect textbooks and reference books. Teacher support is provided only in the form of in-school supervision of teachers by the head and assistant head teachers, and partnering of new teachers with assistant head teacher (in Uttara school). Academic committee meetings are also used for providing teacher support.

The Uttara school gives an additional increment for better performance and a general increment to all teachers if the results in the public examination are as expected. In addition, self-motivation of the teachers is also present. In Savar, a festival bonus and free education for children of teachers are provided. In Motijheel, good performers are provided training opportunities. Oral appreciation and encouragement is used in all four schools.

Teachers are very much involved in management and decision making in all four schools. The school managing committee, which constitutes the top strata of in-school management, has the head teacher as the member secretary and two teacher

representatives elected by the teachers from among themselves. All the schools have a sub-committee system. Committees and sub-committees formed in order to look after different areas of management are participated by the SMC members as well as the teachers. These committees take decisions in the respective areas such as finance, academic, administration, purchase, infrastructure and the like.

Relations between teachers: In all four schools a friendly and cooperative relationship among teachers has been found. There is no specific complicated relationship among groups of teachers or between any two teachers. Teachers are helpful to colleagues. Cooperation takes the forms of financial and personal help. There are instances in one school of teachers who donated blood for a sick colleague. A helping attitude, particularly in academic matters, has observed in all four schools. Sharing of workload at times when colleagues need it is a very common practice in these schools.

Apart from this, there is a mechanism of peer learning and experience sharing. Staff meetings are organized regularly for exchanging views, discussing problems related to teaching learning and working out solutions. The teachers' relationship with the head teachers is very cordial, friendly and empathetic.

Relations with learners: In all four schools, the teacher learner relationship is a multidimensional one – it is friendly, inspiring, guiding, encouraging and at the same time controlling. There is no unit or body/committee for formal guidance and counselling of the learners in any of these schools. But there is the head teacher's instruction to the effect that teachers – particularly the class teachers should always have an eye on the psychophysical problems of the learners and also the difficulties they have in understanding the lessons taught. The learners have easy access to the teachers and they (as well as their parents) can seek guidance and counselling any time they need it. In Savar, 95% of the pupils and teachers live in the same locality, which results in close familiarity between the teachers and pupils. In Chunarughat, the head teacher is both a controlling authority and friend. Pupils in all the schools are part of school management.

Relations with parents/community: The teachers of the Uttara school know the parents of the majority of their pupils and know some of the parents personally. The class teachers of this school maintain diaries containing the names and addresses of the parents, which helps them contact the parents in times of need. The teachers of the Savar and Chunarughat schools also know the parents of majority of the pupils by name. However, the teachers of Motijheel school know only the parents of the slow and the best learners.

The schools do not organize regular meetings with the parents. The parents are invited on occasions such as the day that progress cards of the learners are distributed and the annual prize giving ceremony. On the day of publication of the results, parents meet the class teachers in groups in the classrooms. They check the results of their children, seek advice of the teachers for improving the performances of the learners, and vent their grievances regarding the teaching learning process. In addition, the teachers also ask the parents to take care of those

having learning difficulties, suggest ways for improvement and the like. Almost 80% of the parents in all the schools turn up at these meetings. Only the Chunarughat school has a parent teacher committee, which holds meeting twice every year, however the attendance is very poor. In one such meeting held in 2001, out of 1200 parents (600 pupils), only 25 turned up.

Except for two representatives in the SMC of the three non-government schools, there is no direct involvement of the parents in school activities. In these schools, the parents and the community of the school have provided support to the school management since the beginning of school.

Relations with the Administration

Degree of school autonomy and initiative: School managing committees are responsible in overall management of the non-government schools, which the government school does not have. Through SMC the non-government schools enjoy more autonomy than the government schools. The SMC, of which the head teacher is the member secretary, has an ample ability to exercise its authority in all areas of management such as financial, teacher management, infrastructure development and general administration.

The head teacher and the SMC members of Uttara school were of the opinion that the present degree or state of autonomy is satisfactory. However, the head teacher of Savar school has a different opinion in this regard. He mentioned that some of the SMC members often want to dominate him, and he has a problem convincing the SMC regarding the urgency of various needs and as such emphasises on having greater authority in the SMC. The head and other teachers in Chunarughat school want more autonomy, which they expect would empower them to take decisions in specific management areas. The head teacher and assistant head teachers of the government school desire more autonomy in the areas of recruitment of support staff, financial management, transfer of teachers, etc.

