REVIEW OF POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF 21st CENTURY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Educationists may describe year 2010 as a turning point for education sector in Bangladesh because this year the government came out with a ‘National Education Policy 2010 (NEP2010)’ which is termed as complete policy and, in turn, involved scholars and practitioners in the process policy formation, and NEP2010 has, gradually, been implemented. This policy put emphasis on teacher education for uplifting the quality of the education. In addition, the country has some policy documents, say, Five Year Plan (FYP), Education Reports, Education Strategy 2021, National ICT Policy 2015, and Master plan for ICT in Education (2012-21) which also have the teacher education sections. Hopefully, the increased level of involvement through review will result in additional scholarly analyses of policy issues with particular emphasis on teacher education. Calls for the reform of teacher preparation were very long and have seldom come from as many quarters. This paper focuses on the issues that characterize the educational reform movements as they relate to teacher education and offers a perspective on the challenges before teacher educators and certainly there are implications. A framework is applied in this paper for the case study of Bangladesh for addressing questions: Were these implications fully evaluated in terms of their desirability, affordability, and implementability? Was the impact of the policy properly assessed to determine whether to continue the policy, modify it, or go on to a new policy cycle? To answer these questions, the policy process was analyzed, step by step, examining events within the context of the conceptual framework. The policy and development of teacher education in Bangladesh is designed to equip a teaching profession to meet the needs of the 21st century where blended environment has been the integral part of education system. Various ministerial projects, say, a2i (Access to Information) and TQI (Teaching Quality Improvement), implement CPTD (Continuing Professional Teacher Development), and Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) and universities provide IPET (Initial Professional Education of Teachers) to cope with the teaching environment in 21st century education.
INTRODUCTION

Teacher education curriculum combines both theory and practicum (known as teaching practice i.e. TP) for professional development of existing and prospective teachers. As a result, teacher education programme absolutely through online is difficult, and it needs to be blended i.e. a portion through ICT and other portion through face-to-face (f2f). In Bangladesh, there are three providers of teacher education, they are: i) Institute of Educational Research (IER) of traditional universities, ii) Teachers’ Training Colleges (TTCs) affiliated by National University (NU), and iii) Bangladesh Open University (BOU). Former two runs BEd, MEd programmes through conventional f2f mode and use little bit of ICT, and the later one runs BEd and MEd programmes using blended approach through OER-based self-learning materials (SLMs), video lectures, radio-TV broadcasts, and f2f tutorials & TPs at the selected TTCs. In this way, BOU teacher education programmes are truly run through blended learning (BL). Huge number of teachers is still untrained in the country who do not have the opportunity to do their BEd/MEd in the TTCs and also trained teachers need CPTD (Continuing Professional Teacher Development) because ICT has been paramount important in the delivery of education in the 21st century. In this way, blended teacher education at the BOU has been the only alternative to them for professional development. In the last couple of years, the government gave strong leadership drive taking Bangladeshi teacher education onto the next stage of development. Unfortunately, things did not quite work out that way. Bangladesh tried to reform its school education system through some project activities, for instance, last couple of years, it has gone through the implementation of ‘innovative system’, it got policies that were supported by few, with little or no debate, that indicated low dividend in the education in the 21st century. Schools in the 21st century will become nerve centers, a place for teachers and students to connect with those around them and their community. In order to educate in the 21st century, teachers and administrators need to cultivate and maintain the students’ interest in the material by showing how this knowledge applies in the real world. They must also try to increase their student's curiosity, which will help them become lifelong learners. In this way, teacher needs CPD to cope up with the situations 21st century education. This paper discusses the policy and development of teacher education in Bangladesh in the 21st century where educators must create a curriculum instrument that will help students connect with the world.
OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to look into teacher education policies of Bangladesh and to critically analyse its provisions in addressing issues in using information and communication technology (ICT) in Bangladesh, in the context of blended learning teacher education. It also achieves the following specific objectives are:

1. To examine whether the national teachers’ policy identifies problems related to blended teacher education and other related issues;
2. To assess if the policy addresses the ICT dimension of the identified problems;
3. To investigate if the policies and other related strategies include provisions to address the special needs for technology-enabled learning (TEL); and

METHODOLOGY

This policy study uses a desktop research approach and reviewed documents related to policies towards teacher education. This research analyses the formulation and implementation processes, and strategies of Bangladeshi policies for teacher education. Pal [1] framework has been used in the current research which describes that a policy has, at least, three basic components. These are: problem identification, policy goals and instruments. Pal’s framework is depicted in the Figure 1. Each frame analyses different aspects of the teacher education policy in Bangladesh. The first frame analyses the background and underlying principles related to the formulation of policies for teacher education. The third frame investigates the implementation process and the related gaps between implementation and planning. Finally, it focuses on effects of policies. By using Pal’s frames, the researcher uses a comprehensive perspective for critically reviewing current teacher education policy in Bangladesh.

