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BRAC's Intervention in Secondary Schools: A Comparative Study

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List of Acronyms

BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BRAC	World largest Development organisation (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee)
CAL	Computer Aided Learning
CLT	Communication Language Teaching
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
EFT	English for Today
FDR	Fixed Deposit Receipt
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MCLC	Multipurpose Community Learning Culture
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NGO	Non-government Organisation
PACE	Post-primary Basic and Continuing Education
PO	Programme Organiser
PM	Post Meridian
SEQAEP	Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project
SESIP	Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
TQI	Teaching Quality Improvement
UEO	<i>Upazila</i> Education Officer
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPS	Uninterruptible Power Supply or Uninterruptible Power Source
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

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Abstract

Post-primary Basic and Continuing Education interference of BRAC Education Programme popularly known as PACE desired to enhance the quality of secondary education of Bangladesh. This comparative ethnographic study intended to understand if any cultural changes took place in the schools due to PACE. For this, data on school daily life, teaching-learning process, use of the library, school management, leadership, values and gender issues were collected from three intervened and three non-intervened schools located in three *upazilas* (sub-districts) of Tangail, Jessore and Rajshahi districts of Bangladesh. Six research assistants following the guidance of the research team conducted a four months long observation on the selected schools starting from March 2016 and collected data on the above mentioned areas from the learners, teachers, parents, SMC members, PO, UEO and communities, and from the available documents on different aspects of the schools. Methods of data collection were observation, interview, FGD, survey, field note taking and document analysis. Major findings revealed that PACE activities were rarely practised in the intervened schools. Though teachers received training and perceived it useful could not apply in classrooms because of time constraint and pressure of completing syllabus. Teachers from both types of schools heavily depended on the lecture method. Classes using CAL materials were barely held, and teachers in both sorts of schools hardly used any teaching materials. Teachers' training and mentoring programmes lost their popularity after adopting cost recovery approach. *Gonokendros* were not truly functional in the schools because of irregularity and unavailability of the librarians. In case of school management, political influence was observed in both types of schools. Girls and female teachers experienced teasing and harassments. Mixed perceptions among teachers, parents and learners were observed regarding student cabinet election. The study concluded that desired cultural changes did not take place in the intervened schools because of several challenges. Hence, recommended for close monitoring of the PACE activities, accelerating initiatives for enhancing moral values among the teachers and learners, treating student leadership issue seriously and building a gender friendly environment through forming a committee in each school.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance

Bangladesh has progressed much in school education during the MDG era, but the progress was much higher at primary level than that at the secondary level. Enrolment, survival and completion rates are much higher in primary education than secondary education, and an opposite scenario is observed in the case of dropout rate (DPE 2014; BANBEIS 2015).

However, secondary education is very important for the society. It bridges primary education with higher education. A portion of the children, at this stage of life, prepares them for the world of work and other section for tertiary education. Dakar Framework of Action emphasised on equal access of both boys and girls to secondary education by 2015, which was also reiterated by the Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO 2000; World Bank 2000). Recently endorsed Sustainable Development Goals also emphasised on ensuring free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all girls and boys by 2030 (United Nations 2015). At present, the quality of education is the main agenda in the case of school education throughout the globe.

In Bangladesh, grades VI to X are considered as secondary education. The aim of this is to develop students' latent intellect and comprehensive inner faculties and to equip them with competencies so that they can compete in the job market, especially in the economic sector of the country (MoE 2010). Unlike the primary education, secondary education in Bangladesh is dominated by the private sector. However, the government has lots of investment in this sector. In line with the global initiatives, the Ministry of Education has launched some initiatives to improve the secondary education system. The related projects include Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP), Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI) Project and Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (SEQAEP).

Alongside the government, BRAC also realised the necessity of work for the secondary education sector, especially in the rural areas. BRAC initiated Post-primary Basic and Continuing Education (PACE) programme in 2001 to enhance the quality of rural secondary schools in Bangladesh. In collaboration with the government, the PACE started with a teacher-training programme in 2001 to bring a qualitative change in teaching-learning provision in the secondary classrooms. Training on management and administration was added immediately for the head teachers and the members of the school managing committees (SMC). A mentoring programme was initiated in 2006 realising the importance of peer tutoring. Selected students from grades VI-IX were provided training to develop self-esteem, leadership skills and creativity. Computer Aided Learning (CAL) was initiated to introduce technology in education. *Medha Bikash* (promoting talent) was initiated in 2005 to help poor and talented students who scored the top grade in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination. *Chhatra Bondhu* introduced volunteering in education to assist the poor children who did not have any helping hands for studies at home due to the low level of parental education. Multipurpose Community Learning Centers (MCLC), locally known as *Gonokendro*, was introduced to provide access to reading and literacy materials to the secondary students and the rural communities. At least one of the PACE interventions was given to 4,000

schools, of which 1,410 received major interventions, and 20 schools got all the components.

It is about a one-and-a-half decade, BRAC has been engaged in the improvement of the quality of rural secondary schools through above mentioned initiatives. Several studies were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different components of PACE programme (Rahman *et al.* 2006; Sharmin and Roy 2011, Nasreen and Kundu 2012; Miah and Acharjee 2013; Power, Babu and Chowdhury 2017). However, none of these studies had a holistic view to see the impact of PACE initiatives on overall quality improvement. PACE initiatives in the schools may have their standalone as well as interactive contributions. A relevant question is thus how the PACE activities interact with each other and function in reshaping school culture as a whole towards the enhancement of quality.

The current study is an effort of the researchers to explore the secondary school culture from different aspects as facilitated by PACE intervention. In Bangladesh studies on school culture is quite rare. Like every organisation, the school has its own culture, which is still unexplored from research perspectives. Deal and Peterson (1999) defined school culture as the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the "persona" of the school. To narrate the importance of understanding school culture Peterson (2002) stated that "a school culture influences the ways people think, feel, and act. Being able to understand and shape the culture is the key to a school's success in promoting staff and student learning".

BRAC's intervention under PACE intended to bring cultural changes in school discipline, teaching-learning process, management, leadership, co-curricular activities and so on. In addition to these aspects, this study had a special focus on understanding gender sensitivity culture of the schools. It is expected that the findings of the study would help the secondary education administrator, curriculum developer, material developer, teacher trainer and teacher to improve their practices. Moreover, it can be considered as a base of research for the interested researchers of this area.

1.2 Objective and Research Questions

Keeping the above-discussed aspects in mind, the study intended to investigate whether any kind of cultural changes took place in the schools due to PACE intervention and whether such changes have any role in school improvement. To address this broad objective, the following were the specific research questions.

1. In which context PACE intervention worked in schools?
2. How did school discipline appear in the intervention and non-intervention schools?
3. In which extent PACE intervention impacted on the teaching-learning process?
4. How did library bring impact on school culture?
5. What was the nature of school management culture?
6. To what extent leadership and co-curricular activities varied in the schools?
7. How gender-sensitive the schools were?

Chapter 2

Methodology of the study

This chapter represents the methodology adopted to carry-out the study. The following sections would be described here; nature of the study, sample and sampling techniques, study duration, field operation, data collecting instruments and data analysis process.

2.1 Nature of the study

The study was a comparative one and ethnographic in nature. The reason of choosing ethnographic approach was to understand two different settings of the schools, which allowed the researchers to tease out the organisational and academic practices of the schools in a systematic manner (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Creswell 2011). Moreover, this approach also facilitated to learn the rules of behaviour such as informal and formal relationship among teachers and students (Pajak and Blase 1984). Besides, ethnography provides a detail day-to-day picture of events, such as thoughts and activities exist inside the particular settings of the schools (Wolcott 1994). A quantitative survey at the students' households was also conducted.

2.2 Sample and sampling technique

Total six schools were selected with equal preference in numbers of intervention and non-intervention schools using purposive sampling technique. Three secondary schools from *Mirzapur Upazila* of Tangail district, *Jhikorgache Upazila* of Jessore district and *Puthia Upazila* of Rajshahi district were selected by ensuring that all the components of PACE programmes were running there whereas another three schools were selected from the same *Upazilas* where PACE intervention was absent. As ethnographic research demands specific settings in in-depth exploration, the sample size of six schools allowed the researchers to collect data from the actors such as students, teachers, head teachers, school managing committee members, school visitors and parents within the schools in a manageable way (Atkinson and Hammersley 2007). Intervention and non-intervention schools were selected considering their similarities regarding infrastructure, number of teachers and students, resources, academic results and years of establishment. Table 1 presented in the field operation section shows the number of participants in detail.

2.3 Data collecting instruments

A number of instruments had been used to collect data on desired aspects of the schools in a holistic way. Ensuring proper triangulation was another reason for using these. The instruments were as follows;

- In-depth Interview Checklist for Teachers and Students' Leaders
- Formal Interview Schedule for UEO and BRAC field managers
- Classroom Observation Checklist
- Focus Group Discussion Guideline for Students
- Focus Group Discussion Guideline for Parents
- Focus Group Discussion Schedule for SMC Members
- Students' Household Survey Questionnaire

- School Survey Questionnaire
- Field note on School Context

2.4 Field Operation

This study was a year-long one where actual fieldwork was conducted for four months. Prior to the fieldwork the research team convinced the school authorities to cooperate the research assistants in data collection. One research assistant was deployed in each of the sampled schools for consecutive four months. It is worth mentioning that in each *upazila* one male and one female research assistant worked in the schools and both of them were well introduced in each of the school so that they could support each other as per need, e.g., while conducting FGDs. The research assistants required to collect data from a diversity of sources as did Nath and Mahbub in 2008 and Thapan in her studies in 1981, which was published in 2015.

Participant observation and in-depth interview had been identified as the principal data collection methods for ethnographic research (Coll and Chapman 2000; Cresswell 2011). Research assistants through non-participatory approach observed the lessons of English, science and mathematics teachers on a regular basis for consecutive three to four days in each month of observation. Besides classrooms' teaching-learning, students' activities and interaction in formal and informal settings, teachers' activities and interaction in formal and informal settings, weekly and monthly meetings of teachers, role and activities of SMC members and the overall school context were observed. After the observation, the research assistants produced the observation report immediately, so that they did not miss any aspects of their observation. The principal researchers monitored their work in a regular basis to ensure the quality of fieldwork and the collected data.

After observing the above activities, the research assistants conducted the in-depth interview in formal and informal settings with the respective actors including trained and non-trained teachers whose classes were observed, the head teachers, SMC chairman and members, and also with some students' leaders from each school. The principal researchers observed the interview session of the research assistants and provided necessary feedback to improve the quality of data.

Along with observation and in-depth interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was another strong means of data collection. FGDs were conducted in each of the schools. Total eight students participated in FGD, four of whom were boys and four were girls. As like as gender, the effort was given to ensure the participation of each merit level students. In each school, a special FGD with girls of grade nine or ten was conducted to discuss some sensitive issues of gender and health perspectives. The female research assistant moderated the FGD as culturally girls did not feel comfortable to discuss such issues with the male. FGDs were conducted with the students of grades seven, eight and nine/ten. Students of grade six were purposively omitted from FGD because they were too young to provide opinion on various aspects of the school culture. Research assistants conducted FGD with parents, teachers and SMC members as per requirement. At the end of the fieldwork formal interview was conducted with the administrative persons like *Upazila* Education Officers and BRAC field manager. Interviews and FGDs were audio recorded as per the consent of the participants.

Using random sampling technique forty students (20 boys and 20 girls) were selected from each grade for surveying their households. Hence, the sample number of students per school was 200, and thus the sample size was 1200 (200 student x 6 schools) for

the study. Time to time the principal researchers monitored the whole survey process to ensure that the survey were conducted appropriately. The following table shows the sample size, respondents and the data collection methods at a glance.

Table 1. Respondents, data collection methods, sample size and techniques

Respondents	Data Collection Methods	Sample Size		Total Sample Size	Sampling Technique
		PACE Intervention	Non-Intervention		
Classroom Observation (Students and Teacher)	Non-Participant Observation	English, Science and Mathematics teachers' lessons were observed for consecutive three-four days in each month of observation	English, Science and Mathematics teachers' lessons were observed for consecutive three-four days in each month of observation	Number of observed lessons varied from school to school depending on teachers load of lessons	Purposive
(English, Mathematics and Science teachers)	In-depth Interview	3 teachers x 3 schools = 9	3 teachers x 3 schools = 9	18 Teachers English-6 Mathmatics-6 Science-6	Purposive
Head Teachers	In-depth Interview	1 x 3 schools = 3	1 x 3 schools = 3	6 Head Teachers	Purposive
Student Leader	In-depth Interview	1 x 3 schools = 3	1 x 3 schools = 3	6 Student Leader	Purposive
Students	FGD	3 FGD x 3 schools = 9 FGD 8 students x 9 FGD =72	3FGD x 3 schools = 9 FGD 8 students x 9 FGD =72	18 FGD (18x8=144 Students)	Purposive
SMC Member	FGD	1 FGD x 3 schools = 3 FGD 11 members x 3 FGD = 33	1FGDx3 schools = 3 FGD 11 members x 3 FGD = 33	6 FGD (6x11=66 Members)	Purposive
Parents	FGD	1FGD x 3 schools = 3 FGD 8 parents x 3 FGD =24	1FGD x 3 schools = 3 FGD 8 parents x 3 FGD =24	6 FGD (6 x 8 = 48 parents)	Purposive
Students' Household	Household Survey Questionnaire	40 students x 5 grades x 3 schools = 600	40 students x 5 grades x 3 schools = 600	1200	Random
School	School Survey and Field Note	3 survey questionnaire and notes	3 survey questionnaire and notes	6 survey questionnaire and notes	Purposive
UEO	Formal Interview	<i>Upazila</i> Education officer		1 x 3 <i>Upazila</i> = 3	Purposive
BRAC field Manager	Formal interview	Programme organiser of Intervention area		1 x 3 <i>Upazila</i> = 3	Purposive

2.5 Data processing and analysis

Data had been collected through the day to day narrative writing based on observation and interviews. The assistants recorded those as detailed as possible while observing. Coming back home at evening, they prepared the more detailed transcription on their observation. In a similar way, FGD data were also preserved. Data had been checked and rechecked by the respondents to ensure that exact opinion and statement were recorded. Finally, data were organised; themes developed and under themes, data were interpreted as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999). Initial output was a case report on each school, and the final report was written based on the school case reports, where necessary comparison among the intervened and non-intervened schools were conducted to understand the cultural changes.

2.6 Ethical consideration

Ethical aspects were strongly maintained while conducting the study. Prior consent was taken from the schools and respondents before initiating the data collection and the study objective and research questions were clearly narrated to them. Respondents were ensured that collected data would be used for research purpose only and their identity would not be disclosed in the report. Respondents were free to withdraw themselves from the research at any time they want. Classroom observation, interview and FGD were conducted according to the time appreciated by the respondents. The data collectors did not put their personal opinion or view, which could influence the respondents to express them. Any manipulation of data was strictly prohibited. No biases took place towards the respondents from the data collectors' side.

