

Exploring the Dependency of Teachers and Students Regarding the Use of Guidebook in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Guidebooks are quite popular in Bangladesh. There are currently more guidebooks than literary works on the shelves of libraries. It is worthwhile to analyse the popularity of guidebooks because it is indicative of the education system in Bangladesh. This study seeks to shed light on the utilization and reliance on guidebooks by students and teachers in Bangladesh, as well as the causes and consequences of this reliance. This is qualitative research that focuses on a full understanding and analysis of the topic of educational guidebooks in Bangladesh. Teachers and students have been interviewed for this purpose. This has allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the inner workings of our nation's education system. The study's principal findings demonstrate that teachers and students are highly dependent on guidebooks because of majority of the teachers are untrained and lack of degrees in the subjects they teach, the ineffectiveness of NCTB textbooks, lot of pressure from the school administration, guidebook language is easier, organized and translations are offered. In addition, students are encouraged to use guidebooks because of their tendency of memorizing, better practicing opportunities and help to achieving good marks in the examination. The study recommended that the state must create a policy that formally recognises and enhances textbooks involvements of the teachers and students.

Keywords: Guidebooks, Shadow education, Teachers perception, Students perception.

INTRODUCTION

Guidebooks are publications that include test suggestions, ready-made answers to problems from past years, and solutions to the NCTB textbook's exercises. Guidebooks are produced commercially by profiteering corporations that are less concerned with the intellectual development of youngsters than with maximizing their own profits (Ahmed,2020). Since every student desires to perform better on exams and the guidebooks give a shortcut to success, they

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purchase them year after year. However, the guidebooks serve no part in fostering the creativity and intelligence of youngsters, therefore they might be compared to a gloomy cloud that currently hangs over the children of Bangladesh (Adnan, 2018).

Students are led down the path of ignorance by guidebooks, which is extremely destructive for both students and the nation. The Note-books (Prohibition) Act, 1980 outlaws the production, publication, import, distribution, and sale of note-books on textbooks for primary schools and secondary schools up to Class VIII ("The Note-Books (Prohibition) Act", 1980). Again, in December 2009, the Appellate Division upheld a High Court ruling that outlawed guidebooks and notebooks and ordered the government to prosecute anyone found to be in violation of the restriction (Alamgir, 2018). Despite laws, it is rare to encounter a school pupil who does not use a guidebook. As Siddiquir Rahman, former Director of the Institute of Education and Research Dhaka University Institute, pointed out, the authorities have taken few steps to curb the illicit handbook and notebook trade (Alamgir, 2018). Each year, guidebooks worth approximately Taka 1,500 crores are sold in the country. Despite evidence demonstrating the damaging impacts of guidebooks and regulations outlawing guidebooks, the people in this industry continue to assert that there is a big market for these books and that they must print them because they benefit students (Alamgir, 2018). It was important to address the prevalence of guidebooks in our educational system, explore the reasons behind the significance attached to it, and consider potential ways this phenomenon might be affecting the students despite the notable influence of guidebooks in Bangladesh's educational system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Presence of Guidebooks in the Education System of Bangladesh

Despite being aware of the harmful effects of guidebooks, students are socially driven to purchase them if they wish to improve their scores. High-scoring incentives entice students to read guidebooks, and the proliferation of guidebooks leads to poor instruction and more reliance on the guidebook market. As this detrimental cycle continues, some people consider interrupting it, which is why an endeavor to develop the "creative" system was undertaken. To appreciate the appeal for guidebooks, we must first understand the question structure of the Bangladeshi school system. The examination system in Bangladesh is heavily influenced by Bloom's taxonomy. The title of the question is Creative Question. Knowledge, Understanding, Application, and Higher Order Thinking, which encompasses the higher order skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, are the components of a creative inquiry (Hafiz & Rahman, 2019). Therefore, this method analyses the many types of student skills. Theoretically, this approach promotes learning as opposed to rote memorization, hence its successful implementation would have been beneficial for both students and the nation as a whole. However, creative question has been turned into a commercial farce in a nation where textbooks are not interesting, informative, or even entirely reliable, and where the culture suggests that getting high marks is more important than learning (understandable through the numerous suicides and suicide attempts by students who did not get the expected results). Shadow schooling, however, has the flexibility to quickly adjust to any changes in the educational program (Liu & Bray, 2018). The "creative" approach of structural questions based on comprehending the themes failed immediately, as the guidebooks swiftly adapted to developing "creative" questions and answers that students could memorize without understanding and perform spectacularly on exams (Iqbal, 2015).