External supervision: The prevailing situation is not very supportive of the head teachers and teachers as far as administrative and academic assistance from supervision and support agencies are concerned. Deputy director (zones), school inspectors working in the zonal DD offices, and district education officers are the functionaries comprising the main body for field-level supervision (both academic and administrative) of the schools. In addition, the Directorate of Audit and Inspection (DIA) and Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) have inspectors for administrative supervision of the schools.

The schools were visited one or two times each in 2003 by the respective DEOs. All the visits were short and general in nature. They were almost informal and there was no reporting – no feedback was given to the schools. The DEO had a general discussion with the teachers, gathered general information, and visited a few classrooms. Nevertheless the visits were useful as both the teachers and the learners feel that there is somebody looking after them and so the visits are

alerting. The Motijheel school was visited by the officers from DSHE, DIA and NCTB. With the exception of the visit of the DIA, the others were short visits. External support in the form of meetings, seminars, in-service training does not exist.

Selected Management Devices

School Development Planning: The Uttara school sets its goals in terms of the pupils' performance in the public examinations – the primary and secondary scholarship examinations, and particularly the SSC examination. This goal is set in the SMC and the staff meetings. There is no comprehensive school development plan and as such no goals are spelt out in clear terms. Formulation of an overall development plan is still in the thinking stages of the management. However, the head teacher and the SMC have a vision of turning the school into one of the best institutions in the country. By 'best' they mean each and every learner will attain a particular level of achievement and be turned into a worthy and productive citizen of the country.

The Savar school has a development plan with some specific goals and objectives. The SMC and the teachers all participated in preparing the plan. The specific objective of the plan is to provide quality education to the learners with a target of an 80% success rate. The strategy for achieving this objective is to expand the library, laboratory and classroom facilities and involve all the stakeholders, including the community, in the process of implementing the plan.

The management of the Chunarughat school does not prepare any school development plan. The Motijheel school has a development plan prepared by the Ministry of Education containing clear objectives related to the development of infrastructure, teacher behaviour, and learner achievement. This school has set its mission as serving the people of Bangladesh, conforming to the religious norms and values, and producing patriotic and worthy citizens for the country.

Evaluation and accountability devices: At the secondary level, there is a standardised public examination – the secondary school certificate (SSC) examination. The learners sit for the examination at the end of grade X. The examination starts on the same date and is held during the same period throughout the whole country. The performance of the learners in this examination is the major indicator of school performance. This is also linked to government salary subvention provided to non-government school teachers and non-teaching staff. Failure to achieve a particular success rate leads to the stoppage of the subvention.

The school evaluation mechanism was introduced in the recent past (in 1997) and schools are categorised as A to D on the basis of a number of criteria. Category 'A' indicates the best schools, category 'B' the next best and so on. The criteria for categorisation are material conditions, teacher quality, learner performance in the public examination, inclusion of the school in the MPO (money payment order) list, etc. But this evaluation mechanism has yet to produce an impact.

The school evaluation by the school itself takes the form of review of school performance in the SMC and staff meetings. These meetings are used as a means of finding out opportunities for further improvements to school performance.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Summary Findings

Four successful secondary schools identified on specific criteria were investigated to explore the factors contributing to their success. In general, the schools are unique. However, each of them has an identical way of managing the school and performing certain activities. This section summarises the main findings of this study and suggests policy changes, which can be followed for improvement of the school system.

Community has been the driving force in the establishment and growth of the three non-government schools. These schools are instances of community contribution to the education sector and the role community can play in directing the academic affairs of the schools. However, community participation in the form of the SMC is not without flaws. SMC members with low educational qualifications and poor understanding of school affairs are more a hindrance than a support for the schools.

Good material conditions are supportive of good performances. Material conditions in schools under study vary depending on the location of the schools. The urban schools are better off in this respect than those of suburban and rural areas. The performances of the urban schools are also better than the other two schools. It may be inferred, therefore, that material conditions have a bearing on the achievements of the schools.

Teacher quality has been identified as one of the major factors contributing to success. About half of the teachers in three schools are Masters degree holders and have a specialization in the subjects they teach. All the teachers in these schools are trained. In the rural school, 55% of the teachers are trained against the national rate of 40%. There are also specific measures for teacher motivation in these schools. Teacher quality and motivated teachers have emerged as one of the key determinants of success of the schools.

It is also to be noted that there is no mechanism for formal evaluation of teachers in the non-government schools. This is a strong mechanism for establishing accountability, which if used would have contributed more to the success of the study schools.

A well-organized in-school management structure covering all the areas of school management with participatory and transparent systems ensured efficient management in all the schools. This has also ensured a good work environment through discipline in school activities. Effective teacher and classroom supervision

features prominently in the in-school management process. This has greatly contributed to the success of the schools.

