

Teaching-Learning Activities on ‘Bangladesh and Global Studies’ in Urban and Rural Secondary Schools of Bangladesh: An In-Depth Analysis

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Abstract There remain considerable differences between the classroom performance of urban and rural high schools in Bangladesh. These differences are found in the use and implementation of teaching methods, teaching aids, students’ active participation in the classroom activities, classroom evaluation etc. In this article, the researchers have tried to make a comparative study between classroom activities of 5 urban and 5 rural high schools in Bangladesh. A particular subject named ‘Bangladesh and Global studies’ taught in class IX-X has been chosen and classroom performances have been observed thereon. Remarkable differences have been pointed out between urban and rural classroom activities. At last a number of suggestions have been prescribed to minimize the differences and remove the drawbacks. These suggestions are hoped to be useful for the teachers, students, education administrators and policy makers.

Keywords Bangladesh and Global Studies, Urban Classroom Activities, Rural Classroom Activities, Teachers’ Performance, Students’ Performance

1. Introduction

Among the four-fold education system in Bangladesh, Secondary is the second phase and this phase holds much importance for various reasons. It prepares students for entry level employment and also creates a foundation for advanced studies (ADB, 2006). For this much emphasis has been given on secondary education and the government is trying rigorously to ensure quality education at this level. A Subject Called ‘Bangladesh and Global Studies’ (‘Bangladesh O Bishwa Parichaya’) is taught in the Secondary Schools so that the students can have adequate knowledge regarding various important issues of the society and the country. There are sixteen chapters in this book. The chapters are The Political Movement in East Bengal and the Rise of the Nationalism (1947--1970), The Independent Bangladesh, The Solar System and the Earth, The Configuration of Land and the Climate of Bangladesh, The Rivers of Bangladesh and the Natural Resources, The state, Citizenship, Law, The Organs of Bangladesh Government and the Administrative Systems, The Democracy of Bangladesh and the Election, The United Nations and Bangladesh, The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), The National Resources and Economy of Bangladesh, The Family Structure of Bangladesh and Socialization, The

Social Change of Bangladesh, and The Problems of Bangladesh, and their Remedies. So the subject ‘Bangladesh and Global Studies’ is actually an integration of subjects like History, Geography, Civics, Economics and Social Science. The contents and topics of the book are of great importance and basic knowledge of these contents should be achieved by students of secondary level. Putting much importance on the book, the Chairman of NCTB said in its preface that by studying ‘Bangladesh and Global Studies’ “the students will gain complete knowledge of the society and environment, history, heritage, culture, socio-economic-political condition and global issues of Bangladesh. They will get an opportunity to develop themselves as conscious citizens. They will be able to enrich their world of knowledge comparing to global issues. They will be expected to possess the life-skills with a view to dealing with different issues of the society” (Saha, 2020).

Undoubtedly, ‘Bangladesh and Global Studies’ has become an important component of the secondary school curriculum and, therefore, it requires special attention to understanding and improving the teaching-learning activities in the classroom.

2. Review of Related Literature

Application of various teaching methods, use of proper teaching -learning materials and active participation of the students in a class help students achieve better knowledge and learning from a lesson. But these instructional strategies

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Received: Apr. 19, 2024; Accepted: May 25, 2024; Published: May 27, 2024

Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/edu>

are not adequately followed in the classrooms of the secondary schools. Again, there are differences in using them in urban and rural schools. Our focus in this study is to find out how teaching-learning activities of 'Bangladesh and Global Studies' take place in both urban and rural high schools in Bangladesh. Some researchers have conducted research on teaching-learning activities that focus on issues like using teaching aids, teaching methods etc. But no research is found where the actual scenario of classroom teaching-learning activities in urban and rural area is depicted. Hence, the study intends to investigate classroom activities to compare the teaching methods, teaching aids and student participation urban and rural high schools in Bangladesh.