Chapter 3

Findings

3.1 Context in which the intervention took place

To provide an account on the context in which the intervention took place description has been presented on the following areas: the socioeconomic condition of the local communities, the historical background of the schools, school infrastructure and the teachers and students of the schools.

3.1.1 A glimpse into the community

The main source of income of the majority of the households of students of intervention and non-intervention schools was agricultural activities (21.6%), followed by small business (20%), service (19.7%), and day labour (17.4%), respectively. The other sources include driving (3.4%), pulling own rickshaw/van (3%), masson or carpenter (4%), remittance (8.2%) and others (2.4%). Only a few of the households reported their yearly food security status as *always in deficit*. Around 14.6% of households in intervention and 17.2% in non-intervention areas rated them as *sometimes in deficit*. Overall, 38% of the households reported them as *breakeven*; however, no significant difference was observed between two types of households. Majority of the households reported them as *surplus*– 43.4% among intervention and 41.6% among non-intervention. Therefore, the majority of the households did not make any surplus (57.5%).

Table 2 shows, 27% of fathers and 19% of mothers of intervention school students had no schooling experiences, which was 33.9% and 27.6%, respectively for non-intervention schools. Only 16.1% of fathers and 8.5% of mothers of intervention school students completed secondary or more education. These figures were 16.5% and 6.8%, respectively for non-intervention schools. In both cases, the majority of the mothers and fathers completed primary education.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of students by years of schooling completed by parents and school type

Years of schooling	Father's education		Mother's education	
	PACE	NON-PACE	PACE	NON-PACE
Nil	27.0	33.9	19.0	27.6
1–4 years	18.2	16.1	17.6	19.9
5–9 years	38.7	33.5	54.9	45.7
10years+	16.1	16.5	8.5	6.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Majority of the households under intervention and non-intervention schools were Muslims by faith – 94% and 91.4%, respectively. No other ethnic community rather than Bengali was there in the non-intervention schools. On the other hand, 97.7% of households of intervention schools were Bengali and the rest from indigenous communities.

3.1.2 Location of the schools

All six schools were located in rural areas within ten kilometres from the respective *Upazila sadars*. All the schools except one were well connected to the main road. Transportation facilities were also available. However, main means of students commuting to school was on foot. Each school had students from nearly two to three villages. Some teachers also lived in the same villages of the schools and others in the same or nearby *upazila* towns or the district towns. There were varieties of small shops nearby the schools. Students were the main customer of these shops.

3.1.3 Infrastructure of schools

Schools under the study had both old and new buildings. In most cases, the old buildings were mainly semi-*pacca* – walls made of bricks and roof made of tin-coated iron sheets. The new buildings were fully made of bricks. Both types of buildings were in use either as classrooms or as official purposes. At least one two-storied building was in each of the intervention schools, and the others had one-storied building.

A number of classrooms in these schools ranged from five to ten. Natural light and ventilation were mostly adequate in each of them. All the classrooms had electricity facilities, but the number of ceiling fan was inadequate, and their distribution was also uneven. The schools suffered from frequent load shading, especially during the summer. Some of the classes held in the yard under tree shades during summer due to high temperature. Roof, walls and floors were in good condition. All the classrooms were furnished with benches for the students, and tables and chairs for the teachers. The area of the classrooms was inadequate for accommodating the students. Therefore, seating arrangement was congested. Most of the classrooms were partly decorated with posters and quotations of famous personalities. Classrooms were mostly clean. There were no litters in the classrooms, but dust were found on the floors.

All the schools had separate toilet facilities for girls and boys. Most of them had running water facilities. Tubewell was found in each school as an alternative provision. In most cases, the toilets were not cleaned, and some of them were found locked. Therefore, boys often had to go to the nearby places or behind the toilets for urinating. It became difficult to stay in the nearby classrooms because of unhealthy odour. Though the girls were not noticed to go outside for this purpose, only limited number of girls used the toilets. The situation indicates that girls were holding urine for long periods, which is supposed to be harmful to their health. No bins were seen in the girls' toilet; therefore, they kept sanitary pads unchanged during menstruation. Only two schools had separate hand wash corner for boys and girls aided by BRAC WASH programme. Other schools did not have any hand washing facilities after using the toilet. All the school had separate toilets for teachers. Both male and female teachers used the same toilet. Toilets for teachers were relatively better conditioned and clean.

All the six schools had tubewell facilities on their premises. Most of them were arsenic free. Students drank water from these tubewells as needed. During classes, they took permission from teachers to go out to drink water. However, the crowd was observed during recess. Girls were more comfortable to drink water from plastic bottles they carried with them and boys preferred to drink water from tubewell. Sometimes they fight with each other during a recess near the tubewell to get water first though they helped juniors and girls to get water first. Some of the schools had a water filter for students, but they were not in use. For teachers drinking water was kept in jugs near the office room and sometimes the office assistant served water to the teachers on demand.

Most of the schools had a large playground and the morning assembly usually took place there. Students also played here during recesses if the weather was favourable. During mid-summer, students could not play outside because of excessive heat. The annual sports programme also held on the playground.

Each of the intervention schools had a library (*gonokendro*) sponsored by BRAC, but none of the non-intervention schools had any. Although the librarians were found in official records for each library, they were not seen to play any role related to the library; rather to teaching in classrooms like other teachers. According to the government rule, every secondary school should have a library with a librarian. Therefore, the schools showed books and libraries in their official records and recruited librarian, but in reality, there were no library. However, there were some books kept in the cabinet in teachers' room, but the students never borrow books from there. On the other hand, all PACE intervention schools had librarians too, but they also did not take any responsibilities regarding the library. There were separate librarians for *Gonokendros*.

Only one of the six study schools had a separate laboratory; however, no use of it was observed during fieldwork. The equipment and chemicals for scientific experiments were seen in cabinets of teachers' room. Sometimes the teachers brought the equipment in the classrooms to show the students.

3.1.4 Teachers and students

The study schools had 73 teachers, 18 of them were female. All six head teachers were male, and only two assistant head teachers were female. All of them had master degrees. Most of the teachers were experienced for several years and received various training from government and NGOs. Majority of the teachers had other income sources including private tutoring, agriculture and business. However female teachers had to spend plenty of time in household chores; therefore, they were less involved in other income activities.

Total number of students was 2,158; 1,046 boys and 1,112 girls. Though the total number of girls enrolled in these schools was higher than boys, it varied from grade to grade and school to school.

Table 3. Number of students by grade and gender

School No.	Intervention status	Grades									
		Six		Seven		Eight		Nine		Ten	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	Intervention	22	29	20	34	16	32	29	34	26	36
2	Intervention	56	47	39	30	44	45	38	34	28	30
3	Intervention	40	22	28	43	33	46	43	30	42	38
4	Non-intervention	34	47	40	52	39	40	27	44	16	26
5	Non-intervention	51	28	35	45	37	35	34	39	25	24
6	Non-intervention	43	34	60	59	43	49	26	29	32	31

Most of the students lived in the same or nearby villages. Majority of the students were from low income family. Agriculture, day labour and small vendor were the main source of their family income. During harvesting, most of the students had to work to support their family. Therefore, attendance became very low during this season. Besides, a

significant number of the boys had to work as a day labourer or rickshaw puller to support their family and to bear their educational expenses and this is the reason behind the lower attendance rate of boys in the schools.

3.1.5 PACE intervention in study school

Each of the three intervention schools got all the five major activities of PACE programme. The PACE activities were initiated with teachers' training in these schools. Teachers' training started in two of the intervention schools in the year 2003 and the rest in 2005. In total 19 teachers, received subject-based training and four head teachers and five SMC members received management training. The teachers agreed that they learned so many useful techniques from these training but because of time constraint, they cannot apply these techniques always. One of them said, 'I have learned how to conduct classes in a better way. We have learned how to do a lesson plan, group work, pair work and how to give feedback to students. In reality, it is difficult to apply all these within a limited time. We cannot check all of the students' notebooks and cannot give them proper feedback. If we want to do all these, we will not be able to complete our syllabus before examination'.

Up to the year 2015, teacher training under PACE programme was free along with free food and accommodation and some allowances for transportation. The programme started to charge from 2016, which was discouraging for the teachers. After imposed charge, only one teacher received subject-based training from one of the study schools. The teacher said 'I only received this training because the head teacher requested me to do so. Though the training was helpful I'll not pay for any training in future'. Over the years, the PO built intimacy with the teachers, so the teachers could not refuse the PO, but at the same time, they also declared that they would not be able to pay for any training in future.

Two study schools got mentoring training in the year 2005 and 2006, and the rest received it in 2010. Each year thirty students received training from BRAC. With the help of teachers, the POs generally selected the mentors and then divided the classes into groups according to the number of mentors and class size. The mentoring training was held in regional centres of BRAC so at the beginning the PO along with teachers visited students' homes to consult with the parents. The mentoring programme ran well until 2014. Regular supervision of POs was the key to success of these activities. No new mentor received this training after 2015 due to a charge of fees, and the activities of mentors' like group meeting or wall magazine also reduced noticeably.

During four months stay in study schools, a few activities of mentor was noticed once in one school. The PO along with some mentors made some posters of groups and its members' name. According to the teachers, activities of mentors reduced, as the POs did not monitor this regularly, The POs, however, blamed reduction of human resources at the field level.

The CAL programme started in these schools in 2005 and others in 2010. BRAC provided all the equipment to conduct computer-based classes including computer, projector, sound system and UPS. Each school dedicated a classroom for CAL where the equipments were kept, and classes were conducted. BRAC also provided training to the teachers on how to conduct CAL classes efficiently. Meanwhile, the government also emphasised computer aided classes. The government provided laptop and appointed ICT teachers to all the secondary schools as well. However, a limited number of CAL or ICT classes were conducted during the fieldwork. Students were asked in the

survey how many of them can operate a computer. A statistically significant difference was observed by gender and school type. Grade wise difference between students' ability in computer operating was also observed. Students of upper grades in both types of schools were more likely to have this skill.

Table 4. Percentage of students can operate computer by programme type and gender

Programme type	Gender			Level of significance
	Boys	Girls	All	
PACE	25.9	13.5	19.5	p<0.001
Non-PACE	18.2	7.9	12.8	p<0.001
Level of significance	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	

Table 5. Percentage of students can operate computer by programme type and grade

Grade	Programme type		Level of significance
	PACE	Non-PACE	
Six	10.4	2.6	p<0.05
Seven	12.6	8.5	ns
Eight	21.5	8.5	p<0.01
Nine	22.1	22.8	ns
Ten	31.2	25.5	ns
Level of significance	p<0.01	p<0.001	

Though it was expected that each teacher would conduct at least three classes a week the teachers mentioned that due to frequent load shedding they were unable to conduct CAL classes. The UPSs were in bad repair in all the schools, so there was no backup power supply, and in one school, the computer and projector were stolen. However, more students of PACE schools had access to computer-based classes than non-PACE schools.

Table 6. Percentage of students having access to computer class by programme type

Programme type		Level of significance
PACE	Non-PACE	
79.1	67.5	p<0.001

The subject-wise difference in computer-based classes was also observed. Bangla, Bangladesh and Global Studies, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Higher Mathematics, and Accounting were the subjects where the use of computers was much less popular. Whereas, in PACE schools, a good amount of English, Mathematics and General Science classes were held using computers it was not the case in non-PACE schools. Against 41% of the students using computers in English classes under PACE programme, it was 3.2% in non-PACE schools. Sixty-four per cent of the students of PACE schools used computers in Mathematics classes and 34.6% in General Science classes.

Table 7. Percentage of students having access to computer class by programme type and subjects

Subjects	Programme type	
	PACE	Non-PACE
Bengali	0.5	3.8
English	41.5	3.2
Mathematics	64.0	0.0
General science	34.6	6.5
Bangladesh and global studies	1.8	2.4
Physics	4.6	0.0
Chemistry	6.2	0.0
Biology	3.4	2.4
Higher math	0.5	0.0
Accounting	1.8	1.9
ICT	84.3	94.9
Others	2.5	24.1

The students and teachers both liked to have computers in classrooms. The students said that they enjoyed the classes more as they could understand the contents easily by visualising them rather than only reading them. Teachers also said that the students remain more attentive in computer-based classes. During the survey the students were asked how they benefited from computer-based classes. Majority of them replied that it was more helpful to understand lessons.

Table 8. Percentage of students benefited by computer class by Programme type and type of benefit

Benefit of computer class	Programme type	
	PACE	Non-PACE
Increasing attention in class	54.9	39.2
Understanding lesson	83.6	79.5
Acquiring good result	10.0	6.2
Increasing eagerness to go to school	13.9	9.7
Increasing efficiency in technology	33.5	36.5
Others	2.5	3.0

Gonokendro was established in these study schools between 2005 and 2010. A trust fund of Taka one lakh was created in each school with equal support from BRAC and community. This money was deposited to a bank; interest of which was used for the librarians' remuneration. Each school dedicated one room for the library. BRAC also facilitated the library with books and computer. However, during fieldwork, it was observed that one librarian was very irregular, one was late on a regular basis, and there was no librarian in the rest school. Therefore, the students could not borrow books regularly. The students were not allowed to borrow books from the library in one of the schools. They were just allowed to read books only in the library. The librarian informed that some books were missing and therefore, she stopped lending books.

The *Chatrabondhu* programme started in one school in 2008 and others in 2013. A number of *Chatrabondhu* were trained under this programme, and among them majority were female. Most of them were mainly students and housewives. The POs visited the classrooms and asked the students to identify some potential volunteers from their locality who can help them to their study. A significant number of poor but meritorious

students got help from this service. However, due to cost minimisation approach, no monthly refreshers were held from the year 2015. As a result, the *Chatrabondhu* lost their interest in this kind of volunteer services.

3.2 School Discipline

This section emphasises on general rules in schools, attendance of students and teachers, and use of punishment to maintain school discipline.

3.2.1 General rules

There was some flexibility regarding school hours. According to the government rules, the schooling should be six hours in each day. However, most of the schools (both type) enjoyed some flexibility to readjust school hours. For instance, one of the schools used to start school early, remove lunch break and therefore end school early. Provision of lunch break was there at this school until last year. When the teachers observed that, students do not come back to classes after lunch break they rearranged school timing. The teachers also noticed that mothers also could not provide lunch at 1:00 PM as they had to do other household chores. So, the students remained hungry either ways. Schools, in general, started and ended early in the summer too. Due to high temperature and load shedding of electricity, it was difficult to stay in the classrooms especially at noon and afternoon. So schools reduced contact time of each period and overall school hours. For instance, in one school, duration of a period was reduced from 45 minutes to 30 minutes during summer.