The teaching process in all four schools is very structured, however the teachers use traditional teaching methods such as lecture and question-answer. Other methods like invention, workshop, group-work are not used in any of the schools. The use of these methods might have improved the performance of the schools further. Homework with regular feedback thereof is extensively used in all the schools. This has contributed significantly to the learning of the pupils. Innovations have been made in the area of assessment by introducing class tests in-between two terminals and also by introducing cumulative assessment systems in three schools. A system of strong feedback on learner assessment in all four schools has been established. This, together with the practice of homework, has ensured proper learning in the schools. But none of the schools have made use of assessment for purposes like teacher evaluation, counselling and guidance, teacher management, etc. Learner assessment is also not used for evaluating learner achievements in the psychomotor and affective domains.

The single most important factor responsible for the success of the schools is the quality of the head teachers. They are committed, motivated and dynamic. They have remarkable innovative capacities, leadership qualities, and the capacity to identify and materialise the right measures. Their consciousness of their role is also worth mentioning. The cooperative and friendly relation among the stakeholders in the schools is a very strong factor contributing to the success.

External support in any form is almost non-existent, particularly in the academic area of the schools under study and also in all secondary schools. With one exception, the schools under study have no mission statement. No school has a school development plan. Though the schools are successful in terms of performance indicators, they do not have specific directions as they do not plan their activities and do not plan for development.

Policy Suggestions

The following policy suggestions can be made based on the findings of this study:

1. Community involvement has to be nourished and encouraged as this contributes greatly to the expansion of education in this resource-poor country.
2. A minimum level of educational qualifications should restrict entry to the SMC either as the chairman or the member. This can be equivalent to the minimum qualifications required for being a teacher.
3. A minimum level of infrastructure facilities has to be ensured irrespective of the location of the schools throughout the country in order for teaching learning in the classroom to become effective and for a minimum quality of education to be ensured at every school.

4. Raising the percentage of trained teachers from the present 40% to 100% should be a policy measure if education quality is to be improved. Ensuring recruitment of subject teachers at secondary level may also be a policy measure. Financial, however small the amount may be, and other forms of motivation should be arranged for teachers in all secondary schools.
5. A formal mechanism for teacher evaluation may be introduced in the non-government schools. This would ensure accountability of teachers to the head teachers in turn ensuring efficiency in in-school management.
6. Internal supervision by the head teacher/assistant head teacher could be made mandatory. The "management training" for head teachers imparted by NAEM should include a module on internal academic supervision in the course content. An in-school management structure may be devised by the DSHE for implementation in the secondary schools to make the internal management structured. District administration may facilitate the implementation.
7. Assessing homework and providing regular feedback to learners and parents should be made mandatory for all the schools.
8. The existing rules relating to learner evaluation may be modified to include class tests and tutorial examinations in-between terminal examinations. Cumulative assessment system should be introduced in all secondary schools. Learner assessment should be utilised to cover learner achievements in the psychomotor and affective domains.
9. Head teachers may be given leadership training for building their capacity to innovate and systematize interventions and motivate teachers and learners. Aptitude, commitment and leadership traits should be set as criteria for the appointment of head teachers.
10. A mechanism for effective and regular external academic supervision including feedback and follow-up should be ensured.
11. Preparing and implementing school development plan should be made mandatory. The DSHE may formulate the generalized goals and framework for the plan, which individual schools may adapt to their particular school situations. The zonal and district level administration may facilitate the schools in this regard.

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CASE STUDIES OF 'SUCCESSFUL' SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: WHAT CAN BE LEARNED?

Manzoor Ahmed

The open discussion following the presentation of the case studies of successful examples of primary and secondary level school management offered an opportunity to explore various issues related to the studies and their findings. The participants in the discussion commented on the appropriateness and value of the methodology used, gave their views on the substance of the findings, some focused on what they thought were important items missed out in the studies, and others wondered about the sustainability and replicability of the success stories. Some commentators challenged the premise of success underlying the studies and expected specific indicators of success and their assessment in the studies.

How should 'successful' school management be defined?

As noted in the presentations, the cases of formal primary schools, non-formal primary education centres, and secondary schools, were identified by respective authorities as examples of "good" schools. Apparently public reputation of the schools and information about the schools with the concerned authorities, which reflected their notions of standards influenced the selection of the schools. Objective and clearly defined criteria, which could be assessed and related to management process and functions were not applied explicitly in selecting the institutions. As Professor Kazi Saleh Ahmed put it, "the researchers mentioned a number of criteria for selection of the schools; they recognized that all schools could not fulfil all the criteria to be successful. But it was not explained which selected school satisfied which criteria…. Then the question comes, to what degree each criterion has been satisfied by each of the schools… For instance, on a scale of 0-100, what could be the minimum acceptable level for being a successful school."