In this study, Bangladeshi teacher education policy development, changes, and implementation are explored from the perspective of adopter – education faculty of conventional universities, TTCs, and BOU – with particular emphasis on technology-enabled learning (TEL) in CPD for teachers. Document review approach has been deployed in this study. Research questions include how did NEP2010 incorporate teacher education policy and create change subsequent sub-policies adopted by the ministry? What were the primary influences on adopting TEL in teacher education?
According to Pal [1], the problem identification component of national policy articulates the problems, the root and immediate causes of that specific problem. This framework also said that problems usually come in sets and consequently, the definitions consider different dimensions - they are: social, economic, and financial which are not included in the actual policy. The second component - goal is related to problems definitions and classified into general goal which agreed upon by all, and then split to specific objectives which, in turn, contribute to its achievement. The third component is the policy instrument or the means by which the problems are to be addressed for solving the defined problem, thereby to achieve the goal. Policy instruments answer the question, ‘how’. Pal [1] compares a policy with a research project which is to be finished in stipulated time. This is to say that it should have internal consistency among the three major elements: problem definition, goals and instruments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Policy Identification

Quality of education in Bangladesh has been social problem. In order to solve this, government of Bangladesh formulated a broad-based education policy in 2010 titled National Education Policy 2010 (NEP2010) which is termed as strategic policy as it describes the actions to be taken in pursuit of policy decisions. NEP2010 comprises a chapter on ‘Teachers’ Training’ that is known as teacher education policy of Bangladesh. Policymakers have expressed concern that many teachers are not prepared to help students meeting new standards. The preamble of the NEP2010 states as under:
The existing teachers’ training system of our country is very traditional, insufficient, certificate-based, loaded with theoretical knowledge, incomplete in practical learning, based on rote learning and conventional testing system [2].

This statement of the policy indicates that all aspects of teacher education programme of the country need to be addressed. Therefore, there are paradigm shifts. There are -

- traditional to modern - it requires focus on TEL-based;
- insufficient to sufficient - it requires focus on infrastructure (both physical and ICT);
- certificate-based to knowledge-based - it requires focus on learning;
- theory-based to practical-based - it requires teaching practice (TP);
- rote learning to creative learning - it requires innovative testing system;

Quality of the education has been the main variable of the teacher education policy analysis. In line with this, the government of Bangladesh issues directives towards the teacher development programme. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MoE) prepares projects and implements with the help of development partners such as World Bank, ADB, JAICA ……and these projects’ profiles are also become the part of teacher education policy.

The Teachers’ Training section of the NEP2010 clearly defined the problem and identified the immediate causes of that specific problem as under:

……Qualified teachers are essential for proper and quality education. To ensure the quality of teachers, it is essential to recruit qualified teachers through scientific and transparent recruitment process on one hand, and on the other, quality teachers’ education and repetitive demand-driven training is imperative to develop the professional excellence of the teachers [2].

This policy statement actually focuses the followings:

- implement and support programs that specifically recruit and support diverse teacher candidates;
- implement and support programs that specifically target such as preparation programs for teachers who teach and stay in high-need schools, quality systems of educator support and professional learning, and compensation systems that reward effective teachers in high-need areas.
- with support and design career ladders for teachers that reward professional growth and learning.

The policy document clearly identified the specific problem of teacher education in Bangladesh as under:

……the existing teachers’ training system is inadequate, far short of demand and poorly traditional. So, the number of trainers will be increased and the quality of training will be enriched [2].

Policy document recognizes that existing teacher education system in Bangladesh has been traditional and needs to be redesigned in such a way so that they can be well-fitted with the 21st century education.
Improving the quality of teaching in Bangladesh’s schools continues to be a central focus of educational reform. In line with this, Menon and Mathew [3] stated that regulation and policymaking in teacher education is a highly disputed arena with many conflicting interest groups (say, professional collectives of teacher educators, the private sector, and actors within governments) pushing for more control and a greater voice.

**Policy Goals**

The teacher education policy clearly addressed ICT issues in teacher education and set the policy objectives derived from the policy goal. This is despite the existence of problems in teacher education and development, and that these problems have ICT dimensions. In line with this, ministry of education developed an ICT plan document to implement the NEP2010. For instance, the roadmap for ICT in education through the document titled ‘Master plan for ICT in Education [4] clearly indicated that the major challenges facing education include inadequate number of qualified teachers and uneven distribution of teachers between urban and rural schools, poor remuneration and motivation, low teachers support [4]. However, the policy objectives of the NEP2010 do have tackling steps for these problems which are highly differentiated by ICT.