Flexibility was also observed in students' uniform. Some girls wore colourful *dupatta* with their school dresses, and boys wore jeans instead of nevi blue pants. Both girls and boys wore comfortable shoes rather than cades. Hence, students could alter some of the parts of their uniform without making any major change. One of the students said 'we wear jeans instead of pant as it lasts longer and does not need to wash regularly. During summer we do not wear cades because feet became sweaty and smelly'.

3.2.2. Attendance of students

Students' attendance was noticeably low in both types of schools. There were so many reasons behind this such as selling labour to support the family, attending private tutoring in the morning before school, sickness and extreme weather. However, selling labour to support the family was the crucial reason for absenteeism of boys in these schools. A significant number of boys was involved in wage-earning activity like rickshaw pulling or working in factories. During harvest, session attendance became very low. Both girls and boys joined their family in harvesting paddy, and therefore, they could not attend school. Attending private tutoring in the morning was another reason for absence or coming late in schools. In a PACE intervention school, many students left first one or two periods for the cause of private tutoring.

Most of the schools recorded students' attendance twice a day to prevent them from escaping school after recesses period. The tendency of leaving school after recesses period was observed in both types of schools. Almost half of the students did not come back to school after the lunch break. This tendency was higher in PACE schools than the non-PACE schools; however, the later type of schools was more concern to prevent this. Lack of sincerity in recording students' attendance was observed in an intervention school. However, students' attendance in classrooms and examinations was better in the intervention schools.

Students had to submit an application with guardian's signature in case of enjoying unauthorised leave. Both kinds of schools charged fine to students in case of unauthorised leave or for leaving school without permission. In some schools, the collected money was used to pay cell phone bill of teachers to contact with the parents of absentee students or for the refreshment of teachers after their meeting.

3.2.3 Teachers' attendance

Irregularity in teachers' attendance was commonly observed in both types of schools. The teachers often came late in schools but recorded the time at which they were supposed to come. The head teachers were found trying to bring the teachers in the school on time through providing advice orally. Sometimes so many teachers were seen to be absent which made it difficult for the heads to continue school. One intervention school was found to be closed earlier than the scheduled time very often because of the early departure of teachers.

Attempts were there in the schools to conduct classes of absentee teachers by those who were present in school on that day. However, such classes were not that much effective. According to a teacher, 'proxy classes are not much helpful because we conduct those without any preparation. It is not possible for another teacher to continue the progress of that course. In most cases, we saw that proxy teacher pass the time by asking students to sing songs or giving them some writing tasks'.

3.2.4 Uses of punishment

Although corporal punishment was prohibited in school, unfortunately, teachers of both types of schools often punished students physically. In most of the cases, teachers physically punished the student in the name of bringing them in order or discipline. In an FGD student said, 'If we break any rule teachers beat us, sometimes they punished innocents too. They beat us with hands, cane, duster, and ruler.' Data obtained from observation also showed that most of the teachers carried cane or ruler with them while conducting classes.

Parents were found more conscious of physical punishment. They sometimes took it to the head teachers as complain. For instance, a teacher of an intervention school was walking through the playground. Some boys were playing nearby. Suddenly a small piece of stone hit the teacher. The teacher became very angry and spanked students with a cane whom he got at his reach. The next day, a mother came to the head teacher with his wounded son and complained against the teacher. The head teacher called the teacher, and he sought apology to the mother.

Teachers also used other form of punishment which includes threatening, yelling, criticising or using slang. Students in an FGD said, 'Though we respect our teachers some teachers use slangs like *harami*, *bonno shuor*, *madarchot* to us very often'.

Disobeying teachers was considered as the most serious misconduct of students and punishment for that was highest. In a PACE school, during the fieldwork, a 10th-grade student was terminated from the school as he tried to hit a teacher. The teacher asked him not to talk in the classroom, but he continued to talk. Then the teacher tried to beat him, and the student also tried to hit him back with a broken leg of a bench and said to the teacher that "I will rape you". Then the teachers decided to terminate him.

3.3 Teaching-learning process

Classroom teaching in English, science and mathematics were observed in both types of schools to understand the difference between them in the teaching-learning process. In other words, whether PACE intervention made any difference in this case. Teaching-learning process of each subject described separately, which was followed by assessment culture of the schools.

3.3.1 Changes in English teaching-learning process

Greetings

Exchange of greetings was observed in English classes in both intervention and non-intervention schools. Most of the time, the teachers in the intervention schools greeted their students in English using very cordial words. Students also responded to the teachers cordially in English. It was also noticed that teachers' language of greetings varied with the age variation of the students. For instance, a teacher greeted the students of grade VI in the following way;

Teacher: My dear babies good morning! How are you?

Students: Good morning sir. We are fine and you? (In chorus)

Teacher: I am very well and happy. You know why?

Students: Why sir?

Teacher: Because I am in a flower garden and you are my flowers.

The same teacher when greeted the students of grade X simply said, 'good morning students'. He also got back the same wishes from his students. On the other hand, the non-intervention school teachers greeted their students in Bangla, and the students replied in the same language. Teachers in these schools often asked about students' physical condition. In some classrooms of non-intervention schools, the students first greeted their teachers and the teachers replied. They exchanged greetings by saying 'Aas-salamu-aali-kum sir' (Islamic way) to their teachers and the teachers responded in the same way by saying 'Wa-li-kum Aas-salam'. Therefore, exchange of greetings among teachers and students varied in terms of language uses, choice of words, as well as in content.

Classroom Management

In the intervention schools, the mentors were expected to take their seats with their groups; however, this was not the case in reality. Teachers were also seen reluctant about seating arrangement of the mentors or the other students. Some teachers of the non-intervention schools were found taking initiatives regarding classroom management. When they found students walking outside the classroom, they instructed them to enter the classroom and afterwards they ordered them to sit on the front bench. His statement in this regard was, '*those who are sitting on the back benches come forward. You should not keep the front benches empty.*' It was commonly observed in both types of schools that the relatively meritorious students used to sit on the front benches. Their seats were fixed which seemed like a convention. Those who sat in the middle of the classrooms took their seats depending on availability and situation. In one intervention school, benches were arranged in U-shape pattern, which greatly helped in minimising difference regarding seating position. Some behavioural issues occurred in both types of schools. Once in an intervention school, two boys of grade VIII quarrelled, and one uttered slang aiming another. The teacher did not take any measure to resolve

the situation except separating their seats in two different benches. On the other hand, in a non-intervention school, one boy of grade IX uttered slang aiming his teacher. The teacher further inquired about who uttered the slang, but nobody agreed. He did not proceed further. So this kind of problem dominated in the schools. All types of teachers used to complete lessons on time.

Announcement of the lesson

It was observed in the classrooms of both kinds of school that the teachers hardly tried to deliver any motivational words or importance of the lessons before starting them. However, in FGD, the students of an intervention school reported that some of their teachers tried to motivate them towards lesson. They said,

'Our English teacher explains the utility of the topic before he starts teaching. He tries to say how a particular topic is linked to previous as well as future topics and also with those in an upper grade. After hearing such words from our teacher, we become inspired to learn the lesson and there concentrate more'.

During the interview, the above English teacher agreed that he tries to motivate the students before starting any lesson. He argued that it was his own technique to keep the students attentive. In his voice, *'before teaching a topic, I try to provide hit list about that topic. It's my own technique of teaching'*. Here the phrase "hit list" is significant which is similar to "utility" uttered by students in FGD. A teacher of a non-intervention school was found trying to motivate the students in her way. She showed two pictures from the book that contained the picture of human, garden and dog, cat and so on, respectively. She then conducted the following conversation,

Teacher: Who can make words using G?

Students: Grade, good, gender

Teacher: Good! Can you make words using C?

Students: Citizen, class, city

Teacher: Okay, G for good and C for the citizen. So the whole thing is 'good citizen'. Today's topic is a good citizen.

In classroom observation, it was not clear about the effectiveness of this technique. The students participated with the teacher, but it was not clear if they could relate the example of the topic. Generally, teachers in both kinds of the school asked the students what was their home task for the day. Usually, the mentor/1st/2nd boys/girls replied to such question. Teachers spent some time to check homework quickly and then directly announced the lesson of the day. For example, in a non-intervention school teacher announced the lesson in the following way, *"Students, open model question 1. See there are a composition "wonders of modern science". Today's lesson is "wonders of modern science"*. Guidebook was used to search this composition. A similar scenario was observed in intervention schools as well. So, clearly the teachers announced lesson without any motivational connection. The only difference was that non-intervention school teachers gave the instruction in Bangla but the intervention school teachers used English.

Methods and materials used in lesson presentation

While the English teachers of intervention schools were using various teaching methods and techniques in classrooms, the English teachers of non-intervention schools were mostly using lecture method. They were also struggling in using lecture method

properly. They hardly ensured proper engagement of students in learning process. Emphasis on memorisation was much in these classrooms.

Teachers of the two intervention schools were found using lecture method properly. They were asking questions to the students off and on and were trying to get answers from them through helping them in preparing their own answers. Teachers also did various activities engaging the students. For instance, one of the teachers described a lesson to his students through clear and easy words. He then invited one frontbencher to read the lesson from the guidebook, simultaneously asked others to listen to her carefully, because they have to answer some other questions from the text. In this regard, the teacher said,

Look, English is an international language. English language skills are important for our students, but very often, we struggle with insufficient facilities. We don't have an audio-visual facility; electricity is not always available. Should we stop practising? No! See one is reading, and others are listening to her, and then they are answering questions. It's the listening test. So, if you want, you can involve students in language skill practising.

Another teacher in an intervention school, who was basically appointed to teach history and Christian religion was found teaching English. She was not competent in using effective methods. Therefore, she was seen inspiring students to memorise. For instance, once she was teaching how to write an e-mail. She wrote an e-mail on the blackboard and instructed the students to memorise the first three sentences within five minutes. When she was asked about memorisation, she argued referring to the rural context of the students and their weakness in learning. She said that,

"This is a rural school. Most of the students are weak in English and mathematics, especially in English. There is a reason. The guardians are illiterate and cannot provide any educational guidance at home. In this situation, I think it's better to ask them to memorise.

This teacher had lack of confidence in presenting lessons as well. She sometimes was doing wrong in spelling while writing on the blackboard and was unable to say meanings of some words' asked by her students. The teachers of two other intervention schools were found confident while delivering lessons. They interactively communicated the students and confidently explained the lessons before them. In an FGD, the students said the following words about one of them– '*our English teacher is very knowledgeable. He knows everything. Any question asked of him must be answered. We like him very much*'. These teachers gave credit to BRAC training programme for their improved confidence level in delivering lessons. One of them said, '*BRAC training is really good. I have learnt many techniques of effective teaching from this. Especially some grammatical contents, which increased my confidence while teaching in school*'.

Among the three teachers in non-intervention schools, one was found presenting lessons with confidence while others had some limitations in this regard. They were seen reading out the text from guidebooks and hardly were explaining those or saying anything of their own. Students of these schools were used to memorisation, which means that instead of promoting critical thinking memorisation was more practised in the non-intervention schools.

Majority of the intervention school teachers handled group and pair work more skilfully as well. For instance, one of them asked the students to prepare a graph presenting population of Bangladesh in different years. After preparing, that teacher engaged them in group discussion. The students worked actively in the group and presented the graph

in the classroom. Before students' presentation, the teacher demonstrated to them how to present a graph to an audience. Therefore, it may be said that this teacher was caring and skilled in organising and monitoring group work. Other teachers of the intervention schools were found struggling in arranging collaborative learning atmosphere properly. Students hardly shared their views in such activities among themselves rather the group leader had to take the maximum load of tasks. Teachers were not found instructing properly to form groups. They even did not think of the best way of making the groups. In most cases, those who sat on a bench were designated as a group. Groups were named by English alphabets instead of any meaningful word. Teachers' active participation in group work or monitoring was also absent. Her role was limited to writing the group task and time on the blackboard. As the teachers were not careful, the students used to gossip during group work and quarrel among themselves which ultimately seriously hampered proper classroom management. The teacher also did not disagree with that. She believed in the effectiveness of group work for learning but acknowledged the limitations as well. She said-

'The purpose of group/pair work is undoubtedly good. A student may hesitate to ask any questions to his teacher but can ask that easily to their friends while he works in the group. In this way, students' mutual relationship become better also. But the reality is that not all the group members work equally, and therefore any particular student has to do more. For example, when Masud (pseudo name) is in a group he has to do the maximum work'.

So, this statement revealed her limitations in conducting group/pair work even though she had received training from BRAC. The teachers of non-intervention schools hardly organised any group work. Pair work was sometimes seen in such schools. In pair work, students' role, in general, was to question to each other. Sometime teachers provided the questions and their answers in advance. For example, once a non-intervention school teacher wrote two questions on the blackboard; these were 1) *Where do you live?* 2) *What are you doing?* She provided the answers and asked the students to memorise them because she will give the same questions the next day in pair work. The following day, the teacher wrote the above questions on the blackboard along with their answers. She then asked the students to come in front of her in pairs. One of them asked the questions, and the other replied. Some of them forgot the answers but replied looking at the blackboard. Such practice is far from group work or collaborative learning, and does not include critical thinking. Besides group and pair work, teachers dominantly used question-answer as another teaching technique which would be discussed in the 'students' participation' section.

Teachers of both types of schools solely depended on guidebooks sold in open market. Students prepared graphs were also seen used in the classrooms of intervention schools. On the other hand, in a non-intervention school, a teacher was found to sell a note of two pages in the classroom. The students or the school administration did not react to this. When the teacher was asked about this, he replied, *'The language of the guidebook is sometimes difficult to the students. I wrote them easily so that everybody understands. I sell this sheet to help them in learning'*. Surprisingly, none of the teachers or the students considered the textbook as their first choice as learning material. Basically, teaching-learning activities were held keeping the examinations in mind. Good scores in the examinations were the target, and they perceived guidebook as the most powerful means to achieve good marks in English. The scenario had been narrated by a head teacher of an intervention school. He said, *'student of my school use "Basic English Grammar and Composition" book, not the EFT book provided by NCTB because the passages and question pattern of examination are not demonstrated in the NCTB's book but in the guidebook'*. English guidebooks published at least by three

private companies were seen used in the classrooms of the study schools. When the teacher was asked to justify the strength of a particular guidebook compared to the textbook, she compared it with another guidebook but not with the textbook. She told-

'The book had been selected by the teachers' union to use in this school. As it has been referred to the syllabus, we have to use it because examination question will be selected from this book. In case of quality, it is so-so. I can show you two other guidebooks which are better than this'.

Therefore, the situation is indicating that guidebook has been highly dominating in the school culture and has taken the place of principal teaching or instructional materials regardless of school type (intervention or non-intervention). Every type of activities was presented in the guidebooks in a readymade mode which teachers found very helpful for them. Teachers mostly blamed their workloads for not using teaching materials other than a guidebook.