Proper teaching methods help students to understand subject-matters and form a clear conception thereof. These methods play an important role in students' learning achievement (Li, 2009). All the methods serve different capacities of motivating students (Anderson, 2006). Again, all the methods cannot stimulate students' learning interests equally. So, there must be variety in applying teaching methods. Utilization of diverse teaching methods ensures the highest learning of the students. That is why most of the successful teachers suggest involving students in learning through various methods (Gillani, 2005). But in classroom Practices teachers actually use only lecture method. They do not go for diverse teaching methods, Again, there are great differences among teaching methods used in urban and rural area. Teacher-centered methods are mostly used in the rural area. Teachers in urban schools, though not always, use some more methods and techniques unlike the rural school teachers.

To impart better education and stimulate students' eagerness to know using teaching aids is very much important. Teaching aids are mainly used to explain content, for revision purposes, to coordinate activities and to provide new and exciting ways of learning. They support the execution of teaching strategies and activities. They also act as management tools. These aids reinforce the learning by stimulating, motivating and catching learners' attention during the instructional process. That's why teaching aids are considered to be more useful than teaching methods. Actually teaching method and teaching aid supplement each other. Meaningful teaching-learning activities depend on subject-related teaching aids (Perveen, 1996).

But in running our real classroom activities teaching aids are hardly used. There are differences in using teaching aids in urban and rural schools. Use of teaching aid is less sufficient in rural schools than urban schools. Haq observed that only text book and chalkboard are found as supportive materials in classroom. Few teachers use charts (Haq, 2004). The use of teaching aid is not very remarkable in the classrooms.

Students' active participation in the classroom activities is one of the major factors for students' better learning. Active student participation in the classroom facilitates both acquisition of knowledge and development of problem solving skills. It is argued that students play too passive a

role in lectures, furthermore, the pace of presentation is too fast and the main emphasis is on rote memorization rather than meaningful understanding. To remedy this situation, it is recommended that teachers make greater use of instructional techniques that require active student participation. Active classroom participation actually does facilitate student learning and problem-solving (Murray, 1991). Again, classroom participation can result in insightful comments and interesting connections being made by students, and enthusiasm in the classroom learning environment. However, poorly managed participation can also lead to instructor frustration and student confusion.

Most often our high school classes are run in a traditional manner where students' active participation in the classroom activities is hardly emphasized. Again students in urban schools are somewhat more facilitated with active activities than those of rural schools. As a result, there remains a significant difference in learning between urban and rural students (Jekayinfa, 1997).

3. Research Questions

The objective of the study is to and investigate the activities taking place in 'Bangladesh and Global Studies' classes in urban and rural high schools, and to compare the teaching method, student participation and teaching materials used in both areas. The main questions addressed by the study are:

- What methods do teachers use in 'Bangladesh and Global Studies' classroom?
- What types of teaching aids do the teachers use to perform the teaching-learning activities of 'Bangladesh and Global Studies'?
- How do the teachers motivate the students in active classroom participation in the subject?
- What are the differences between urban and rural classroom activities while dealing with 'Bangladesh and Global Studies'?

3.1. Methodology

To collect data for the study 10 high schools were selected through purposive sampling. Information was basically collected through observing the teaching-learning activities in the classroom. Side by side information was collected from secondary school teachers and students A sample of 10 secondary schools was selected, 5 from city area and 5 from rural area of two upazillas of Chattogram district. 10 teachers (1 from each School) and 100 students (10 from each school) were chosen as participants. The actual picture of teaching-learning activities can be seen in classrooms. That's why 20 classes, 2 from each school, were observed minutely to collect valid information about classroom performance of teachers and students.

Data were gathered through qualitative and quantitative approaches. An observation checklist was prepared to make the observation more focused. Interviews were conducted

with the teachers on their activities in the classroom. Both open and closed ended questionnaires were administered for students to collect information about their classroom performance giving emphasis on how teachers played role in it and how they engaged students in classroom activities. Data were analyzed in both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data collected from classroom observation through structured checklist were statistically analyzed. All data were collected in a time period from June 2023 to October 2023. Chi-square test was used to determine the differences between urban and rural high schools.