In one government primary school the gross enrolment ratio was 140 percent, while the other school covered only 60 percent of the children in the catchment area. The question then, according to Professor Saleh Ahmed, how could the second school be considered as successful?

Professor Md. Shafiul Alam, former Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) also asked – what do we understand by success? Success means, in his view, obtaining defined outputs which should be

related to producing "quality learners" from schools. He observed, "It would have been better if these criteria were spelled out in the study. In the case of the secondary school, a large number of students remained absent on the day of home task submission, which is not an indication of success. We need to know the criteria of awarding [by the government] 'A' grade to schools as a recognition of their success."

Is case study a useful tool?

The value of case studies in offering lessons that may be relevant more broadly was a concern. The Minister of Education Dr. M. Osman Farruk asked if case studies on two, three or four schools were sufficient to provide a general picture of a system consisting of 78,000 primary schools and 27,000 secondary schools. He also thought that the benefits would have been greater if a comparative picture could be presented between successful and not so successful schools. He was also concerned about the small number of cases failing to capture the diversity of the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which schools functioned. He would rather prefer "a large study" to find out the factors contributing to successful school management. Dr. Farruk, however, agreed that in exploring issues of quality in education, research based on case study method was needed "to understand quality constraints and how these might be addressed." This indeed is the purpose of the case study approach, rather than deriving conclusions about a large system from looking at a small sample. Both of these approaches have their own contribution to make and have to be seen as mutually complementary.

Relevance of the findings

Despite some questions about the research approach, many commentators found the substantive findings relevant for gaining an understanding of the school management issues and ways of enhancing the effectiveness of management in primary and secondary schools. As Abdur Rashid, the District Primary Education Officer of Rajshahi put it, "We made these schools successful, but were not aware of the details of the process of development. The researchers documented the process. … credit first goes to the community. The people came to us and we provided them support and suggestions. [New resources were mobilized]. The schools could establish various income-generating projects such as fisheries, cattle rearing, poultry firm, etc. Without financial solvency it is not possible to have a good school."

One important message was that, even within the constraints of what was regarded to be an overly centralised management system, schools could take initiatives for effective management. In fact, Professor Md. Shafiul Alam observed, "…the government has prescribed rules and regulations about how schools should run; the presentations suggest to me that schools can succeed if they follow the rules and regulations. I also agree that SMCs should be given more freedom with some financial autonomy. I have seen in the Philippines and in other countries that the general public can participate in school activities if they want to. They donate

computer and many other useful things to the schools. We should find ways of encouraging these types of activities."

The rules about catchment area determination did not facilitate planning enrolment, because some schools enrolled more students than actual number of school-aged children in the catchment area, according to Professor Shafiul Alam. He agreed with the conclusion that harmony, as in a musical concert, is needed among all the elements of management of a school to produce the outcome in terms of good performance of the school.

M. Habibur Rahman, Director of Education, Save the Children, USA congratulated the research teams from Brac and NAEM for conducting pragmatic and informative studies. This kind of research, in his view, was very much required in order to bring systematic changes in the education system. In addition to this, he suggested that longitudinal studies using anthropological approaches should be undertaken.

The findings of the studies showed, according to M. Habibur Rahman, significant roles of the head teachers and the school managing committees, who needed greater autonomy. They also needed help to prepare these key actors to perform their job better. He found confirmation in the study of the fact that the upazila level officials, instead of providing supervision to schools, were mostly engaged in exercising administrative control.

What was missing?

Professor Siddiqur Rahman of the Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka found missing in the studies how and to what extent the school heads were supportive to the assistant teachers in enhancing classroom teaching. He also thought that a number of interventions in both primary and secondary schools introduced by the government during last two decades and their consequences were not considered in the studies adequately.

Financial management is a key element of secondary school management, especially for the non-government schools. Over 97 percent of the secondary schools fell in this category. The study, according to Professor Siddiqur Rahman, should have given greater attention to financial management of secondary schools.

Mr. Nil Ratan Halder of the Post-Primary and Continuing Education project in Brac wanted more attention to increasing teacher-student contact hour as a key measure to improve performance of schools and students. Another issue that must be a management concern, according to Mr. Halder, and merited attention was students' learning assessment including promotion policy, and failure in specific subjects (e.g., English and mathematics). He would have liked to know how these issues were handled in successful schools He further commented, "The presenters of the secondary school studies mentioned that class work and homework were provided regularly. My question is, how do the teachers manage it in a class of 50-

110 students? How is group work possible there? Answer to these questions might help the unsuccessful schools."