It was expected that technology would play a vital role in the intervention schools in minimising the gap of using teaching materials in English lesson and would also improve the teaching-learning pedagogy because of computer-aided learning (CAL) programme there. In reality, teachers hardly conducted any English class using those materials. During observation of four months, only one CAL class was found to be initiated by the teacher, which he could not complete because of the insufficient supply of electricity. No CAL class was seen to be arranged in other two intervention schools. The projector was stolen from a school. There was CAL classroom in another school, but the teacher did not use that during the observation period. In the incomplete CAL class, it was seen that the CAL material was helpful to capture students' attention where the teacher also delivered the lesson skilfully. However, teachers did not conduct CAL lesson for many reasons. Apart from poor electricity supply and security issue, the teacher felt that CAL materials were not helpful in completing syllabus timely. To them, CAL lesson consumes time. No use of ICT materials was seen during the observation in non-intervention schools as well.

Students' participation in English teaching-learning process

Although the teachers of both types of schools adopted various techniques to involve students in classroom activities, intervention school teachers were found more active in this regard. Students commonly participated in exchanging greetings which took place in the classes. Apart from this, the students of both types of schools participated in question-answer sessions, reading the text, presentation, group/pair discussion, writing on blackboard and so on. Among these activities question-answer session was the most frequently used strategies. Students' participation through presentation was seen in one lesson only in an intervention school.

Although the English teachers of intervention schools were more competent in engaging students in classroom activities through using question-answer strategy, some limitations were there in asking questions. Teachers are generally encouraged to ask questions to the whole class rather than to the individual one. The intervened teachers asked most of the questions in one-to-one mode. Majority of the teachers in intervention schools asked questions in a balanced way, that is they asked questions equally to the students regardless of their seating position, merit level and gender identity. However, one teacher sometimes asked more questions to the slow students and those who sat on back benches. Justifying his action, the teacher said-

'I ask questions to my students to encourage them to participate with me. I want to see their increased participation. I ask more questions to the less meritorious students so that they 'get fear' and engage in the study more and more. I think they should be given an equal chance. Otherwise, they won't participate in the lesson'.

The phrase 'get fear' is vital in the above quotation, which indicates that questioning engages students and challenge them to think about it, which ultimately increase classroom participation. A basic difference between the intervention and non-intervention school teachers was that the teachers of the former type tried more to engage their students in classroom activities compared to those in later type. Non-intervention school teachers had limited attention to those students who were weak and participated less in activities. It was also observed that such kind of students often created classroom destruction by making noise and different disturbing tasks like side talking and not paying attention to the teacher. The teachers termed such students as 'daring students'. Intervention school teachers often encouraged their students to ask a question. One of them said, 'Dear students, do you have any question? Please ask me. Who ask more questions can learn any language easily and quickly.' When any weak student struggled to say something, the teachers helped them by saying, 'it's okay if you make any mistake. Just try to speak.' Students also recognised this in FGD. One of the FGD participants made the following statement-

'We first ask a question in Bangla in our English class, and then translate it into English. If we make any mistake, the teacher makes it correct. Before asking a question in English we request our classmates not to laugh if we make any mistake. If anybody does so, the teacher insults him/her.

A different scenario was observed in non-intervention schools. Teachers dominantly asked questions to the students and hardly asked them to make questions. They also insulted students if they fail to answer. When they called any students to write on the blackboard, they usually called relatively meritorious students aiming to teach the others from them. One teacher of a non-intervention school, in this regard, said-

'I prefer to call the meritorious students to write on the blackboard because it creates an opportunity for the weak and slow students to learn something. However, if I call a weak student, s/he will not be able to add anything to the learning process'.

The above perception process limits the scope for many students to take part in classroom activities. Although a better situation was observed in the intervention schools, some limitations were also observed there. For instance, not all members of the groups participated in discussion or activities equally. Relatively meritorious students took the lead in the discussion, which ultimately made others idle and reluctant.

In short, relatively meritorious students got more attention than others in both types of schools. The difference was that, the teachers of intervention schools tried to make the other students active in classroom teaching-learning process which was hardly seen in non-intervention schools.

Assessment and feedback practices in English lessons

While teaching, teachers mainly asked questions to the students for assessing them. Although it was the main tool for assessment in both types of schools, some fundamental differences were there. Teachers of intervention schools were used to ask questions irrespective of students' merit position, sitting location, or gender identity. Non-intervention school teachers mostly asked questions to meritorious students. Such

tendency was noticed in one intervention school teacher's classroom as well. It was noticed that teachers of both types of schools selected the lowest level questions (dominantly knowledge-based) to assess students. Intervention school teachers tried to engage students in the assessment process. For instance, once a teacher asked a student to identify whether a specific statement was true or false. After getting the reply, teacher asked the other students whether the answer was correct. Such kind of cross-checking practice was rarely found in the non-intervention schools except in one English class where teacher involved students in individual writing and instructed them to exchange their work for the next one. However, she did not check the authenticity of such assessment. Intervention school teachers provided feedback to the students more generously and encouragingly. For instance, when the students provided correct answers, they usually uttered appreciating words like thank you, well done, you have done very well, excellent and many more. Non-intervention school teachers also uttered such kind of words, but those were not so frequent like the intervention school teachers. When any student of intervention school struggled or failed to answer, teachers did not apply any psychological or corporal punishment rather inspired them to try once again. A different scenario was observed in non-intervention schools. Instead of helping them to try, they often insulted the students. Sometimes made them bound to stand to hold their ears, sometimes to sit or stand simultaneously holding the ears. Besides such insulting punishment teachers used to hit in students' hand using a cane.

Remedial teaching

Remedial teaching aims to identify those students who could not achieve day's competencies and to provide them proper treatment either by a teacher or by the peer. Teachers of both schools hardly identified such students. Hence, no measures were taken to achieve day's competencies. During lesson presentation teachers, in general, asked everybody if any problems were there to understand but no specific attempt was observed to identify students who might need remedial intervention.

Homework

Teachers hardly assigned any thought-provoking critical tasks as homework rather promoted rote memorisation. In an intervention school, the teacher instructed the students to memorise a paragraph called 'School Magazine' for next class. On the other hand, a non-intervention school teacher wrote the following questions on the blackboard and instructed the students to memorise those for the next class. The questions were

- a. Where did he make a hut?
- b. Was the man happy in his hut?
- c. How did he find himself again in a family?
- d. Where and how can a person be happy?
- e. What is the moral of the story?

This non-intervention school teacher made the students believe that proper learning of the answers to the above questions would help them do better in the examination. Both parents and teachers believed that homework was important for learning because those put pressure on students to study. Students also agreed that, if the home works required memorisation it was difficult and uncomfortable for them to carry on. When homework consisted of collecting information or doing something from own thought, was comparatively relaxing. Such homework was assigned only in one intervention class.

Closing classroom lessons

Teachers' taking some additional time (4-5 minutes) after the official time is over was common in the classrooms of both types of schools. This tendency was more among the teachers of intervention schools. This additional time was usually used for cleaning blackboard. If the home task was written on the blackboard and the students were still writing, the teachers requested the students to clean the blackboard after they have finished writing. Non-intervention school teachers did not show such intention in cleaning blackboard. They hardly uttered 'goodbye' or had any interaction with students before leaving the classroom. Respecting the teachers, the students of all schools stood and uttered *salam* while teachers left the classroom. Teachers also replied them. A teacher of an intervention school was found very cordial while closing lesson. He used to thank students for their contribution and cooperation in classroom activities. He usually uttered, 'Today, this class is finished here. Thank you, dear students, for your participation and hard work in today's class.' In informal discussion, the students said that they felt good at this.

3.3.2 Changes in Science teaching-learning process

Greetings

Following a cultural norm, students used to stand up when teachers entered the classroom. Students of non-intervention schools uttered *salam* and *adab* (religious way of greetings) for *Muslim* and *Hindu* teachers, respectively. Students of intervention schools hardly greeted their teachers in this way rather they preferred to remain silent while teachers entered the classroom. Teachers of both types of schools also usually did not want to know how the students were. Only in one intervention and one non-intervention school both teacher and students asked each other how they were.

Classroom management

Science lessons were conducted in different periods such as 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th in both types of schools. The average duration of lesson delivery was 35-40 minutes, and classroom size varied from 20-80 for both intervention and non-intervention schools. Both types of science teachers showed little care about classroom management issues. Shortcomings were identified in both types of classrooms in terms of classroom management. There was no sitting plan in the classrooms and students also used to sit as per their choice or to depend on the availability of a place. Among the three intervention schools, only one teacher in a single lesson was found asking students not to sit more than three on a bench as empty benches were there. In other two schools, teachers hardly noticed such issue. Also in case of non-intervention schools, science teachers hardly took any initiative to arrange proper sitting of the students. However, one science teacher of these schools tried to help students sit properly in their classroom through area and number of benches were inadequate compared to the need. He had complained regarding this which had been reflected in the following statement of him,

'Science should not be offered in these type of schools. This school was built in 1967, but until today, there is no necessary arrangement for science teaching. There is no specific classroom for science or a laboratory. There are no well-trained science teachers as well.'

Relatively more noise was observed in the intervention school classrooms. A big classroom consisting of 70 students were too noisy. It was a CAL classroom of grade VI where students of two sections sat together. There was no sitting instruction by the teacher; as a result, the continuous noise was noticed. The teacher was struggling to manage the students. Instead of convincing students not to the noise he used to depend on a cane. Although he did not beat any, but often threaten students showing the cane. In his words-

'The government has recently banned the use of the cane in school but to control young students, it is necessary. I do carry a cane while entering classrooms but do not use it on them. Seeing the cane, they get fear and remain silent for at least some moments'

Role of class captain/mentor in classroom management was not noticed. In case of intervention schools, mentors were expected to play a vital role in classroom management by ensuring sitting in groups and confirming classroom discipline, but such contributions were unseen. Class captains of non-intervention schools did not contribute to facilitating classroom management except collecting homework from students and returning them after checked by the teacher, which the mentors also did sometimes.

Announcement of the lesson

Science teachers of non-intervention schools introduced the lesson in a better way than the intervention school teachers. Science teachers of intervention schools hardly used any motivational words before introducing a lesson. On the contrary, teachers of non-intervention schools spent some time to motivate students before starting a lesson. For instance, a non-intervention school teacher wanted to teach 'chemical formula'. He adopted an interesting way to motivate students towards this topic. He asked a student his name. The boy replied Md. Mainul Kabir and the teacher wrote the name on the blackboard. He then wrote 'M M Kabir' and said, we can use a shorter version of his name. Like this, chemical compounds can be expressed in a short form in writing chemical reaction which is called chemical formula. In this way, he tried to grow students' interest on a certain issue and then wrote the words 'chemical reaction' on the blackboard. Another teacher of such schools used to ask lesson related quiz or any other thing that linked the lesson with students' real life. The announcement of a lesson in this way greatly worked to ensure students' mental engagement with the teacher and lesson. On the other hand, in most cases science teachers of intervention schools announced the lessons directly usually not motivating the students. They sometimes asked students to open particular page of a textbook and then to read that. Science was taught in CAL classroom in one out of three intervention schools. Broadly, no change was observed in CAL and non-CAL classes in terms of announcing the lesson. However, sometimes it was better where teachers did not use CAL materials. For instance, in a science class where CLA materials were not used, the teacher asked students, 'what come out when we cut our hand?' Students replied 'blood'. He again asked how blood passes throughout out body. Students responded, 'through vein'. In this connection, the teacher announced the day's lesson.

Methods and materials used in lesson presentation

Teachers of intervention schools mostly depended on lecture method for teaching science through some of them tried to blend lecture with question-answer strategy. Science teacher used CAL materials only in one intervention school, but in presenting these materials, he did not adopt any student-centric investigative teaching method. For example, while teaching 'matter and its state' he only demonstrated the slides without

engaging children or explaining any concept. He instructed one student to read out the topic from textbook and others to listen to him. Such kinds of activities did not stimulate the students for investigation or observation. On the other hand, the non-intervention school teachers used question-answer regularly along with lecture method and also demonstrated various experiments in science classes engaging their students. For example in one non-intervention school, science teacher showed a solution of water and soda while teaching chemical reaction. Another teacher showed the experiment of osmosis. Experiment on 'reflection of light' was demonstrated in another class. While showing experiment, teachers first demonstrated that experiment and drew the figure on board to clarify the theoretical part and then the students tried themselves which provided them with the scope of getting hands-on experience of the experiment. Students liked those experiments and reported that such activities generated their interest and attention to classes. Non-intervention school teachers were found probing questions repeatedly for eliciting information from the students, and when the students reached close to the answer, they encouraged them for another try which was rarely seen in intervention schools. Before presenting any concept non-intervention school teachers tried to involve students in brainstorming regarding that concept and usually, elicited students' prior knowledge of that concept which intervention teachers hardly did. They also used life-related examples more compared to the intervention teachers. Another appreciable aspect of non-intervention teachers was that they were caring about using teaching materials. They collected teaching materials and also engaged students in collecting these. In one observation it was found that the teacher brought a little plant at the classroom and using that introduced students to different parts of the plant. All students got the scope to participate in this activities as the teacher demonstrated the plant being closed to them. He also drew a picture on a board and indicated the parts there. Such kind of combination of teaching strategies helped students to understand the topic well, reported by the students. Intervention teachers hardly used any materials. Use of guidebook as the instructional material was found more in intervention schools. Teacher argued that such guidebooks help them to take preparation for asking multiple choice and creative questions in the classroom. Non-intervention school teachers used a textbook in classrooms. Intervention school teachers reported that they understood the importance of using materials and demonstrating experiments but workload and other personal responsibilities resisted themselves to practice these. On the other hand, non-intervention school teachers believed that for teaching science these were essential. Observation also revealed that non-intervention school teachers were more confident and sincere while teaching which had been reflected in their lesson delivery, and interaction with the students.

Students' participation in teaching-learning process

In both types of schools, teachers tried to promote students' participation in the classroom through questioning and collaborative learning tasks like group and pair work. Students of none of the schools participated spontaneously rather assigned by the teachers. Teachers of both types generally asked questions aiming to the whole classroom where the attentive students intended to respond voluntarily. One intervention school teacher tried to make room for the students of backbenchers to respond orally or writing on the blackboard. She called them by name for answering. However, it was not a regular practice. On the other hand, another intervention teacher was found who tended to select bright students for classroom activities. Students hardly ask any questions in the classroom. It was noticed in one intervention school that teacher got angry if the student asks any question. The student needs to take the permission first for asking a question, and when he asked: what is *ovijon*? The teacher stopped him with shouting that the question belonged to another chapter, not in the

current one. Such kind of behaviour from teacher's side resisted that student from asking further questions. Opposite scenario was found in a non-intervention school where a science teacher appreciated questions from the students. A girl asked what would happen if somebody consumes too much saline. The teacher thanked her and replied the question cordially saying that it might cause some imbalance in physical ingredients of the consumer. Comparatively more group and pair work were observed in intervention schools, but the teachers could not manage those appropriately most of the time. The huge noise was created during such activities. Though the teachers moved to the students, they did not bother that much. Some of the students pretended to work while the teachers came closer but immediately after leaving the teachers, they became busy with their gossiping. However, in the group and pair students did not participate in a balanced way rather some particular students generally the attentive one worked and they presented the group findings as well. Teachers argued that when they had to deal with a large number of students in short time such mismanagement occurred. In non-intervention schools, students did not participate in a mentionable number of group and pair work except during the experiments where they collaboratively worked, and the teachers closely monitored them, which helped to resolve the management issues.