Teachers’ Training chapter of the NEP2010 incorporated 14 specific objectives and 17 strategies giving the priority of using and training them on technology-enabled learning (TEL) issues. Objective no. 12 tells as under:

……to train teachers of all levels in information technology and to ensure wider use of IT to build up a modern and developed Bangladesh [2].

The strategy part also says as under:

……training programs should be made more realistic and effective. To do so and to ensure full-time training, the establishment of non-government training institutions of inferior standard will be discouraged. Rather, the number of government institutions will be increased to a rational number and full residential facilities will be provided to the trainees to make the training programs meaningful and effective [2].

The NEP2010 focuses on development of infrastructures for teacher education to cater to untrained teachers. At the same, it discouraged the privatization of teacher education because they compromise the quality what actually was seen in running BEd/MEd programmes by the private universities. Finally, government stopped teacher education programme of the private universities.

NEP2010 is termed as the complete policy and passed a process in formulating it. The last ten years were a period of rapid growth in government in Bangladesh, and government experimented with new structures for informing and coordinating the development of policy. This enables Bangladesh to benefit from a resource to maximum level with minimum negative outcomes. Bangladesh has resources
constraints and that why, ICT-enabled teacher education programme is of alternative to cater to large number of teachers for their capacity building.

The Policy Instrument

Though some policies may not clearly state the policy instrument as such, all the listed out means by which objectives are to be attained are considered as policy instruments. These include the necessary structures that need to be laid down, the financing source and system, and actual actions to be undertaken to achieve the policy objectives. In the Bangladeshi National Teacher Education Policy, the instruments are presented as policy statements and strategy. The strategy is to implement CPD through technology-enabled learning (TEL) through project activities.

The Government of Bangladesh aiming to turn the huge number of its potential young intelligent populace into a resourceful one, has emphasized on ICT in education by introducing ‘multimedia classrooms’ and ‘teacher-led content development’ in 500 primary schools, 15,200 secondary schools and 5,300 madrashas through different projects of Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) across the country [5]. Education Policy 2010 [2] strongly recommended implementing TEL-based teacher education by the providers. In order to address this, the MoE already formulated the Master plan for ICT in Education (2012 -2021) issued in 2013. From then, ministry implements the plan through projects.

The other area covered in the Bangladeshi policy is curriculum and instruction. The curricula for teacher education BEd/MEd are redesigned. The principle is for teachers to have sufficient mastery of content and subject-specific method of teaching. The quality of knowledge has impacted on effectively monitoring. National BEd curriculum was designed and implemented through a project titled ‘TQI (Teaching Quality Improvement)’. The project provides clarity and detail about how a teacher education provider will implement major directions and provides details on how changes will be made and accounted for, and emphasis targets, outputs and milestones with particular emphasis on ICT in teacher education. The project tested m-learning for teachers, LMS platform developed by the a2i project, and training on using ICT in the classrooms.

Current Status of Teacher Education

Improving quality of education in all tiers was a priority in the national education policy 2010. In the policy, the Teachers’ Training chapter has been rightly addressed the teachers as the key to ensuring quality education. The expansion in teacher training continued and a large number of teachers received professional training as more training colleges were established. Teacher education and training is categorized into two: pre-service and in-service, which
are offered by both TTCs and Faculties of Teacher Education in Universities. The Pre-service training is the training offered by the TTCs before teachers engage in their teaching career. Teacher Training Colleges have been upgraded to Colleges of Education to offer three-year Pre-service BEd (honors). Figure 2 illustrates the status of TTIs in the country.

![Figure 2. No of TTIs](image)

The in-service training as discussed in the Teacher Education Policy is targeted at upgrading teachers’ knowledge, skills, and competences through short courses, seminars, workshops, conferences, educational tours and exchange programs. But most of TTCs do not give drive on CPDs. They only become the partner of the ministry projects to conduct CPDs. There may be of shortage of teachers or of lack of policy considerations. Figure 3 illustrates the numbers of teacher trainers.