Mr. Abdul Motaleb was of the view that both the studies could have highlighted academic supervision more prominently. The presentations of the reports indicated to him that academic supervision and community participation were two cornerstones of success of the school. In general, according to Mr. Motaleb, both were very much present in the Brac primary schools, and absent in the government system. The government school supervisors did not play their role as facilitators and in many cases were not capable of doing this. He also emphasised the importance of financial management and accountability in schools. One useful measure he suggested was to develop and try out in some schools methods and instruments for this purpose and then implement these more widely.

Is success sustainable and replicable?

Professor A.K. Mirja Shahidul Islam, Former Director, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), raised the question of replicability and sustainability of success. As he put it, "During my service with the Directorate of Primary Education I saw many schools became good with some interventions like community participation and support from the upazila education office. The students of these schools showed better performance in the scholarship examinations. However, the success could not be sustained after some years. It is not easy to make a school successful; and it is even more difficult to hold on to success. It requires intensive labour of many parties – in and out of school. Sometimes, the assistant teachers do not cooperate with the head teachers in new initiatives and there is also political interference. There are instances of support of the upazila education officials discontinuing some initiatives with the change of regime and personnel at the central level. My request is to protect schools from outside political interference."

Mirja Shahidul Islam was also concerned about effective dissemination of success stories. He observed, "This can be done in many ways – publication of case study reports, regional and national seminars, discussion meetings, study tour to these schools, etc. It has two benefits – the people who made these schools successful would be inspired to see that they are given importance; and secondly, the other schools would get a chance to learn from the experiences of the successful schools."

Mr. Ichiro Miyazawa, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Dhaka office cautioned about using the word 'management', without being specific. He suggested that there were four relevant aspects of management: (a) management of human resource in a school, (b) management of monitoring and information system including information about students in and out of school, dropout, attendance and student performance, (c) financial management, and (d) management of external relations – involving school managing committee, community, parents, NGOs, CBOs and donors in relation to school activities. All these four components needed attention for successful school management.

In conclusion

The case study method, despite its limitations as for any other methodology, is a very much acceptable and widely used research technique. It has a respectable pedigree, especially, in the study of management techniques and philosophy. In a case study research, each case is an independent example, in which the complex interplay of multiple factors in contributing to intended outcomes can be examined. The challenge is to extract broader operational and policy conclusions for a system from the case study findings. What conclusion can we draw from the findings of the present case studies? The researchers presented some recommendations. The participants of the open discussion session shed light on the validity of these suggestions as well as the methodology. They also commented on what could have been given greater attention and what may have escaped attention altogether.

Many of the comments in the open discussion were about the role of leadership in school management. Its importance cannot be overestimated. However, a clear message from the studies and the discussion is that we should not search for a single hero; rather we should emphasize and try to establish a culture of collective responsibility in school management. Decentralisation with a special focus on school level responsibility with accountability is another key component effective school management. There is a need to establish a permanent arrangement for management development – in which academic supervision, financial management, and other elements identified as critical in specific circumstances can be given due prominence. Schools should be able to experiment with some of their ideas, engage in action research and take decisions based on their findings. A research, development and learning process should be encouraged in each school to help it move towards greater autonomy with accountability for itself, establishment of performance standards for itself and their application in the school.

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COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH NEEDS FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

M. Osman Farruk

I do not wish to give a lecture here in this seminar; rather I would prefer to take part in the discussions – that some of you have already started on the issue of school management. First of all, I acknowledge the use of case study research in improving the quality of our education. Quality, the most important aspect of education – is not only a matter of concern for our country, but also for the other parts of the world. Some days ago, I had an opportunity to participate at a conference organised by UNESCO, where quality of education came out as an important part of the conference discussions. After the Jomtien and Dakar summit, the number of educational institutions and number of students have increased manifold, but aspects of quality were not emphasized. Now a time has come when you cannot discuss education without discussing the quality issues. From this point of view research is badly needed to understand quality constraints and how these may be addressed.

The moderator of the discussion session has mentioned that the organisers of this seminar were inspired by the presence of the Minister i.e., me. Actually, you have created a good opportunity for me to participate at such a scholastic forum. As a Minister, I have to pass busy times mostly with lots of files and people trying to lobby. I hardly get the time needed to think creatively. As a participant of this seminar, I have a chance to do this. So, thanks to all of you for inviting me.