Assessment and feedback practices in science lessons

Both types of teachers asked questions to assess the students. Observed data revealed that almost every question asked by the teachers was chosen from the knowledge subdomain. Examples of such questions are; what is the pH value of water, what is the formula of water, what is isotope and so on. An intervention teacher asked questions to the weak students however the others tended to ask questions to the careful students most of the time. Non-intervention teachers in this regard tried to ask the question in a balanced way. Non-intervention teachers used to engage students in solving creative questions as a part of the assessment. A teacher also marked those, and identified the weakness of the answer and advised the way to obtain full marks. However, these marks were not added to the final exam. Intervention teachers hardly provided any feedback on students' response. Contrary the non-intervention teachers praised by uttering thank you, good and so on to the students who could answer properly and in case of wrong answer teachers corrected those and hardly insulted the students. Intervention teachers sometimes assessed students through group and pair work. One teacher involved students in cross-checking of the group work which means one group assessed another group's work. The teacher thought that assessing each other's work helped them to understand their strength and weakness. One another intervention teacher assessed two-three pairs' work randomly, and the rest did not get any feedback from him. In the interview he argued that within such short time it was not possible to assess each pair's work.

Remedial teaching

None of the science teachers from both kinds of the school thought about remedial teaching. They did not identify the students who could not achieve day's competencies. Hence, no measure was taken. In general, when students failed to answer questions some of them tried to provide feedback but teachers did not promote any extra care such as tagging the weak students with the bright one for group study after class or spending some time with the weak and slow students. In the intervention schools, mentors were supposed to provide some remedial support to the weak students, but in reality, such practice was rarely seen.

Homework and closing the lesson

In both types of school teachers assigned memorisation based homework and wrote the task on board and with this, they closed the lessons.

3.3.3 Mathematics Teaching-Learning Process

Greetings

During the observation, it was commonly found that the students stood up when their teachers entered the classroom and greeted the teachers with *salam*. Replying that *salam* teacher instructed them to sit. Most of the time teachers did not proceed with further questions that could make the students feel that their teachers thought of them cordially. Especially the non-intervention teachers did not ask any questions about how the students were. Only a teacher of an intervention school used to ask students about their health and home regularly. He provided a feeling to the students that he care about them. Observation revealed that students also paid more attention to that teacher and participated more actively in his classes.

Classroom management

In case of classroom management, intervention teachers demonstrated more sincerity and skill. Intervention teachers' classes were comparatively clean and less noisy. Also, the intervention teachers showed more awareness regarding students' seating arrangement. They usually tried to ensure balance seating positions in the classroom, whereas, in the majority of the non-intervention classes four to five students used to sit on the same bench keeping other benches empty. Non-intervention teachers also avoided such mismanagement. In a non-intervention school, a group of local students sat in some fixed seats of front and backsides of the classroom where other students did not dare to sit. Such kind of scenario was not seen in intervention schools. One unique aspect of seating arrangement of an intervention school was that the teacher established a seating plan in the classrooms. He organised seating plan in such way where the students of different merit level sat together. In the rest of the school's boys and girls did not sit together, but in his class, they did because the seating arrangement was not based on their gender but merit level. He argued that keeping the attentive students in some fixed benches learning could not be effective rather they should work with the average and slow students so that learning could be shared. He also managed a U-shape seating arrangement in his classroom. Neither the mentor nor the class captain of non-intervention schools contributed to classroom management except collecting and returning the homework to the students in intervention and a non-intervention schools.

Announcement of the lesson

The intervention teachers regularly showed a tendency of not motivating the students towards the topic. They hardly announced the lesson title rather started teaching directly. On the other hand, non-intervention teachers in most of the classes tried to motivate the students towards the lesson. They tried to draw students' attention through explaining the associated concepts of the topics and relating to these concepts with the broader future benefits. For example, in one lesson teacher wanted to teach a geometrical problem about the circle. Before solving that problem, he explained radius, diameter and circumference and inspired students saying that knowing these concepts would help them solving circle related many problems. Teaching these concepts did not

motivate the students directly towards the problem, but this approach helped to generate their interest in the lesson. Non-intervention teachers usually uttered the lesson headline followed by writing that on board which intervention teacher hardly did.

Methods and materials used in lesson presentation

Mathematics teachers of every school mostly used lecture method. Both kinds of teachers had their rationale for using lecture method more. Intervention teachers believed that when they could engage students in writing or drawing figure while lecturing it worked effectively. On the other hand, non-intervention teachers thought that for completing syllabus on time lecture was the most useful method. Besides lecture, a little use of participatory and question-answer approaches was also seen. Intervention teachers used to ask questions during lecturing; as a result, they could understand if the students understood the lesson, which non-intervention teachers hardly did. Both intervention and non-intervention teachers verbally explained the process while they solved the problems on board, but in case of using examples, intervention teachers were more serious. Teachers usually did not use any materials except the geometrical kits in geometry classes. Intervention teachers sometimes used the example in such a way that helped to minimise the gaps of materials usages. Such as while teaching “angle” at grade six; the teacher asked students to search for angles from their classrooms, and when they struggled to find he showed them the windows, table and an old poster from where students might identified angles . More participatory classrooms were found in geometry lesson, where teacher drew the figure step by step and the students also drew with them. All the teachers seemed confident in lesson delivery and engaging students except an intervention teacher. He sometimes seemed less comfortable in lesson delivery and sometimes made mistakes in solving pattern related mathematical problems on the board. In case of using board, intervention teachers demonstrated the more educational approach, they used to utter what they were writing, and while they invited the students also instructed them to utter what they were writing there, non-intervention teachers hardly did that.

Students' participation in teaching-learning process

Teachers dominantly controlled the whole teaching-learning session. Therefore, students had limited participation in the teaching-learning process, which was true for both types of schools. Teachers did not engage students in collaborative learning tasks like group and pair works rather assigned to individual problem-solving. Therefore, students could not exchange their ideas and learning. One intervention teacher believed that individual work was more effective for engaging students on tasks as he said, “most of the students did not work in group and pair but when individual tasks were assigned each of them had to work that is why I preferred individual work”. Non-intervention teacher, on the other hand, perceived that group and pair work consumed huge time, which hindered on-time completion of exam syllabus. It was noticed that both types of teachers tried to engage students in writing on a board by assigning them some problems to solve. Intervention teachers in this regard invited students more regardless their gender, and when somebody felt less confident, they inspired to have a try. For example, once a girl was not getting the confidence to come and write on board teacher then encouraged her saying “you can do that I believe”. It was observed in non-intervention schools that teachers invited boys more to work on a board. When teachers were asked the reason, they did not clarify it. It is worth mentioning that students of intervention schools were more confident in using the board and explaining the process of solving problems. Another way of engaging students in the lesson is questioning. In both types of classroom questioning was teacher dominant. Students hardly asked any

questions. In intervention school, when teachers asked questions attentive students used to reply them most of the time on a volunteer basis, sometimes in the chorus. A number of students remained inactive in the questioning process. However, one intervention teacher was found who encouraged the bright students and simultaneously provided an opportunity to the slow students as well for answering some questions. He also inspired students for asking a question to him. In this regard, he said, "I feel so good when students ask a question. I inspired them to ask the question because it increases the eagerness of learning". Non-intervention teachers hardly inspired students for asking questions. In case of one non-intervention school when teachers asked questions the students raised a hand, and one answered. Teacher selected that student. About students' attention in the teaching-learning process, it was found that at both types of schools, girls were more attentive and their participation was also higher. For example in one intervention school, girls responded more to teachers' question. Overall, students were more attentive in intervention school. They created less noise and side talking while their teacher taught. On the other hand, students in non-intervention school used to make noise and sometimes made fun with a peer without bringing that to the teacher's notice. For example, in trigonometry class teacher wrote "Cos θ " on board which was uttered as "Cosco soap" by a back seated student, which made his peer a laugh. It was common in both types of schools that students of backbenches were less attentive.

Assessment and feedback practices

Observations revealed that both types of teachers assessed students in different segments of the lessons. Intervention teachers called the students for solving mathematical problems on a board; they also engaged students solving problems individually. Teachers uttered inspiring words like thank you, very good, right and so on when students solved the problems correctly, if not, teachers identified the mistakes and helped to solve. On the other hand, non-intervention teachers used to apply corporal punishment and insulting words when students did mistake in individual tasks. However, one non-intervention teacher was found different who treated students' mistakes positively and inspired them towards correct path. An intervention teacher and almost every non-intervention teachers used to beat students with either a stick or their hands when they did not do their homework. In case of beating, both types of teachers showed more aggressiveness to the boys. In case of girls, the non-intervention teachers beating less but uttered insulting word more whereas the intervention teacher used to alert them only for not to make the same mistake again. Questioning was another popular way of assessing students. It was noticed that the questions asked by the teachers encourage memorisation. Both types of teachers used guide books for asking multiple choice questions which students memorised earlier. Sometimes they wanted to know the algebraic formula from the students verbally, which were another form of uttering memorised contents. Teachers thanked the students for a correct answer. Though teachers asked closed questions, intervention teachers tended to offer the questions to the whole class, which created an opportunity for different positioned students to participate which non-intervention teachers rarely did. Non-intervention teachers used to take the class test after teaching new topic which intervention teachers did less. None of the teachers added class tests' marks in the final exam.

Remedial teaching

During observation mentionable effort for remedial teaching was not seen from teachers' side in both types of schools. Teachers even did not summarise the discussion before closing the lesson. However, in an intervention school, a teacher suggested the

students to help each other in the understanding of the lesson, which was a general instruction but not related to any specific topic. Another teacher in non-intervention school placed a physically challenged student beside some attentive students. He wanted to promote that student in the classroom for inclusiveness but not for the remedial purpose.

Homework and closing the lesson

One intervention teacher did not like to assign any homework. He argued that a majority of the children did not do the homework by themselves rather copied from those who did properly. He believed that it was better to ensure students' learning at classroom rather than assigning homework. The rest teachers assigned homework, and those promoted repetitive work and memorisation. One intervention teacher assigned memorising hundred multiple choice questions from a guidebook and solving two algebraic problems from the creative questions' guidebook. According to him, such kinds of homework helped students to get prepared well for examination because these guidebooks were a good source of exam questions. On the other hand, the non-intervention teachers used to assign the already solved problems and the similar kinds of homework. One of such teachers took exam regularly on the homework he assigned. He rationalised that such short exam helped students to be habituated for the bigger exam. So, it can be assumed that most of the teachers assigned homework for students' better performance in examination instead of strengthening learning. It was commonly found that both types of teachers closed the lesson with hurry as they already passed few extra minutes. During closing, non-intervention teachers advised the students to prepare the lesson for next day whereas the intervention teachers sometimes mentioned the topic would be taught next day. No formal closing greetings from teachers' side were observed in any of the schools. Students in both types of schools as a part of common norm used to stand up while teachers left the classrooms.

3.3.4. Assessment Culture

Nature of assessment

Students of both types of schools were assessed through formative and summative assessment procedure. Following the government schedule, half-yearly and annual examinations were found taking place as a part of the summative assessment. This was not always appreciated by the teachers. In addition, head teacher of an intervention school introduced quarterly model tests. He argued that students do not study regularly if formal examinations held once after six months. Therefore, to create pressure on the students model tests were introduced. He mentioned another two reasons for arranging such examinations. Students had to pay the pending tuition fees for participating this examination, which were financially helpful for the schools. Secondly, such examination helped teachers to understand learners' academic improvement.

However, this was not possible for the schools to continue this kind of examination because the local education offices asked to stop it, as there was no legal permission for this. On the other hand, headteacher of another intervention school organised model test for the JSC and SSC candidates who did not face any objection from the local office.

Formative assessment in intervention schools was limited mostly to classroom questioning, but weekly and monthly tests were regularly organised in non-intervention schools. Subjects like mathematics and science were emphasised more in these tests. Adequate direction for further improvement was also available based on the

performance of the students in such tests. Test using multiple choice questions was organised by a non-intervention school as local education officer advised it. Teachers saw that such test helps students to improve if adequate feedback is provided.

Assessment of scripts and publishing of result

The intervention and non-intervention schools demonstrated many similarities in terms of assessing students answer scripts and publishing results. In each school, a teacher was responsible for collecting the scripts after examination, and to distribute to the respective subject teachers. All the schools tried to publish results of both half-yearly and annual examinations within their earliest possible time.

Both types of schools' teachers also opined in a similar way when they were asked about the marking strategy in the script. They reported that nowadays they had to assess the script such way that nobody fails there. One teacher of intervention school in this regard said, "Now students do not fail, we have to put mark such way that they do not fail. If somebody fails in school exam his/her performance is demonstrated as pass on the website". In one non-intervention school, all students were declared passed in some special considerations. Some intervention teachers tried to set some standards for providing high marks such as, having an introduction and good description of the answers, which would be clearly written without spelling mistake. Both types of teachers showed the scripts at classroom which was appreciated by the students of both schools. They opined that they could understand their scopes of improvement while they revisited their scripts. A difference was observed in a point that the intervention schools most of the time tried to publish the result in the presence of the guardians and SMC members, which was noticed in one non-intervention schools only. Both types of schools sent report cards to students' guardians and took it back with the guardians' signature. In terms of academic achievement, no mentionable change was observed between the two types of schools. Sometimes the intervention schools performed better, and sometimes the non-intervention schools did. So, it cannot be concluded that the intervention schools could build a culture of performing better in the examinations.

3.4 Role of library

This section emphasises on the establishment of the libraries and the use of it in schools' daily life by the students and teachers.

3.4.1 Establishment of library in schools

There was no library in non-intervention schools, and in the intervention schools, the library was installed by BRAC as the *Gonokendros*. During observation, around one thousand books were estimated in each *Gonokendros*. In only one school librarian complained that some books were missing because some students did not return the books. To establish the library, BRAC shared fifty percent of the establishment cost and the fixed deposit for the librarian's salary. Community shared the rest of the money. Teachers raised the money from local elite people and teachers also contributed money for the library. After the establishment of the library a fixed deposit was created with the rest of the money from total collection. The monthly interest from the FDR was spent as the librarian's salary. There was also a computer in the library, and the librarian conducted basic computer skills course for students. Initially, the salary of librarian was around one thousand taka per month, but the interest rate went down very low latter. During the fieldwork it was observed around BDT 600 per month. Due to a lower salary, the librarians became demotivated and irregular. The opening time of the library in one

school was found very irregular during the fieldwork. In most of the days, the librarian opened the library for two to three hours. In the other schools, the librarians hardly opened the library. However, the students said that a few years back they could borrow books from the library regularly, but now they hardly found the library open to borrowing. The PO said, 'we cannot tell any harsh words to the librarians, as their salary is very low. If we scold them, they would not continue duty as the librarian. Nobody wants to work for the low salary'. One of the librarians showed her dissatisfaction regarding the low salary 'our salary is too low. I cannot work for the whole day for BDT 600 only per month. If I spend that time in my household or on my cattle, it will bring more money for me'. The computers were also out of order so the librarian could not able to make money by conducting computer training.