This type of memory prevents pupils from completely comprehending the issue since it encourages them to absorb information without learning or understanding it. This further inhibits individuals from drawing conclusions and creating connections between the new and old knowledge (Klemm, 2007). It discourages autonomous thought, inventiveness, and innovation in general. In addition, it results in a lack of curiosity and apathy in learning new things (Alamgir, 2018). "Once you teach people to say what they don't understand, it's easy enough to get them to say anything you want," Rousseau said (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1762). The type of education provided to Bangladeshi children by guidebooks contributes to the development of subservient, incurious, dull people incapable of thinking for themselves (Alamgir, 2018). People are aware of the correlation between guidebooks and a reduction in the quality of education; the Ministry of Education has already chosen to finalize the draft of the Education Act, which prohibits the printing, publication, and marketing of guidebooks (Alamgir, 2018). Scholars and educators have regarded the manual to be damaging and responsible for the intellectual demise of youngsters (Iqbal, 2015).

Although the government has taken significant measures to prevent the production, popularity, and consequent reliance on guidebooks, guidebook publishing houses have been quick to take up the cause. In 2020, the elementary and secondary schools in Raipur received payments of up to twenty thousand and one million twenty thousand taka from publishing houses in exchange for encouraging pupils to purchase guidebooks. Many students claim that their teachers do not teach them from NCTB books, but rather require them to memorize the questions and answers from guidebooks (Dainik Shikshar Alo, 2020). Many teachers in poor countries purposefully hide exam information and fail to clarify or teach things effectively in class, causing students to seek assistance elsewhere (Liu & Bray, 2018).

Some researchers assert that the inadequacy of mainstream education, i.e. the inadequacy of schools, textbooks, and teachers, leads to the emergence of and reliance on shadow education, while others attribute the aforementioned inadequacy of mainstream education to the popularity of shadow education. However, it appears that the reduction in the quality of mainstream education and the rise of Shadow Education are interrelated (Liu & Bray, 2018). This abhorrent cyclical structure that currently exists in our country has long-term harmful effects. The culture of travel guides begins in elementary school. As pupils continue to study in an environment hostile to learning, they become incapable of creativity, curiosity, sagacity, and the drive to learn. Prior to entering universities, students lose a portion or all of their intellectual talents (Iqbal, 2015).

Powerful people are expanding their education-based businesses, and the nation is paying the price; teachers in many schools are establishing syndicates to force pupils to purchase guidebooks (Ahmed, 2020). The heavy price is being paid with the partial devastation of children's minds; pupils spend hours memorizing answers from guidebooks in the goal of receiving higher grades, resulting in worry, tension, sadness, and several other psychological issues (Arusha & Biswas, 2020). Farclough claims that his three-dimensional method to discourse analysis is consistent with analyzing socio-cultural developments because the former emphasizes connections between social activity and language (Farclough, 1989). This is significant because it implies that the education system will inevitably affect the country's socio-cultural position, and recognizing the link between education and a country's social and cultural situation allows us to assess challenges and opportunities. "Education that begins with

a crime will definitely lead to a catastrophe," said Egypt's Minister of Education in a 1997 address, as cited by Bray (2018). As published by The Prothom Alo on February 24, 2020, this is what's happening in Bangladesh. Much study has been undertaken, and publications on Shadow Education in general have been authored. Researchers investigated the use of shadow schooling among elementary and secondary school pupils in East Asian countries. Some of the research are centered on coaching centers, while others are centered on private instruction. Despite the fact that guidebooks are generating quite a stir among Bangladeshi educationalists, no paper has been prepared on their usage and rising reliance in Bangladesh. My research aims to investigate the reasons for the growing reliance on guidebooks, as well as the potential consequences of this reliance.