The two researchers from Brac and NAEM presented the studies. Both were well presented. When I was working at the World Bank, we used to tell the reviewers of case studies to be ruthless. People who were not sympathetic to the researchers were invited as reviewers. Here, in this seminar, I would like to take the opportunity to speak impartially and ruthlessly. Firstly, I want to talk about sample size of the studies. There are 78,000 primary and 27,000 secondary schools in Bangladesh. Case studies on two, three or four schools are not sufficient to provide us with any meaningful picture of the prevailing scenario. The researchers followed purposive sampling procedure. Purposive sampling is often used for this kind of study. However, this could have been done differently. Due to the sampling technique adopted here, i.e., selecting only successful schools, the value of the case studies has become limited. We could have benefited more if samples were drawn to provide a comparative picture for the successful and the not so successful schools.

Secondly, geographical bias is very strong in the study on primary schools. You have selected two schools from one area, but there is a big difference with respect to social, cultural, economic and other aspects among different areas of the country. Some measures were taken to reduce geographical bias in the study on secondary schools, but the number of school is not adequate to give a bigger picture. I think the case studies would have provided us a better picture if adequate number of schools were studied, applying appropriate sampling techniques, paying attention to schools of different quality and geographical spread.

Recommendations have been made based on the findings of the case studies on some successful schools. This provides us a profile of good schools only. However, cause and effect relationship has not been established. In the open discussion, some of you have mentioned a number of causes for schools being successful – there are other causes too. I think if the number of schools studied was larger and the study was conceptualised differently, we could reach more useful perspectives. If I were the researcher I would have followed a different approach. Instead of analysing the management of only a few good schools, I would have also studied a number of unsuccessful schools to identify the factors that make school management unsuccessful.

There are some findings in the papers – pointing to the all-too-obvious characteristics of successful schools. If you had studied the good schools along with some bad schools, then we could see why some schools are good and others are not. It would have allowed us to see whether the bad schools are bad due to absence of the characteristics of the good schools that you have mentioned or due to other reasons too. You can see hundreds of schools, especially state owned, which do not have even a head teacher, but the performance of the schools are good. There are many non-government schools in the country, which are facing lots of problems, but showing better results in the examinations than the state owned schools. Thus, the obvious factors identified are not always the factors for making a good school. We could have kept the study focussed on factors that make a school good – is it management, any other factor, or an interaction of many factors?

I think quality of education is an interaction of many factors like students, teachers, management, parents, local elite, etc. It is possible to identify the contribution of these factors, isolating the contribution of infrastructure facilities and teaching aids. There are some teachers who are more motivated than others. The question is why? We do not know the reasons behind this. This can happen because of a good head teacher or for his/her own background or for his/her training or for other reasons. Similarly, we do not know why teaching learning environment in some schools is good. What makes a school bad also needs analysis. If we could explore the answers to these questions the studies might be more useful for policy making. We could make a comparison of good and bad schools. Another way of seeking cause and effect relationship is research with control and experimental groups. This was not done.

Case study method is very helpful to explore certain circumstances. So, the studies are appropriate from that point of view. But all of us already know the findings of the studies – the factors contributing good schools. Without conducting a research, closing my eyes, I can say that good head teachers, congenial teaching learning environment, motivated teachers, are all key elements of good schools. What factors are absent from a bad school is more important, than finding out the success factors of a good school. There are hundreds of schools having head teachers and plenty of assistant teachers with teaching materials and other facilities, but the quality is still very poor. There may be local political interference.

Political interventions or enabling overall environment are increasingly becoming an important factor for schools being good or bad. If you prepare twenty more case studies on twenty good schools, you might have the same results, because, these are the necessary condition for good schools. If the bad schools were studied with the same parameters, we would have been able to understand what makes the schools bad. Lack of good leadership, lack of teachers, inappropriate curriculum, and poor infrastructure – anything could be the reason for making a school bad.

It is important to expand the scope of the present studies. The question of how do we replicate the conducing factors to other schools is not addressed. Replication of the recommendations to other schools might be an important policy decision, which needs more discussions. However, before scaling up, there is a need to see whether the absence of these criteria alone make schools perform poorly. This is important because, there are plenty of schools, especially in government sector, having lots of teachers and other facilities, but their output is not satisfactory.

We often say that quality of education is an outcome of combination of a number of interacting factors. It is not only a good head teacher or the other teachers or the textbooks only. Good supervision is also a critical factor for quality education. Some of the discussants have discussed the issue already. We do not have any supervision of schools in the real sense, but it is present in Brac schools. It is important to find out the effect of supervision by the programme organisers in Brac schools.