3.4.2 Use of library

The girls borrowed more books than boys and students of grades six and seven used the library more than the ten graders. The librarian said, 'juniors borrow more books because they are new to the school and the books are also new to them. So, they are more interested to read books. However, when they go to more senior grades they lose their interest. Moreover, they have to sit in the SSC exam, so they do not have any extra time to read extra books'. Students were asked during household survey how many of them borrowed books from the library in last six months. A significant difference between girls and boys was found regarding borrowing book from the library. Table 9 shows the percentage of girls and boys borrowed books from the library.

Table 9. Percentage of students of PACE schools borrowing books from school library by gender

Gender		Level of significance
Boys	Girls	
28.6	42.9	p<0.001

Most of the books in these libraries were provided by BRAC and the schools provided a few. Students found these books monotonous as these books were nothing new to them. One student said "we already have read all the books there are no new books. That's why we don't go to the library". Librarians also said that BRAC provided books only once at the beginning. They do not provide any new book. So, students do not find any more interest to come to the library.

However, gender differences also persist in a choice of books. One of the librarians said that "the girls look for novels and the boys like to read thriller". During the household survey, students were asked what type of books they borrowed from the library in the last six months, and the following table shows their responses.

Table 10. Percentage of student (PACE) borrowing books by gender and type of book

Type of book	Gender		
	Boys	Girls	All
Story	82.9	83.9	83.5
Novel	17.1	25.0	22.0
Drama	6.6	1.6	3.5
Poetry	6.6	15.3	12.0
Biography	34.2	17.7	24.0
Religious book	3.9	1.6	2.5
Science/general knowledge book	19.7	6.5	11.5
Joke/funny book	9.2	6.5	7.5
Magazine	1.3	1.6	1.5
Others	1.3	2.4	2.0

Both teachers and parents acknowledged that reading books is a good habit for students and it not only enhances their reading skills but also increases their outer knowledge. One of the parents said, "I know my daughter borrowed a lot of books from the library. It's a good habit because it's better than visiting neighbours and gossiping idly".

The students were also asked about how reading books help them and majority of them said that it increases their knowledge.

Table 11. Percentage of students (PACE) getting benefited from reading books by gender and type of ways

Ways how the books helping	Gender		
	Boys	Girls	All
Increase eagerness to learn	0.0	2.9	1.8
Increase knowledge	89.4	90.3	89.9
Know about biography	10.6	13.6	12.4
Can know new word	0.0	1.0	0.6
Increase reading habit	0.0	1.9	1.2
Know about liberation war	0.0	1.0	0.6

3.5 Role of schools to promote leadership skills among students

This section presents the scopes of enhancing students' leadership skill within the school compound. The highlighted part of this section is the role of class captain, the formation of school cabinet, activities of school cabinet and other scopes to develop leadership skills in schools.

3.5.1 Role of class captain

Most of the schools (both type) had provision for building leadership skills among students. Through the class captaincy schools encourage the students to develop this skill. However, only fewer students could avail this opportunity as teachers prefer top students as class captains. Two to three students from each class were selected as class captain by the teachers. Gender wise distribution was also noticed in these study schools. Generally, the girl and the boy who topped in the class were selected as the class captain. The class captains maintain liaison between students and teachers. They

control the discipline of the classroom in the absence of teachers, at the same time they also raised the necessities of the students. However, when they were asked in FGDs about their duties as class captain, they emphasised only how they helped the teachers and how they control the discipline of the class. They also helped the teachers during various events of the schools; such as to control the crowd during sports day, prize-giving ceremony or victory day.

3.5.2 Formation of school cabinet

The government also put emphasis on students' leadership in secondary schools. Through an ordinance on 15 February 2016, directorate of secondary and higher education (DSHE) instructed 15,000 secondary school and madrasas to elect a seven-members cabinet to help students practising democratic norms and values develop leadership skills and reduce the dropout rate. Although the decision was declared on 15 February 2016, and the instruction was to hold the election on 21 March 2016, but the study schools received the official order on various dates. Therefore, some of the schools got limited time to take preparation for this new initiative, and some of the schools held the election later.

According to the official order, the tenure of the seven-members student's cabinet would be one year, and students from class six to ten would have the voting rights. After the election, one of the members of the cabinet would be elected as the prime minister by voice vote. He or she would distribute portfolio among his or her cabinet, following a parliamentary democracy. There would be ministers for education, mid-day meal, environment, health, water resources, teaching materials, cultural affairs and sports, and others as per the recommendation of the general students.

In our study schools regardless of PACE intervention, some experienced free and fair election and in some schools, teachers selected the cabinet members, and they distributed the ministries among students as well. In some schools, even the candidates were selected by the teachers. One of the students said 'I was absent from school on the Election Day because I did not know the date but surprisingly my name was proposed by the teachers, and I was elected'. The office assistant of that school said the cabinet was not elected but selected. In another school, no election was held although the teachers got the notice from DSHE. However, when the UEO asked for the list of the cabinet members, the teachers selected some students as cabinet members and send their name to UEO. The students even did not know that they became a member of students' cabinet and which ministry they are in charge.

Opposite scenario was also observed in some schools also. In such a school, the students conducted the whole election process under the guidance of teachers. The candidates also participated in the election willingly. The students played a role as election commissioner and presiding officers, and they also printed ballots. The candidate's campaign for votes by visiting classes and also published their manifesto. Each candidate spent BDT 160, for this purpose. The general students also enjoyed voting on the Election Day, and the successful candidates celebrated their victory by distributing foods to their supporters.

Most of the teachers appreciated the idea of the students' cabinet. One teacher said, 'the students learned how to select a leader and the whole process of election. We were surprised to see the result of the election. The students choose the most well-mannered and polite students as their leaders. We never thought these students would be elected'.

Parents also emphasised on students' cabinet's positive aspects in FGDs. One of the parents said 'for the prosperity of our country only doctors and engineers are not enough we also need qualified leaders. We hope, through this initiative the students will learn how to be a leader and how to think about others' interest, how to give a speech and how to meet demand'.

The students were also happy about their leaders, and they called them the minister. They did not have any complain about the leaders except one. In a school, the students elected a new comer of grade nine; he was a new student and others did not know much about him. They found him quiet and polite and elected him as a cabinet member being convinced to his characteristics. However, after the election, he started eve-teasing and anti-social behaviour.

Some of the teachers were not convinced about the idea of students' cabinet. One of the head teachers said, 'though the idea was to grow democratic values among the students from early age, but there is some negative impact also. No top student was elected, and inattentive students won the election. We restricted them from visiting students' home for canvassing, but we heard that they visited students' home at night for canvassing. We are creating *pati neta* (incompetent leader) from a very young age'.

Among the six study schools in three, more girls were elected than boys, and in two schools boys surpassed the girls. In total twentyone boys and seventeen girls were elected as the cabinet member. In the other one, no election took place, and the teachers selected some students as the cabinet member to fulfil the demand of government without informing the students. Therefore, the cabinet members of that school was not counted here.

3.5.3 Activity of school cabinet

It was recommended that the students' cabinet would hold a meeting with teachers regularly. In most of the cases, one to two meeting was held to distribute the ministries among the cabinet members. After that, no meeting took place in any of the study school. No notable activities were observed during four months stay at these schools. However, the cabinet members played the role as class captain in some schools, and they took responsibility to control discipline during various events. Although there was no clear instruction or guidance from the teachers about the responsibilities from the teachers, few members took the initiative themselves after the election. Such as leading others to clean classrooms, to make a garden, inspire other students to follow school's rule or request the head teacher to repair tubewell.

3.5.4 Leadership opportunities through scouts and the girl's guide

There were other activities also like girls guide and scouts, which helped students to build leadership skills. However, their activities were also limited, and only a few students got opportunities to participate in these groups. They participated in discipline management during events especially during annual sports and sometimes lead the morning assembly.

3.6 Co-curricular activities

Promoting co-curricular activities was one of the important aspects of the intervention. This part describes the opportunities of different games in schools, the condition of playground and some other activities that promoted students' co-curricular skills.

3.6.1 Games

There was a physical training teacher in each surveyed school. However, only one of them from a non-intervention school was proactive to coach the students in particular games like football, volleyball, handball and many other games. He conducted at least one class for each grade a week on how to play these games. He conducted separate classes for girls and boys. This teacher also helped students to participate in various competitive tournaments within the *Upazila* or outside. Before each tournament, he took permission from the head teacher so that students who would participate in tournaments could practice more during school hour. Therefore, in this regard, this school was ahead of other schools of the *Upazila*. In other study schools, intervention or non-intervention the opportunity for learning games was very limited. The teachers take physical education classes through lectures, and no practical lesson was conducted. One of the students said, 'as our PT teacher is female, she does not coach our games'. Sometimes the student participated in inter school games competition, but they did not perform well because of lack of coaching. One of the students from an intervention school said in FGD, 'we participated in girls' interschool tournament. We did not even know the rules. Our teacher never teaches us the game, and as a result, all of our girls were injured'. Moreover, the teachers discouraged students from participating in this kind of tournament. One of the boys said, 'we formed a cricket team and asked for permission to participate in an inter school cricket tournament. The head teacher denied and said exam would be held soon you should not participate in the tournament; it will hamper your study'.

3.6.2 Playground

Most of the schools had a large playground, but the students do not play there, because the play ground became too hot during the lunch break of mid-noon (01pm to 2pm). Students from nearer villages went to their home to have lunch, and many of them did not come back to the schools for the rest of the classes. Others from far villages stayed at school and chatted with each other. Most of them did not bring lunch from home and buy snacks like *muri chanachur*, pickle and so on, from nearer shops or stalls.

However, if the weather was comfortable the boys occupied the playground, and the girls stayed in classrooms. The boys played mostly football and cricket. Sometimes they brought their equipment and sometimes they borrowed it from school. However, the girls were discouraged to play on the ground. One of the girls said in FGD that, 'our teachers do not like us to play on the ground. Once we asked our teacher to give us some equipment to play on the playground. The teacher replied that you do not need to play in the ground you are grown up now. You do not wear frock anymore; now you wear *dupatta* so now it is indecent for you to play in the ground'.

3.6.3 Other activities

On the other hand, other activities like singing; dancing, reciting or drama was not encouraged also in both types of schools. There was no provision for students in these schools to learn these kinds of activities. No teacher was also found who had professional training regarding these activities.

As these schools were located in rural areas and most of the students also lived in villages there was no opportunity to learn these activities from out of the schools. However, the students of both types of schools performed singing and dancing at cultural events of the schools. They performed songs and dances they learned from

Indian-Bengali movies. One of the teachers said, 'students love to sing and dance from Indian-Bengali movies, but if you ask them to perform a patriotic song or folk song no students will be found'.

Incidents regarding cultural events were also common in these schools. Some of the schools (both types) stopped celebrating some of the events because of some incidents. One of the teachers said 'the students perform songs and dance from movies. This type of song make the crowd crazy and it became difficult for us to manage the crowd. We do not have a boundary wall, so outsider came to watch our shows, and they taunted, whistled, and threatened us when we tried to stop them. After that, we stopped to arrange such kind of cultural events'. In another school same kind of incident occurred during Bengali new year celebration. During the event, the boys from other villages disrespected the girls of the school, and the boys of the schools fought with those boys. After that, the school decided not to arrange such events anymore.

Teachers and students of the entire PACE intervention schools said that they participated a lot of debate competition and prizes in the past when PACE activities were very vibrant. The POs and trainers visited their schools regularly and gave training to the students. Students also participated in many inter-school and intercity debate competitions. However, from last few years, the POs did not visit schools and students did not receive any training. Therefore, the debate activity also has been discontinued. On the other hand, in non-intervention schools, there were very limited provisions for such kind of activity. However, one non-intervention school once participated in a debating competition; the head teacher hired a debate trainer to prepare the students for the competition. The trainer was from BRAC.

3.7 Gender issue

This section represents the gender relationship among boys-girls, teacher-students and teacher-teacher. Addition to this how gender identity influenced decision-making process has been discussed.

3.7.1 Relationship between boys and girls

Separate sitting arrangement for boys and girls was found in all of the study schools. Though, the girls and boys shared the same classrooms but they were not allowed to sit together in same benches as the social practices do not permit it. The school also followed the rules very strictly. Therefore, the girls sat in different rows. One of the head teachers said, 'the villagers do not allow the boys and girls to sit together. We also like to keep them separate, otherwise many problems may occur'. Parents also had complete consent on this matter. One of the parents in FGD said, 'they are studying together; they do not need to sit together. If they sit together, there will be chances to be distracted from the study'. However, in a school, girls and boys of grade nine sat in separate classrooms. The head teacher said, 'these boys were reckless and they harassed many girls. However, we could not take any action against them because of local political leaders. Once I punished a boy, and the boy's father came to school along with some local leaders, and physically harassed me. Then we decided to separate their classrooms'. The girls of grade nine and other grades also said that they always avoid those boys and do not even cross their classroom.

The girls and boys were not allowed to talk to each other. In most of the cases, (both type of schools), data revealed that the girls talked to girls and boys talked to boys. One of the girls in FGD said, 'society does not like girls to talk to boys. If someone sees a

girl to talk with boys, he will think that the girl is doing something else'. The boys also said the same thing. The teachers also discouraged them from talking to each other. One of the teachers said, 'the girls and boys should not talk to each other because it will turn into some other problem. I observed the president of the student cabinet talk to girls a lot then one day I warned him to not to talk to girls'.

Two schools (one PACE intervention and one non-intervention) among the six study schools did not even allow the girls to sit in classrooms when the teachers were not present. The girls in these schools enter in each class after the teachers get entered the room, and they leave the room after each class before teachers left. Rest of the time they wait in girls' common room. The girls did not like this practice. The girls complained that the condition of the common room was so poor they could not sit there comfortably as the adjacent toilet was so dirty and bad smell of that toilet made it harder for them. Space and sitting arrangement were also inadequate.