4. Major Findings

Major findings of the study are presented in four areas, which are:

- Teaching method used by teachers for 'Bangladesh and Global Studies',
- Use of teaching materials in 'Bangladesh and Global Studies',
- Students' participation in classroom activities on the subject, and
- Asking and answering questions while running classes.

4.1. Teaching Method

Table 4.1. Classes using Discussion Method

School Type	Classes observed	Classes using Discussion Method	(%)
Urban	10	6	60%
Rural	10	7	70%

The table (4.1) shows that teachers mostly used lecture method in classroom. They hardly explained the critical points to make students understand easily. Even when they taught students important contents like 'The Solar System and the Earth' or 'The Configuration of Land and the Climate of Bangladesh' and other topics which are important to demonstrate before the class through the globe, pictures, charts etc., they only tried to make the students understand through verbal description and explanation.

From observation of classes it was found that in urban area 6 classes out of 10 were taken using only discussion method and another 4 were taken using both the discussion and question-answer method. About half (48%) of the urban students said that teachers use lecture method in the classroom. 40% students said that teachers use discussion method and only 10% of the students mentioned that teachers use question-answer method while running classroom activities teachers explained the topics thoroughly and gave adequate examples to make topics easily understandable to the students. But teachers hardly used any teaching aids and they always chose to deliver lectures or discuss the topic orally. Teacher-centered activities were mostly seen in the classes.

In rural areas teachers were found to use lecture method in 7 classes out of 10. In remaining classes discussion method

was used. Most (90%) of the students said that teachers only use lecture method in the class. 80% of the teachers also said that most often they use lecture method in the class. Adequate examples and explanations of contents were not given in maximum (7 out of 10) classes.

4.2. Teaching Materials

Table 4.2. Using Teaching Materials

School Type	Classes observed	Classes using Teaching Materials	(%)
Urban	10	7	70%
Rural	10	2	20%

The table (4.2) shows that in urban schools 7 classes out of 10 were found to use proper teaching materials whereas 3 classes were run only through oral discussion and explanation without any materialistic presentation. Majority (90%) of the urban students said that their teachers use proper and adequate materials while teaching and made the lessons easily understandable and interesting through the demonstration of various teaching aids.

On the contrary, in rural high school classrooms, teaching aids were rarely used. In 8 classes out of 10 were found not using any teaching aids even while teaching. The topics like 'Rivers of Bangladesh and the Natural Resources' or 'Financial and Banking Systems of the Government of Bangladesh'. It was observed that teachers even did not use chalkboard in 4 classes. Majority (80.5%) of the students opined that in 'Bangladesh and Global Studies' classes, teaching aids should be used. 75% of the teachers agreed with the students but said that they use teaching aids when they are asked about it. About one-third (32%) of the students stated that teachers use teaching aids sometimes.

4.3. Students' Participation

Table 4.3. Students' Active Participation

School Type	Classes observed	Classes using Participatory Activities	(%)
Urban	10	8	80%
Rural	10	3	30%

It was observed that students' participation was more or less ensured in the urban high school class-rooms. The table (4.3) shows that in 8 classes out of 10, teachers were found asking questions to students and kept them active in classroom performance. In 6 classes students were engaged in activities like group work and pair work. 85% students said that teachers encourage them for active participation in the classroom. Teachers ask questions on the ongoing topics. The teachers answered the questions of the students and explained the matter in an easy way giving adequate examples.

In rural areas teachers hardly made any attempt to ensure students' participation in the classroom activities. In 7 classes out of 10 teachers were found only to read out the lesson from the text book and the students were just passive

listeners. In other 3 classes, teachers used question-answer method as a tool of student's participation. In only 1 class, group work was observed. It was also found that teachers did not encourage the students to ask questions or the teachers themselves also did not ask any question on the ongoing topic in 6 classes. In the other 4 classes students asked a few questions, Teachers also mentioned that question-answer method to be used as only means of students' participation. Very few (20%) students mentioned that group work and pair work is done to enhance classroom activities and to ensure students' classroom participation.