Shadow Education in the Education System of Bangladesh

The schools administer competitive examinations, and students are under daily pressure to do better and better. Education is no more a pursuit of knowledge, but rather a contest to be won (Tiwari, 2015). In recent years, due to the rising emphasis on examination, education has become a field in which one can demonstrate his or her self-worth and assist concerned businesspeople in making a profit (Spann, 2015). This leads to increased competition and psychological distress among pupils. Today's pupils always have more uninteresting books to read and receive higher grades. Though Bangladesh's school curriculum attempts to promote creative writing, guidebooks are becoming a major impediment to creative expression. Guidebooks have been shown in studies to be damaging to people's creativity. Guidebooks give pupils ready-made answers, preventing them from thinking for themselves, and "suggestions," which reduce the number of things a student learns. In short, guidebooks emphasize and value just the "least significant components" of human learning (Spann, 2015).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given that school has become a platform for achievement, but not for education, the current state of education in Bangladesh appears to be dreadful. The majority of pupils memorize the question-answer pairs from their guidebooks rather than studying the NCTB-issued books. The majority of students need a second to realize that "English textbook" refers to "the primary book" because they have never studied it; they do not need to bring it to school or tuition because their teachers advised them to read the Nobodut Guide (Amin & Greenwood, 2018). Due to the shadow system, the mainstream education system in Bangladesh has lost its most gifted mainstream instructors since the 1990s (Mustary, 2019). Teachers appear to be making less of an attempt to educate these days, instead requiring students to purchase study guides and memorize "essential" question-answer pairs. According to UNICEF, the culture of memorizing is a major factor in low accomplishment and low retention; the system instills in students the idea that earning excellent grades is more essential than learning, which eventually affects the youngsters' brains (Prodhan, 2016).

This culture of studying guidebooks in the expectation of finding a shortcut to glory and success is detrimental to the intelligence of our nation's citizens. Consequently, this study concentrated on and investigate the reasons for the reliance on guidebooks, and attempted to determine the repercussions of this reliance in the hope that this research will inspire others in the field of education to reflect on the issue. This study will also attempt to demonstrate why this practice of Shadow Education is ineffective in the long run, as well as what can be done to improve the overall effectiveness of the education system.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main purpose of this research is to identify the reasons and effects of dependency on guidebook. Therefore, the following research questions have been aroused:

1. What are the reasons behind the dependency of teachers and students on the guidebooks?
2. What are the perceptions of students and teachers on the significance of the guidebooks?

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative in nature. To ensure that the research was thorough, qualitative research was used to collect data. The qualitative research paradigm appears to be more consistent with the nature of the research questions in this study. A qualitative data collection method allows us to critically understand a problem while also providing us with an in-depth perspective of the problem, resulting in a better understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell & Puth, 2017). To generalize and see what the trend is with a large number of participants, a quantitative method may be appropriate (Fahmida, 2010). One-on-one interviews with teachers were conducted to collect data from them. As a result, it appeared to be more pertinent to this study. Researcher collected data from 35 students. The pupils attend schools in the Noakhali district, and they range in age from 12 to 16, secondary level. These participants have been reliant on guidebooks since the first grade, so they are well aware of the benefits and drawbacks of doing so. Along with the children, recruited 30 teachers from Noakhali to participate in the study. Before conducting the interview, consent was obtained from the parents of the pupils, as well as from each participant before recording the entire session. Purposive sampling was utilized by the researcher to pick both teachers and pupils. Purposive sampling is a widely used strategy that entails identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about or have firsthand experience with a topic of interest (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). As a result, because the entire study is centered on secondary school students in Bangladesh. Furthermore, all teachers teach in the secondary department, and students range from Class 6 to Class 10. All of the questions posed to the teachers and students were open-ended. It provided the researcher with the perspectives of students who had just begun secondary school as well as students who were about to complete it. A thematic analysis was conducted, through which patterns as well as the primary reasons and opinions were identified. Teachers and students shared a number of opinions and justifications for using guidebooks, and through thematic analysis, these justifications and their effects were made clear.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The Reasons Behind the Dependency of Teachers and Students on the Guidebook

Teacher's Response:

Teachers admitted to consulting guides and copying some questions to prepare questionnaires. When asked about the reasons behind this arrangement, they remarked that there is a lot of pressure from the school administration to get a lot of things done in a very short time. One participant does not have the qualification necessary to teach the subject which she is teaching. Although she completed her graduation from Accounting, but she teaches English. So she needs a guidebook to understand many subjects. Some respondent said that the textbook's explanations are more understandable, which helps students better understand the subject matter. Sometimes teachers consider guidebooks to be 'base books' because they have sample questions and answers. Teacher 4 said that guidebooks definitely help students learn more. She

added, "Guides also help teachers find the right solutions to problems, and students can find reliable information in guides". The teachers were also asked if they had received any formal or informal training on the question pattern. Unfortunately, and surprisingly, all teachers answered negatively. Furthermore, the appeal for guide-books increases because exam questions (even the question paper of board examinations) are made with the help of guide-books, which imply that studying the guidebooks instead of the text-books is more profitable if the goal is good results. Some respondents shared that the comprehension part of English question is supposed to be unseen, but often we teachers mark the important comprehensions from guidebooks for the students to scan and skim through before exams. The teachers do not seem to have enough time to understand each topic and prepare questions on their own. One teacher stated that guidebooks are easier to understand, and are more effective for getting better marks. Another teacher added that, as students are often inattentive during class, they need extra help which is why they rely on guide-books. Students should be able to consult teachers if they have problems on any subject, but some teachers argue that there is not enough time and opportunity to address students' academic problems outside of class.

Students Response

When students asked the simple question, "Why do you rely on guidebooks so much?", their answers mirrored those of their teachers. Majority students said that the guides were useful as they provided great insight into the subject matter. This is consistent with previously expressed opinions that the NCTB textbook lacks sufficient information and accuracy. Some students tell us, It makes sense to buy a guidebook because it explains what we need to understand. In addition, the guide is also useful for exam-related questions and includes past papers and sample questions and answers to help students better prepare for the exam. Books can be a good source to learn a few things and enjoy some texts and units, but you should use guidebooks to get good grades. Some other students said that "Every student in my class uses a guidebook, so I bought one too". Students also say that teachers often use guidebooks to create task sheets for exam questions. In other words, if students can memorize the answers beforehand, they don't even have to actively participate in teaching. Not only do the teachers copy questions from guide-books to make question-papers. They also teach in class with the help of guide-books, which is quite concerning. One respondent shared that, "I bought guidebooks on my teacher's suggestion" while other said that, "I asked my English teacher to explain future tense and she just told me to buy a guidebooks".

The Perceptions of Students and Teachers on the Significance of the Guidebooks

Teacher's Response:

According to the findings, majority teachers agree on the dependability and importance of guidebooks, because they perceive them as "the solution to the problem produced by our education system's failing infrastructure," as one teacher noted. Some teachers stated that guidebooks assist them in gaining "complete knowledge" of a topic before discussing it in class. It may be assumed that a text book is sufficient in terms of imparting "complete knowledge" about necessary topics, but this does not appear to be the case. It should also be emphasized that the teacher who uses guidebooks to grasp the themes graduated from microbiology and is now teaching English at a private school; she has had no training to prepare her for the role of an English teacher. It is not strange, then, that she seeks help from guidebooks that supply all of the answers with explanations. "Guidebooks are truly beneficial because the language is easier and translations are offered," stated some teacher. English is not my mother tongue, so

it is difficult for us to understand some of the concepts mentioned in the NCTB text-books, when asked why translation was required. Even though English is a second language for Bangladeshis, a teacher of English is expected to be fluent enough to read middle school textbooks. Majority teacher stated that, "The guidebooks also provide sample questions and answers, which help students prepare for exams". Students gain a great lot of support from study guides during exam preparation, as questions usually emerge from study guides. It is perplexing if an English instructor places a higher priority on exams than on improving students' English skills.

Student's Response:

In general, students find the guidebooks to be very valuable because they provide an in-depth examination of any subject or topic and help them achieve higher grades. Guidebooks always have multiple sample questions from which to practice, and the answers are also provided so that students can verify whether our responses are correct. In addition, questions and answers from prior tests are included in study guides, as stated by some students was advised that "our teachers frequently advise us to follow the answers offered in guidebooks and warn us that we would receive higher grades if we imitate such answers". They continued, "One of our teachers gave us very low grades on our responses because teacher deemed them to be too "creative," but I do not see what is wrong with that so long as I have satisfactorily responded to the subject. However, when we informed him this, he merely reprimanded us and instructed to copy from guidebooks in our next tests. The example questions, which have the same format as the actual exam questions, allow students to practice and acquire confidence before the exam. In addition to the questions, the guidebooks include responses that help pupils comprehend the format chosen by examiners. In addition, students are urged to memorize the answers in order to provide "perfect" responses on exams. Even if guidebooks are valued by students across the nation because they help them perform better on exams, the question of whether the method by which they do so is entirely beneficial in the long run is worthy of consideration.

DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

The interviews with teachers provided a comprehensive understanding of the education system and the use of guidebooks. As evidenced by the findings, the majority of teachers are untrained and lack degrees in the subjects they teach; therefore, an increase in the number of teachers does not necessarily contribute to a stronger educational infrastructure. Inadequate training has led to a lack of comprehension of the subject that teachers are supposed to teach, resulting in an increasing reliance on guidebooks. In addition, the ineffectiveness of NCTB textbooks, as stated and reaffirmed by students in interviews clarifies the need for guidebooks (Mustary, 2019).

Guidebooks were intended to be supplementary books that would occasionally assist students, but a cursory examination of the current situation reveals that guidebooks have become the primary text. Currently, the guidebook, not the NCTB textbook, is used to direct students in their formal education. Students consult guidebooks not only to gain a general understanding of a topic, but also to prepare for exams; guidebooks provide not only sample questions, but also sample answers for those questions. Even more intriguing is the fact that the questions from the guidebooks frequently appear on school and even board examinations (Iqbal, 2015). Consequently, guidebooks lead students down the path of ignorance, which is extremely detrimental for students and the nation as a whole. Mr. Hasnat Harun, a retired cadet college teacher, observes that students today are "afraid" of education, which is quite alarming because

education should be something enjoyable, not frightening (Adnan, 2018). A educator believes that not only are the teachers failing to properly educate the students, but they are also writing guidebooks and encouraging the students to rely on them. He explains that teachers not only consult guidebooks when teaching, but also copy questions from guidebooks when preparing the examination question paper (Adnan, 2018). A 2015 news article states that the SSC physics examination question paper for that year was copied from a study guide (Hossain, 2015).

Guidebooks, on the other hand, have become the primary tool for most students, school teachers, private tutors, and coaching centers. The guidebook's allure stems from its ready-made solutions. As a result, students are not required to read textbooks, learn the content, or figure out their answers. In addition, schools prepare question papers for half-yearly, yearly, and test exams using guidebooks. This monotonous reliance on guidebooks not only limits students' potential and creativity, but also diminishes the chances of Inclusive Education in Bangladesh. The government has made available free textbooks, but only financially capable students have access to the supplementary materials. As the guidebooks provide an easy route to higher exam scores, students with more financial resources perform better than those with fewer resources. Poor students are falling further and further behind not only because they receive little guidance on how to approach creative questions, but also because they lack ready-made solutions. Although it may seem like a good idea to students and teachers, guidebooks are actually harming institutional learning and having a negative impact on the students. Even the main goal of innovative questions and learning is being disrupted by this. As a result, despite receiving higher grades each year, Bangladesh's educational infrastructure is failing, and students are not actually learning much.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, it is suggested that to reduce the dependence of guidebooks, it is important to appointing qualified teachers, subject based teachers and those who love the teaching profession as a teachers, providing adequate training for teachers, making textbook more attractive and effective. In addition, the state must create a policy that formally recognises and enhances textbooks involvements of the teachers and students, even include the more exercises work in the textbooks and implement a education system that discourage students to memorising learning.

CONCLUSION

For the education system, guidebooks have been more detrimental than beneficial. From the given facts, and discussions, it is clear that guidebooks have a number of negative effects: guidebooks lead to a lack of interest in and disregard for textbooks; guidebooks have been shown to be a hindrance to the creativity and learning ability of students; guidebooks have allowed teachers to perform inadequately and ineffectively by providing the information necessary to perform well in examinations. While teachers generally acknowledge that guidebooks create problems, students praise them enthusiastically. However, students' and teachers' praise of guidebooks reminds us that they enjoy them so much because they help them earn higher grades. In conclusion, it can be inferred that both students and teachers recognize the negative effects of guidebooks, and that the negative effects are felt throughout the nation.

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