3.7.2 Relationship among teachers and students

In most of the cases regardless of PACE intervention, a distance between teachers and students was observed. However, young teachers were friendly than senior teachers were, and female teachers were more approachable than male teachers. Most of the teachers said that they try to apply gender balanced approach while asking questions to students. However, boys complained that teachers asked more questions to girls than boys. One of the boys said in FGD "Teachers always ask questions to girls, sometimes they also tease us. They encouraged girls that if they can pass the SSC exam they will get a job in primary schools and they make fun of boys by saying you are useless, tell your father to buy a rickshwa for you." The teachers also admitted this matter. One of them said, "the girls are more attentive that is why we ask them more questions." The girls think that though the boys are ahead of girls in other areas, but girls are more advanced in the study.

However, teachers treated students according to their merit. The better performed students got advantage from teachers. Teachers helped them willingly if any meritorious student faced problems like eve teasing or child marriage. One of the teachers said, 'our teachers go to the villages and solve the problem if the student is brilliant but general students do not get much attention'.

Girls faced eve teasing inside and outside the schools. The girls who came from other villages they faced more eve teasing. Tea stalls, bazaar and markets were the common places they faced eve teasing. The girls became victims of eve teasing in the form of vulgar comments and whistle. The girls passed those places putting their head down and looking to the ground without protesting them. Sometimes they complained to the teachers or parents, but that did not help them for a long period. One of the girls who was a victim of eve teasing said, 'once I complained to my father. My father went to the tea stall with some local people to warn the eve teasers. After that, they stopped teasing for a few days, and then again do the same thing every day'. Girls were also afraid of being stopped to go to the school if they complained about this to their parents repeatedly. One of the girls said, 'if we tell our parents about the eve teasing, again and again, our parents will stop our study'. We also found some girls stopped coming to school or changed school because of eve teasing. A student of grade seven changed school because of being a victim of eve teasing during the study fieldwork.

Girls also became a victim of teasing inside their school by their peer and even sometimes by their teachers. The girls' common rooms walls were filled with vulgar

comments and indecent arts. One of the girls said, 'the boys came to school after school hour to write these indecent words and comments on our common rooms walls. We feel very embarrassed to see those words'. They also complained that some boys also passed vulgar comments to them. They also wrote vulgar comments on girls' bench. However, teachers often took action against such harassment. In a school a boy of grade nine wrote a vulgar comment on a girl's bench. The girl complained about this to the head teacher. The head teacher identified the handwriting and caught that boy. Then he punished him by beating him with a cane and suspends him for few days. Then the parents of that boy requested him to reduce his punishment and let him attend school.

Girls often faced another form of eve teasing through a cell phone. Many girls complained that boys took their photos and videos latter they circulate that on social media. One of the victims said she was coming to school and the boy took her video on his mobile phone and threatened her if she does not respond to his proposal then he will circulate it on social media. The girl complained to the headteacher, and the head teacher seized his mobile phone and erased that video immediately. Afterwards, the teacher warned that boy not to do such thing again. Another girl said that they could not sit in classroom comfortably as boys always tried to take a photo of their unconscious moment. Therefore, they had to be always alert in the classroom.

Moreover, girls were also harassed by male teachers (both type of school). Some teachers passed indecent words to girls and some of them harassed girls by casual touches. One of the girls said, 'we try to keep a distance from our game teacher because he touches us with bad intention'. It was also observed that this teacher also give a lingering look to girls at a vulnerable time. For example, in an exam hall, a girl was busy in answering questions on her paper while the teacher was sat just in front of her and staring lewdly at her. However, this kind of teachers was smaller in number.

Some teachers also made fun while giving a lecture on the human body and reproductive health to make the girls embarrassed. One girl said, 'teacher sometimes made fun during reproductive health classes. Boys ask unnecessary questions during this class and teacher also provoke them to do so to embarrass us'.

Sometimes girls also faced discriminations regarding their dresses or wearing *purdah*. Girls were encouraged to wear a scarf and cover their head in school. Sometimes they were forced to wear a scarf and cover their head. In a school (PACE intervention) a female teacher was found to force girls to wear a scarf while the boys were not even wearing schools uniform. For instance, on an exam day, a girl did not wear her scarf, and the teacher holds her paper for ten minutes as a punishment. Then the girl complained it to her father and her father came to school and said to the head teacher that his daughter had asthma so she cannot wear a scarf. Then the head teacher ensured her father that she would not have to wear a scarf.

3.7.3 Interaction between male and female teachers

In most of the cases relationship between male and female teachers were friendly. However, many female teachers (both types of schools) complained that the male teachers often used slang when they were present in teachers' room, and they felt offended. Some of them said they were discriminated in many ways. They were not permitted to do all things while their male counterpart was permitted. One of the teachers said once she gave a set of the textbook to a student from schools store. Their male teachers often gave books to a student from there without head teacher's

permission. However, when she did so, the head teacher called her to his room and asked her not to give any book to student without his permission.

This was also true for requests for leave. One of the teachers said, 'when a male teacher takes leave no one talks about that but when a female teacher takes leave male teachers make fun of that'. Male teachers also criticised about maternity leave of female teachers. One of the male teachers said in work distribution meeting 'If we have four female teachers and they take maternity leave we will lose two years in total'. Some teachers also did not get their salary when they went on their maternity leave. One of the teachers said, 'I did not get my salary when I was on my maternity leave, but one of the male teacher received a full salary when he was on leave for one year for election purpose because he was relative of SMC's chief'.

Sometimes female teachers were also harassed by their male teachers. One of the teachers said, 'one day after school a teacher took me to a classroom to show a period mark on girls' bench and it was too embarrassing for me. I walked away without telling him anything'.

However, during distributing extra duties like organising any event or arranging students' seats before exams the head teachers considered female teachers. One of the head teachers said, 'we do not send female teachers to market to buy anything or where physical labour is required because, women's workload is much higher than man, as they have to take care of households and their children too'. Another head teacher said, 'we cannot ask female teachers to stay school at night because the community will not allow us to do so'.

3.7.4 Decision-making

None of the female SMC members had any role in SMC meetings. In all six schools' SMC, there was a female member of parents' representatives and a female teacher. They were present in SMC meeting, but they did not participate actively in decision-making or discussion. In some cases, they came late to the meeting and left early. At least one SMC meeting was observed in each school and it was found that female members only nod or assented while the male members were discussing or making a decision. In some school, it was observed that female teachers were involved in entertaining the other members. They were not also asked for their opinion.

However, during schools internal meetings most of the female teachers participate actively. They also express their opinion and participate in the discussion.

3.8 School management

School management is an important aspect of school life. To portray a comprehensive picture on school management discussion has been conducted on the role of head teacher, the influence of SMC chairman, the role of district teacher association and the role of *upazila* education officer.

3.8.1 Role of head teacher

In all six study-schools, head teachers led the school. Head teachers took all the necessary decisions, from distributing responsibilities among teachers, ensuring teachers and students' attendance, financial management and maintaining schools' overall discipline. However, some of the head teachers discuss with other teachers

before taking any important decision. One of the head teachers said, 'I discuss with my assistant teachers before taking any decision so that they cannot blame me on any issue'.

Most of the head teachers were responsive and accessible to teachers and students. One of the teachers said, 'our head teacher is very reachable. Whenever we face any problem, we share with him, and he tries to solve that. This year in our class routine English classes were insufficient, I have requested to increase the number of classes, but he replied that it is not possible in this year as it is already settled, but I will consider this in next year'. Students also shared their problems with head teachers. One of the head teachers said, 'my students come to me with various demand, they even come to me to take leave during their menstruation. Then I assigned one female teacher for this kind of situation'.

Head teachers also maintain liaison between parents, SMC and school. In some schools, it was found that head teachers observed classrooms and gave feedback to the teachers. Most of the head teachers took several strategies to discourage students' absenteeism such as communicating parents, assigning fine and so on. One PACE school's head teacher was found to visit students' home to enquire their study at home. Most of the head teachers were sensitive about girls' security and health issues.

3.8.2 Influence of SMC president

In all the six schools, the head of SMCs had a great influence. They practised a culture of dominance over the schools. Though the monthly meetings were not held regularly, all the financial transaction of schools including teachers' salary required the approval of the president of SMC. Therefore, SMC's president had great control over the schools. No important decisions were taken without SMC's concern, especially head of the SMCs. Sometimes the head of the SMCs interfere the internal matters of schools.

Most of the SMC presidents were local political leaders from the ruling party and they were very influential and rich persons of their communities. They influenced the recruitment of teachers and SMC members, and ensured that they belonged to their supporters. If a teacher or parent is not a supporter of the ruling party, they do not get selected as a member of SMC. In a PACE school, one of the parents wanted to join the SMC, but he was not selected because he was a supporter of the opposition party. After being refused by the president, he changed his son's school. In another school, all the teachers wrote an application to not to recruit a particular teacher for their school. However, that teacher was recruited as he had a very strong connection with the SMC president. In another PACE school, a teacher went on leave for computer-aided learning training organised by BRAC. Then the SMC president called him over the phone and threatened him that he would not approve his salary. The teacher said, 'Earlier I was involved in so many activities like organising debate, BRAC's mentoring programme, but now I do not participate in this kind of activities because our SMC president does not like these'. Teachers' representative member in SMC played a very limited role in representing teachers' problems to the SMC meeting. One of the teachers said, 'Our teachers representative are only puppets, they do not speak for us'. They also influenced teachers to allow ineligible students to appear in public exams.

Sometimes the SMC members along with the president were also involved in corruption. They took a bribe from teacher recruitment and various income source of the school. In a PACE intervention school, they allocated some money to dig a pond in the school compound and again to fill the pond. However, no such action was taken in reality.

Another head teacher said, they built some shop in the front of the school with the money they got from the new recruited teacher. They openly talk about this kind of corruption.

However, the SMC head had great influences in school management, but they had limited contribution to the academic development of the schools. Only in few schools, SMCs head visited classrooms, asked students about their problems, and gave teachers necessary feedback.

Parents' representative in SMC also had a very limited role in decision-making. They were hardly seen to participate in the discussion at the SMC meeting. One of the parents said, 'several times we tried to give our opinion, but they do not listen to us and never gave any importance to our opinion. That is why we do not participate in the meeting'. In only one PACE school, parents, representative visited the school regularly.

3.8.3 Role of district teachers' association

As all the schools were private schools so, the District Teachers Association had great influence on these schools also. The district teachers' association predominantly decides those guidebooks for the students, the syllabus, the exam schedule and the question papers also.

3.8.4 Role of UEO

In most of the schools, the UEO was never found to visit the school. In only two schools, the UEO visited once during four months long field work. However, they did not provide any necessary feedback to the teachers. They only asked some question to students and teachers while visiting classes and gave some lecture to students on how to study well. The head teachers said the UEOs do not visit schools even if they visit they inform them before visiting. One of the UEO said 'we do the only desk works because our manpower is very insufficient to monitor all these schools properly. Sometimes we visit schools, but we only exercise our power do not do proper monitoring'.

Chapter 4

Discussion

4.1 Location and infrastructure

Location and infrastructure of both types of school were almost the same. As the schools were situated in villages, these schools were nearest and convenient to its students. However, the infrastructure and other facilities of these schools were not much impressive and thus could not provide a comfortable environment for uninterrupted learning to its students.

4.2 Students and teachers

Until now Bangladesh government took a lot of initiative to promote girls' education, and the effectiveness of this initiative can be seen in girls' enrolment rate. Girls surpassed boys in both primary and secondary level (Nath 2016). Our findings also conformed this statement. However, the proportion of the female teacher is still much lower in secondary level. In these six study-schools, only 13.14% were female of the total number of teachers, and that is even much lower than national statistics (25.3%) (BANBAEIS 2014). One reason could be the lower participation (30.2%) of girls at tertiary level (BANBEIS, 2014). Most of the teachers in these study schools were graduated, and no recent recruited teacher was below masters degree. On the other hand, teachers also motivated girls to complete SSC exam so that they can apply for primary school teacher's post. Early marriage was the main reason behind girls' dropout from secondary education. However, the dropout case was higher for boys than girls according to our study, as boys had to support their family by joining in wage-earning activity. This was one of the major reason for absenteeism of boys from school also. Girls were more studious, regular and attentive. Therefore, teachers were more satisfied with girls' performance in exam and attendance. This may have a correlation with the better performance of girls in public examinations.

4.3 Teachers training

Most of the teachers acknowledged that the training provided by BRAC was helpful however; because of time constraint, they could not apply those techniques in classrooms. Most of the teachers were overloaded with classes and absenteeism of teachers hampered their quality of delivering lessons. Teachers in both PACE and Non-PACE schools also participated in other training provided by the government and other NGOs. However, these training had limited effects on their teaching method, and they mostly followed traditional method. However, teachers were interested in receiving training. They were not willing to pay for that.

4.4 Changes in teaching-learning culture

Observed data revealed some strengths and limitations of teaching-learning process in both types of schools. It was difficult to conclude that PACE intervention brought mentionable changes in the teaching-learning culture of the schools rather in some cases non-intervention schools performed better because of their more experienced and skilled teachers. However, in some particular aspects, PACE intervention schools were better of as well. In English lessons, intervention schools' students greeted through

English but in the non-intervention schools, most of the time students religiously greeted their teachers. This is interesting. The intervention teachers received training where they learned exchanging greetings in English, and later they transmitted this learning to their students. On the other hand, the non-intervention teachers received training from the government, but in English classrooms, they could not build a greeting culture in English. This may be because of the limitations in training design or in implementing the learning in the classroom. The cultural phenomenon could not be omitted here as well. In Bangladesh context, exchanging greeting through *salam* is a common courtesy. Maybe the non-intervention teachers hold that belief that students should respect their teachers through religious greeting. If such beliefs exist, it is harmful to a CLT class because CLT aimed to educate students in using the target language.

Classroom management was a challenging task to the teachers in general. The observed result showed that management issues included lack of proper seating arrangement, noisy environment and some problem behaviour from the students' side. Seating position centric dominance was acute in the classrooms. The leading students sat in the front side benches, which were a kind of unwritten rule of the classroom culture. Actually this is an established perception of the teachers and students that those bearing the leading roll number are the representatives of the classes and they should be seated in the front benches. In addition, while participating in classroom activities teachers mostly selected them and they tried to participate in the teaching-learning activities dominantly. However, such scenario is not encouraged in the philosophy of inclusive classroom because all the students are supposed to be prioritised by the teachers in a balanced way and their participation should be ensured while teachers offered any questions or assigned any learning tasks.

Problem behaviour among the students of secondary level is not an abnormal scenario in the country. This study also identified some problem behaviour from students' side during the classroom teaching-learning practices of both types of school. Among them uttering slangs, aiming the teachers and passing unexpected comments towards them were observed sometimes. Such kind of behaviour did not form in a day. When such behaviours are not controlled or resolved then these are formulated more acutely. Observed data showed that teachers did not bother that much to help students to come out from such indecent behaviour because they avoided this instead of resolving. May be they tried to avoid any unpleasant situation to enhance a learning friendly environment in classroom but ultimately this did not happen. Values are the integral part of school culture. All kinds of intervention should have a strong aim to purify students' values and behaviour. PACE intervention also intended for this but value crisis was observed in the intervention schools' student as well.