If you look at the system carefully, you will find that the government does not significantly control the management of the private schools. The school managing committees and the governing bodies of the colleges are autonomous, and the government does not want to interfere in their work. For secondary education, the policy making process is centralized but the management system is decentralized. This is also true for primary education to some extent. But we do not have much control over the SMC. We do not interfere in appointing teachers for the non-government secondary schools. The members of the managing committees are elected and they can take part in decision-making process. The government's circulars and orders are just to provide them with some guidelines. Without such guidelines the system would have no basis run. On the other hand, the government controls the subventions. There are some schools with no student successes in the

public examinations. The government has decided to discontinue their subvention. I think all of you would support it.

Similar studies on quality issues have been carried out in other Asian countries as well. If you organize a seminar to present the experiences from other countries too, that would be interesting and useful. This would create an opportunity to compare the school management systems in the region. There might be some commonalities and differences as well. I am wondering about what sort of state control over the management of schools do exist in other countries in the region? A comparison will let us know about this.

Finally, social science researchers are in a difficult situation, because the audiences often say that the findings are already known to them. This might happen for the present studies also, but this is not a problem at all – we can expand our findings in a more useful way. We can do so through broadening the methodology of the study – taking control group and experimental group or doing well designed comparative studies.

About the author

M Osman Farruk studied Economics at the University of Dhaka and did his PhD at the Cornell University, USA. He is a member of the Parliament (*Jatiya Sangsad*) and the Minister for Education in Bangladesh. He has contributed a number of journal articles and book chapters on economic issues. He taught at the Bangladesh Agricultural University prior to his joining the World Bank in 1974. He held senior positions at the World Bank (1974-2001) headquarters in Washington D.C. prior to his return to Bangladesh in April 2001.
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PHOTO GALLERY

Dr. M Osman Farruk, Hon'ble Minister for Education is addressing as the Chief Guest where Dr. Imran Matin, Professor Khalilur Rahman and Dr. Manzoor Ahmed are seen

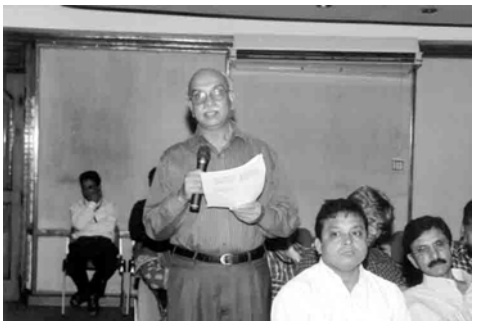
A section of the audience

Prof. Md. Khalilur Rahman, Director General of NAEM is addressing as the Chair

Dr. Imran Matin, Director Research of Brac is giving the welcome address

Mr. Ichiro Miyazawa, Programme Specialist of UNESCO Dhaka is delivering speech as the Special Guest

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Director BU-IED is moderating the open discussion session



Professor Siddiqur Rahman

Professor Kazi Saleh Ahmed

Professor Md. Shafiul Alam

Professor Abdul Muktadir

Mr. Abdur Rashid

Mr. M Habibur Rahman

Professor AK Mirja Shahidul Islam

Mr. Nil Ratan Haldar

Professor Roohi Zakia Dewan, Director (Planning and Development) of NAEM and Mr. Samir R Nath, Senior Research Fellow of Brac are presenting research findings

ANNEXES

Annex 1. The Seminar Programme

Seminar on
School Management: Learning from Successful Schools in Bangladesh
Brac Centre, 19 September 2004

The Programme

2.30 p.m.	Registration
3.00 p.m.	Welcome and introductory remarks **Dr. Imran Matin** Director Research, Brac
3.10 p.m.	Presentation on primary schools **Mr. Samir R Nath** Senior Research Fellow, Brac
3.40 p.m.	Presentation on secondary schools **Ms. Roohi Zakia Dewan** Director (Planning and Development), NAEM
4.10 p.m.	Open discussion Moderator: **Dr. Manzoor Ahmed** Director, BU-IED
4.50 p.m.	Address by the Special Guest **Mr. Ichiro Miyazawa** Programme Specialist, UNESCO Bangladesh
5.00 p.m.	Address by the Chief Guest **Dr. M. Osman Farruk** Hon'ble Minister for Education Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
5.15 p.m.	Address by the Chair **Prof. Md. Khalilur Rahman** Director General, NAEM
5.25 p.m.	Refreshment