![Figure 3. No of TTI Teachers](image)

Number of TTIs in Bangladesh is also limited to cater to all teachers for proving CPDs. This shows there are resource constraints in Bangladesh to implement teacher education programme through face-to-face mode, and where there limited resources, distance education becomes the alternative way. Figure 4 illustrates the number of TTIs in the country.
In line with this, BOU also offers distance programmes in BEd/ MEd for classroom teachers that are not trained. The pre-service and in-service training are open to any qualified person. Admission requirements and procedures for selecting candidates for pre-service training are stipulated in Bangladesh’s teacher education policy. Mannan [6] states that BOU is already in an agreement with the ministry to provide CPD for 30,000 college teachers through blended approach. This is the latest development of BOU’s drive on ICT-based CPD. Normally; it runs academic programmes (BEd/MEd). But from the long past, the country also had a drive on TEL-based teacher education. For instance, TQI-SEP (Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI) in Secondary Education Project) (well-known in TQI). Secondary Education Sector Development Plan (SE-SDP) was developed in 1998 with the Technical Assistance of ADB to develop the secondary education sector as a whole. Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) implemented (1999- 2007) as the first slice of SESDP and Secondary Education Sector Development Project (2007- 2013) taken as a follow-up. Secondary Education Sector Investment Program is taken based on the inputs of the mentioned previous projects. It will be implemented through program approach (treasury model). The program has been taken under a multi-tranche financing arrangement with ADB amounting US$ 500 million for 10 years. The program is aimed at developing Sector Wide Approach (SWAP).

Finally, government drives on TEL through Master plan for ICT in Education (2012 -2021). Master plan sets 7 objectives and objective no. 1 states as under:

…..developing professional and ICT skills of teachers;
…..teacher training will become more effective with the use of ICT. Teachers will become skilled in the use of ICT.

Master plan for ICT in Education implements the ICT training for teachers and deploys the technology in the educational institutions through projects. Finally, the ministry is in partnership with BOU to implement blended CPD for college teachers.
Initiative Through Projects

Access to Information (a2i) Project has successfully transferred the ownership of the initiative to MoE and MoPME. Presently, it is facilitating the scale-up at all the primary and secondary and madrasha of the country. While providing technical assistance during the implementation, the project has developed formal and informal partnership with Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB), Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP), ICT for Education in Secondary and Higher Secondary Level Project (ICT Project), Teachers’ Training Colleges (TTC), Higher Secondary Teachers’ Training Institutes (HSTTI), Bangladesh Madrasha Teachers’ Training Institute (BMTTI). Besides, Banglalink, Intel, Hosaf Group and other private partners under public-private partnership (PPP) approach to implement its ‘Multimedia Classrooms’ and ‘Teacher led Content Development’ initiative project enhancing use of ICT in education (a2i, n.d). a2i has followed a 3-pronged approach in its efforts to remodel education: establishing Multimedia Classrooms in secondary schools, training teachers on making ICT aided educational content on hard-to-grasp topics and make electronic versions of text books available in primary and secondary levels including technical, vocational and madrasha education.

CONCLUSIONS

Bangladesh formulated national instruments to address technology-enabled teacher education issues. For example, MOE has a document that sets vision for ICT in education including a framework of action. Its National Master Plan for ICT in Education also contains the provision of equal education at all levels as one of the 10 policy goals. Without a stronger research base for identifying effective classroom practices, policymakers will find it difficult to develop policies that encourage these practices. The findings suggest that policymakers are correct in emphasizing the importance of improving teacher quality as a mechanism for improving student academic performance. However, findings also indicate that greater attention needs to be paid to improving classroom aspects of teacher quality. In particular, teachers should be encouraged to use TEL in the classroom. Policymakers can encourage these practices by providing rich and sustained professional development that is supportive of practices TEL, and provided that teachers have access to such professional development, perhaps by rewarding them either financially or through advanced forms of certification for engaging in these practices. In addition, we need to increase the research activities. This in turn points toward the lack of relationship between research, policy and practice in teacher education in Bangladesh that is also a long-standing issue in many other countries.
The teacher is required to acquire adequate knowledge, skills, interests and attitudes towards the teaching profession. The teacher’s work has become more complicated and technical in view of the new theories of psychology, philosophy, sociology, modern media and materials. The teacher should become proficient with well planned, imaginative pre service and in-service training programmes. Unless capable and committed are teachers in service, the education system cannot become a suitable and potential instrument of national development. Locally, how was meaning made? General education reform produced a nonlinear process of NEP2010 policy implementation, resources to develop programs, and attention to equity and access issues. Primary change influences were leadership and political relationships. Required teacher endorsement created local impact. Need exists for curriculum policy development. In addition, MOOCs for teacher education should be introduced and providers need to focus on TEL for CPD. The policy is beginning implemented according to the goal set in the document which is seemed to be slowed down.

REFERENCES