4.4. Question-Answer

Table 4.4. Using Question-Answer

School Type	Classes observed	Using Question-Answer	(%)
Urban	10	8	80%
Rural	10	3	30%

In 8 out of 10 urban high school classes students were found to ask questions to teachers spontaneously and requested teachers to explain some points which they felt difficult to understand. Teachers also were very much willing to answer those questions. They also encouraged students to ask questions and classes were run fruitfully. In other (2) classes teachers only read out the topic from the text book and students acted as passive listeners. Majority (70%) of the students said that teachers use question-answer method in the classroom and about 48.5% of the students said that teachers use repetition while explaining a topic.

In rural high schools 7 out of 10 classes were observed to run without any question-answer. Students just sat down silently and listened to teachers reading out of the text and explaining verbally. No encouragement to ask questions was marked on the teachers' part. In remaining 3 classes students asked few questions and teachers tried to give answers and explanations by repeating the same thing without using any other techniques. Majority (90%) of the teachers opined that using question-answer while running a class brings amazing results but only a little number (30%) of them were found to use it practically in the classroom (Table 4.4).

5. Evaluation

In this study light has been thrown on the classroom activities of urban and rural high schools while teaching the subject 'Bangladesh and Global Studies'. The comparative study shows that there is remarkable difference between the classroom performance of urban and rural high schools with regard to teaching methods, teaching aids, students' participation and classroom evaluation etc.

Proper and befitting, teaching method is a pre-requisite to make a lesson easily understandable to the students. Using only lecture method throughout the class creates monotony and students lose interest of the lesson. In a study Hossain found that, as teachers do not use proper teaching method

students do not get motivated to the lesson (Hossain, 1982). Ultimately students do not participate in classroom activities. Though teachers in the urban high schools use some other methods along with lecture method, most of the rural high school teachers use only the lecture method. It was found that 60% of urban school teacher and 70% of rural school teachers use only lecture method in the class.

Using proper teaching aid makes a lesson easily understandable and joyful to the students. From this study it has been found that use of teaching aid is almost absent in the rural high schools (only 20%). In urban high schools 70% teachers use teaching aids. A study revealed that only 45% are above average in using teaching aid (Maleque et al., 2004).

Differences have been also seen in the field of motivational activities and students' active participation in the classrooms of urban and rural high schools (70% and 30% respectively). These differences obviously hamper proper teaching learning activities. It is suggested that all students need to participate actively in classroom activities in order to gain better understanding of the subject Coppola (2006).

In fine, it can be summed up that there exist remarkable drawbacks in the classes on 'Bangladesh and Global Studies' held both in urban and rural high schools of Bangladesh.

6. Recommendations and Concluding Remarks

To ensure fruitful Bangladesh and Global Studies' classes, the following recommendations should be considered

- Teachers Should use various teaching methods in the class as the content requires.
- They should ensure students' active participation in the classroom activities.
- Teachers must increase motivational speech and activities in the classroom.
- They must use different teaching aids befitting the content.
- Government should supply necessary teaching aids to the schools free of cost.
- Teachers should encourage students to participate actively in classroom activities.
- Teachers should use student-centred activities like group work, pair work, problem-solving activities etc. extensively in the classroom.
- Education Department should arrange frequent and intensive training programs on conducting fruitful classes for the teachers.
- The school administration should encourage teachers to make and use low-cost and cost-free teaching aids in the classroom. Teachers talking time (TTT) should be less and students' taking time (STT) and students' performance should be more so that no student can sit idly and be a passive listener in the classroom.

The future of an individual and a nation is built in the classroom of a school. If the classroom performance is not up

to the mark, the students as well as the nation must suffer in the long run. Textbook contents are meant to be understood properly by the students. Classes IX & X are very important period for the students as this secondary education builds mid-level manpower for the country and students prepare themselves for higher education. If there is weakness and drawbacks in classroom performance students' proper and balanced development gets hampered. So immediate attention should be given to fruitful urban and rural high school classroom activities on the subject like 'Bangladesh and Global studies' and other subjects taught there.

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