Annex 2. List of Participants in the Seminar

Mr. Md. Gaffar Ahmed
District Primary Education Officer
Hobigonj

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed
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Ms. Nashida Ahmed
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Former Vice Chancellor
Jahangir Nagar University

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SDM
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Mr. Bulbul Ahmed
Staff Reporter, The New Age

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NAEM, Dhaka

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Director, BANBEIS

Dr. Md. Sultan Ali
Training Specialist, NAEM, Dhaka

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Former Director, BANBEIS

Dr. Mahmudul Alam
Senior Education Economist
The World Bank

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Staff Reporter, The Sangram

Mr. Minhaz Uddin Anwar
Communication Coordinator, Brac

Ms. Mir Jahanara Arzoo
Training Specialist
NAEM, Dhaka

Ms. Ashrafunnessa
Assistant Director
NAEM, Dhaka

Mr. Azad
Bangladesh Television

Mr. M.A. Bari
Vice Chairman, SMC
Uttara High School, Dhaka

Ms. Bilkis Begum
Head Teacher
Motijheel Government Boys High
School, Dhaka

Ms. Mahafuza Begum
Training Specialist, NAEM, Dhaka

Mr. Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul
News Editor, ATN Bangla

Mr. Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury
Executive Director, Brac

Dr. AMR Chowdhury
Deputy Executive Director, Brac

Mr. Mulatiur Chowdhury
Habiganj

Mr. Faruque Dewan
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Ministry of Education

Ms. Roohi Zakia Dewan
Director (Planning & Development)
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Minister
Ministry of Education

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PACE programme, Brac

Professor M Nazmul Haq
Institute of Education and Research
University of Dhaka

Mr. Nil Ratan Halder
Senior Regional Manager
PACE programme, Brac

Mr. Rafique Hassan
Deputy Director (Research)
Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Mr. Rubayet Hasan
Media Correspondence,
The Janakantha

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Staff Reporter, The Daily Star

Mr. Md. Moazzem Hossain
Headmaster, Uttara High School

Mr. Md. Altaf Hossain
Senior Research Associate, BU-IED

Ms. Ruxana Hossain
Material Development Specialist
PACE programme, Brac

Mr. Md. Abul Hossain
Headmaster,
Nayarhat Gana Biddyapith, Dhaka

Mr. AK Mirja Shahidul Islam
Former Director
Directorate of Primary Education

Mr. Md. Mahbubul Kabir
Junior Research Assistant, Brac

Mr. Enamul Kabir

Ms. Raihana Karim
Research Assiatant, Brac

Mr. Md. Abul Kalam
Research Associate, BU-IED

Mr. Md. Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal
Head Teacher
Palpar Government Primary School
Godagari, Rajshahi

Mr. Khandakar Rezaul Karim
Head Teacher
Narail South East Model
Government Primary School, Narail

Mr. Safi R. Khan
Country Representative, Ashoka

Ms. Marufa Aziz Khan
Research Associate, Brac

Mr. N. I. Khan
Consultant, SDE

Mr. Masud A. Khan
CEU, Dhaka Lions Club

Ms. Deborah Llewellyn
Consultant

Mr. Faizullah Mahmud
Reporter, The Jugantar

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Director
Directorate of Primary Education

Mr. Md. Sahiduzzaman Masud
Staff Reporter, The Bhorer Kagaj

Mr. Syed Masud

Dr. Imran Matin
Director Research, Brac

Mr. Abdul Mannan Miah
Executive Assistant, Brac-RED

Prof. Md. Mohiuddin
Director
Directorate of Inspection and Audit

Mr. Golam Mostafa
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UNESCO, Dhaka

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Senior Research Fellow, Brac

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Chairman, S.M.C
Narail South East Model
Government Primary School

Mr. Mohammad Rafi
Senior Research Fellow, Brac

Mr. Rafiq
Bangladesh Television

Prof. Md. Khalilur Rahman
Director General, NAEM

Mr. Md. Ataur Rahman
Upazila Education Officer
Godagari, Rajshahi

Ms. Shameena Binte Rahman
Staff Reporter, Prothom Alo

Mr. Md. Mujibur Rahman
Deputy Director, NAEM, Dhaka

Professor Siddiqur Rahman
Institute of Education and Research
Dhaka University

Mr. Siddiqur Rahman
Staff Reporter, The New Age

Mr. Shahanur Rahman
The Daily Star

Mr. Md. Habibur Rahman
Director, Education
Save The Children

Ms. Sabina F Rashid
Lecturer
James P Grant School of Public
Health, Brac University

Mr. ABM Abdur Rashid
District Primary Education Officer
Rajshahi

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Research and Evaluation Division
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