In terms of using proper teaching methodology and materials, most of the teachers struggled. Too much dependency on lecture method resisted them to think out of the box. Intervention teachers in case of English tried to use lecture method more lively but for mathematics and science lecture was used with a number of limitations. Teachers could not ensure proper participation of the students while lecturing. However, in science classes some teachers tried to execute demonstration method, which helped students to understand the concept. CAL materials were designed in such way that could enhance students' attention and participation in the lesson. Unfortunately, teachers did not use those materials. Surprisingly teachers believed that conducting lessons using CAL materials was time-consuming and less appropriate for completing syllabus before the examination. Teachers' perception on the CAL materials is conflicting with the philosophy of the CAL programme because the materials were developed in such way that these would seek students' attention to the class and reduce

teachers' workload through contributing in the self-learning of the students and teachers. Nowadays government has heavily emphasised on using digital technology. Multimedia classrooms have been provided to the schools which BRAC did much earlier of the government. Teachers were provided with training on using these in the classroom. However, during the observation period, no use of digital contents and multimedia was seen. Therefore, serious attention is required in this area. Might be the training programmes are not being effective for which teachers are not able to implement those in classrooms. If the materials are properly used, it is expected that lessons would be completed on time. So, teachers might need more orientation on the materials so that they can utilise these in classroom discourse effectively. Otherwise, their dependency on one way lecturing would increase over the period.

It was commonly observed that the teachers hardly organised group and pair work during lesson delivery and complained that such activities were time-consuming. However, it was observed that teachers had lack of skill in organising group and pair works. They could not engage students in activities. It is obvious that lack of teachers' skill in operating collaborative learning tasks plays a vital role to keep them reluctant from using such activities. As a result, students also could not enjoy a culture of collaborative learning. This might affect reversely for enhancing their skills of learning together.

Another remarkable observation was that teachers hardly used any teaching aids and instead of using textbooks in classrooms, both teachers and students used guidebooks of different companies. This situation brings two issues in discussion; students might struggle to understand a concepts clearly as materials are not used. On the other hand a guidebook centric toxic culture may prevail within the schools. Use of guidebooks in classroom and making students dependent on those might discourage the students to think creatively. These books are designed considering the examination so that students could achieve higher marks but true learning opportunity is not there. A toxic culture like using guidebooks in teaching-learning activities is hampering the creative and critical thinking process of the students but insisting them only for cutting higher marks in the examination. Such scenario is not expected. Questions might arise on the effectiveness of textbooks distributed free of cost nationally because students' over-dependency on guidebook may be a result of textbooks' shortcomings. If they depend on guidebook such severely then what is the rationale of providing free of cost textbook nationally, might be a relevant question nowadays.

4.5 Mentoring programme and students' opportunity to developing leadership skills

Mentoring programme in PACE intervention schools instigated with great initiatives and ran well until 2014. After that, the cost recovery model was introduced, and then the exquisiteness of this programme turned to fade. All the activities regarding mentoring were stopped, as there was no monitoring from POs. Therefore, without continuous monitoring, the mentoring programme would not be continued.

The mentoring programme, class captainship and the government initiated student cabinet election were found to be blended. It was observed that most of the mentors became class captain and , cabinet members. Their role was also limited to the role of a class captain. The fate of government initiated student cabinet was also similar. The teachers organised the election of cabinet members as the ministry instructed them. After formation, the cabinets had no notable activity in schools. Students had no clear idea about their role, and the teachers, were confused about the operation of the

cabinet. The cabinet members, captain or mentors' role, was limited to helping teachers to manage discipline during class or various events around the year.

4.6 Technologies in the schools

Teachers and students both liked CAL classes. Students understood contents more easily, and teachers liked it because it was effortless. Though CAL classes were not conducted regularly, frequent load shedding and poor maintains of equipment were the main constraints. There was provision for computer-based classes even in non-intervention schools as the government also emphasised on computer-based learning and provided computers and projectors to these schools. So, more training on operating a computer and solving the hardware related problem is required.

4.7 Libraries

Only PACE intervention schools had libraries. Though the non-PACE schools showed libraries in official documents so that they could recruit librarian, but none of them had libraries in reality. Like other programme of PACE, the libraries run well before the inauguration of cost recovery model. The librarians were less motivated as their salaries decreased and POs also reduced monitoring as their manpower reduced a lot.

According to our findings among all these PACE component, only CAL and *gonokendro* still had some activities. Reduced monitoring was the main reason behind the limited activities of these programmes. None of the schools showed interest to pay to receive these services. Existing fee for mentoring training, library membership was too expensive for the students. They came from disadvantaged families, and they could not even pay the monthly school fee regularly. So, the fee for these components needs to be reduced a lot. At the same time, more supervision is required for each component, as it is visible that without proper supervision the programme was not running properly in the study schools.

4.8 Opportunity for co-curricular activities

Co-curricular activities were least emphasised in both types of schools. Though the teachers acknowledged the benefits of co-curricular activities for students, they did not create any opportunity for learning these skills. Students at secondary level had a large volume of courses and enough class time for all those courses could not be allocated. So, teachers did not even take into account to allocate extra time for co-curricular activities. Teachers also had lack of expertise for this kind of activities, as they also never got this opportunity while they were a student. Earlier in PACE intervention school students learned and participated in some extracurricular activities like debate, wall magazine and so on. However, as that components of PACE were inactive from the last couple of years both types of schools had the same situation now regarding this issue. In both types of school students participate in schools' various programme like annual sports programme or cultural events, and they performed songs and dances they learned from Indian Bangla channels. Therefore, this indicates that these channels had great influence on our young generation and our culture as well.

4.9 Gender issues

Although all of the study schools were combined schools the schools did not allow boys and girls to get along with each other. The schools also reinforced the cultural practice of keeping girls apart from and boys. All of the participants of this study from parents to

students had complete consent regarding this issue. In both types of school teachers were aware of eve teasing, and inside schools, they took measures against it but outside of the schools they only protest it if the victim was brilliant. So, it was clear that all the students were not treated equally. Moreover, physical punishments were forbidden, and parents were aware of that, which sometimes hold back teachers to take actions against eve teasing. However, girls of both types of schools were aware of eve teasing too, and they complained about their harassment when they face that. Therefore, it can be stated that the environment was not entirely positive for girls, but there was a fearless environment for them to talk about the harassment they experienced. No significant difference was found in the two types of schools regarding this issue.

On the other hand, majority of the study-schools did not encourage women empowerment. None of the head teachers was female, and only two of them had a female assistant head teacher. The female assistant head teachers also could not take major decisions independently in the absence of head teachers as the male assistant head teachers could in other schools. Most of the female teachers experienced criticism by their male counterparts about their maternity leave, responsibilities to their children and households. It seems female teachers also felt minor and they did not express their opinion in decision-making discussion like SMC meeting.

4.10 Influence of SMC in school management

The head teacher played the key role in managing school. The leadership skills of head teachers varied person to person and schools' management varied accordingly. The head teachers took major decision regarding schools' discipline, class schedule, teachers' course distribution, approving leave and selecting participants for training. Some of them practiced democracy and some of them only dictated their subordinates. The leadership of head teachers varied according to their personality and no influence of management training of PACE was observed among the head teachers of intervention schools. On the other hand, SMC president of both types of schools had great control over the schools and they interfered on schools' internal issues a lot. Without SMC, presidents' approval head teachers could not execute any decision. Therefore, the head teachers could not run the school smoothly. Moreover, SMC presidents were mostly from ruling party and always gave an advantage to supporters of their own parts. The most of the SMC presidents were also involved in financial corruption, and they took a bribe from teacher recruitment or took a percentage from the income of the schools like shops' rent or allocated money for any construction inside the school. Sometimes they also forced the head teacher to allow a failed student to participate in the public examination. All these actions ultimately affected schools' interest and in the long run students' learning of the outcome.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and policy implications

Cultural change is a complex phenomenon. Many associated aspects are responsible for bringing cultural change in any setting. Through some innovative interventions, BRAC wanted to bring positive changes in the school culture. However, evidence do not indicate that mentionable changes took place in the school culture due to the intervention compared to the non-intervention schools.

A sustainable practice of any particular interventions may form a culture, which is expected to be long-lasting. BRAC set its intervention within an already existing strong culture in the secondary schools of Bangladesh. BRAC's purpose was to bring quality changes in the secondary education system, which had been struggling with many problems. So, in that situation, a cultural change in the secondary schools was expected especially in the teaching-learning process, values and leadership practices, school management and discipline. PACE under BRAC offered some programmes that could contribute there.

However, BRAC's initiative could not create a mentionable difference in the intervention schools. One of the reasons may be the lack of sustainability of the programmes. The programmes were there by name only. Any activities of these were hardly found during the data collection period. The initiatives such as teacher training, mentoring, CAL, *Chatrabondhu*, and *Gonokendro* did not have any visible presence in the schools that could reform the school culture from an educational perspective. Field experience revealed that cost recovery approach had a strong role in reducing the programme exposure and practice at field level. Payment on service was not appreciated by the participants; also, the POs struggled to convince the beneficiaries for buying the services. As a result, they found it too difficult to work because a cultural shift took place in their field operation too which was under serious criticism. These kinds of situation hindered the interventions. Hence, schools were operated as usually where no mentionable changes took place towards the quality improvement.

It was expected that PACE intervention would bring various positive changes in teaching-learning culture. However, it was difficult to conclude that the expected changes appeared in the teaching-learning process due to the intervention. A number of limitations were noticed there. Teachers' insufficient understanding regarding the intervention was identified as well. They thought that using various teaching methods and materials was time consuming and not helpful for completing the syllabus. This perception spoiled their motivation for implementing the training in classrooms. An unskilled teacher can be skilled if s/he is motivated. If not, no intervention would work for his/her development. Monitoring from POs' side was helpful to keep the teachers active in using the methods and materials properly. Cost recovery approach increased POs' workload, which resisted them to monitor the classroom teaching-learning process as they did prior to cost recovery approach of BRAC. Besides such limitations, some hopes were there as well. Some teachers of intervention and non-intervention schools conducted lessons properly using appropriate methods and materials. Not the intervention but their interest and experience contributed to that.

Both types of schools experienced difficulty with school discipline. Irregularity in students' presence and escaping schools at leisure period was common for both types

of schools. Teachers also showed deviation from moral values in case of their attendance at schools. Therefore, change is required in teachers' and students' morality. Behavioural crisis among students was also noticed. Some of them misbehaved with teachers and teased the girls. Teachers and parents need to show more responsible attitude to them.

Both types of schools struggled to provide adequate scope to the students to develop their leadership skills inside and outside of the classroom. The government initiated school cabinet election earned both criticism and appreciation from parents and teachers. Malpractices from students' side were also noticed during the election. Therefore, careful attention should be given here.

To improve students' creative and critical thinking, different co-curricular activities play a vital role. In case of arranging co-curricular activities, both types of schools exhibited some shortcomings. Physical movement through games and sports was not entertained at school for girls; also, activities like singing, dancing or reciting were not seen in schools. Lacking of such activities may lead the students towards cheap entertainment, which in the long term may hinder their personality.

The school culture was not gendered sensitive in most of the cases. Girls and female teachers faced teasing and harassment by boys and male teachers. Culturally boys-girls' interaction is restricted in the rural context of the country. An easy and friendly relationship with them hardly existed. Sometimes teachers also restricted their interaction. As a result, attending class together and moving around the same compound was not comfortable for the girls sometimes. Such kinds of restricted relationship hindered their scope of collaborative learning and growing together. Such phenomenon in the long term would affect inversely on their personality.

Though the head teacher led the school management, an over dominance of SMC chair in school administration was noticed in most of the schools. Being an educational institution, it is expected that the schools would not be a hub for political bodies but in reality, it was found that the entire SMC chair was the local or national political figure and they practised their power in any decision making in the schools. Sometimes the head teachers felt helpless to them. Instead of contributing to the school improvement, they dominated the teacher. Also, the parents and teachers' representative did not play any vital role in SMC but adjusting themselves with the chair. Such mentality was not supportive for creating a positive culture in the schools.

Finally, it could be concluded that the initiatives taken under PACE intervention had the full potentiality to bring a positive cultural change in the intervention schools. The design and objectives of the intervention were appreciated by the beneficiaries as well but for some inbuilt reasons expected cultural changes did not appear. The mentionable difference with the non-intervention schools did not appear in the intervened schools. In some cases, a lot more things were there in the non-intervention schools that could be learnt by the intervened ones.

Over the time, many issues and problems have been an inseparable part of the secondary school culture. Within this context, it is not easy to bring a change or shift in the existing culture. BRAC's intervention also struggled in this aspect. However, proper implementation and monitoring of the activities may change the situation.

Analysing the limitations and resources, the following policy implications are presented to bring the expected changes in the school culture:

1. **Ensuring programme sustainability through proper monitoring:** BEP should closely monitor which programmes are functioning and which are not. Without ensuring that, overall programme sustainability would not appear and expected cultural change will not happen.
2. **Providing proper orientation of cost recovery/enterprise approach in field level:** Steps should be taken to provide a proper orientation on cost recovery/enterprise model at field level. Without this staff and beneficiaries' perception would not change towards accepting the service. If the services were not accepted then cultural change would not appear.
3. **Building positive perception among the teachers through teacher training:** It was observed that teachers did not apply their training in classroom believing that these were time-consuming. Therefore, steps should be taken to bring positive change on such perception and measure should also be taken to enhance their pedagogical skills.
4. **Increasing shared decision-making regarding the library:** During the observation period, librarians of the intervention schools were found less sincere in their duties as a result expected outcome did not appear. The operational decision regarding libraries could be shared with the school administration to minimise this limitation.
5. **Accelerating initiatives for enhancing moral values among the students and teachers:** Measure should be taken to improve the moral values of the students and teachers. Problem behaviours like girls' harassment, misbehaving with teachers, disobeying schools' rules, political abuse etc., were observed in almost every school. Such situation is threatening to the education quality. The workshop could be arranged within the schools to build awareness against such malpractices.
6. **Treating students' leadership development activities more seriously:** Mentoring programme offered many scopes for developing students' leadership quality. These were not properly followed. Malpractices were seen in school cabinet election as well. So serious attention should be given here. Rules and regulations regarding the cabinet election should be properly followed.
7. **Enhancing scope of co-curricular activities:** None of the schools created an adequate opportunity for co-curricular activities. As a result students enjoyed the limited opportunity for creative thinking and learning values. So such activities should regularly be monitored.
8. **Building gender friendly environment:** Teasing and harassment related gender issues were observed. Addition to that dirty toilet and slang written wall and benches created discomfort environment for the girls. Even female teachers were sometimes harassed by their male colleagues. So, strong steps should be taken to prevent such situation. A committee for preventing gender harassment could be formed in the schools.

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