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BANGLADESH CURRENT TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND GOVERNMENT VISION 2041: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

(Review study)

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Abstract

After independence of Bangladesh, tertiary level quality education is the top most priority of Bangladesh government. Following amendment of different education policies, government of Bangladesh has taken many initiatives to transform Bangladesh into a developed country as per its Vision 2041. Smart Citizens, Smart Government, Smart Economy, and Smart Society, four pillars were announced by the present government to scale up sustainable digital solutions for all citizens. to turn the aspiration into reality. Our synthesis data reveal that majority of published papers discussed on human resources development along with essential quality education in Bangladesh context. Policy reform strongly influence the national education curriculum at tertiary level and digital education become an essential part for higher studies in Bangladesh. Some papers discussed about education system reform addressing the global context and job market-based education policy should get priority. Many of papers concluded that policy must address the change that will ensure not only quality education but also help learners to think critically, adopting and honing innovative skills. Bangladesh is going to graduate from lower middle-income country to upper middle-income country and, this is appropriate time to rise above the political agenda that will ensure quality digitalized education for the next generation.

Keywords: Education system, vision 2041, smart Bangladesh, digitalized education

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1. Introduction

Over the next two decades, Bangladesh will experience an accelerated pace of change that will be rapid and transformational. The rapid transformational shifts in agriculture, trade, and industry, in education and healthcare in the transportation and communication sector in Bangladesh. Following the above transformational fact, the positive impact of education on developing a nation is highly desired. Many developed countries like the USA, the UK, Japan, and Malaysia adopted practical-design education structures to enhance their education sector from primary to tertiary level.

An integrated approach is required to make the desired change in the above-mentioned sectors to achieve the desired development of a faster-growing economy in Bangladesh. The present government working to build Sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal) following the thoughts of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Considering the facts, the government of Bangladesh has adopted a long-term development plan 'Vision 2041' aiming to achieve a developed and prosperous Bangladesh by 2041. Implementing the vision-2041 a practical plan is required to achieve Vision 2041, and overall desired changes are also important in all sectors in an integration way (Ahsan, & Islam, 2023). Digitalization of the education sector is the top priority of the present government and already adopted many necessary policies to implement and achieve Vision 2041. A holistic approach in the education sector, especially at the tertiary level required. Ignoring and giving less priority to any sector is quite harmful to achieving targeted development in the education sector and difficult to ensure overall development toward Vision 2041 (Jamil & Muschert, 2023). Experts opined that without a visionary holistic approach to achieving progress in the overall development process may not be realistic and not sustainable. We must move forward following an integrated model to reach the vision of 2041 and get equal outcomes for relevant sectors. The tertiary-level education plan and the present government are also directed towards that objective. The author developed this paper to analyze and make a drawback to the current status of tertiary education and its relevancy to Vision 2041. Education experts suggested integrated development to bring out positive change in all the sectors and engage of stakeholders concerned. We informed that the involvement of the education sector plays a key role in mobilizing other sectors and more practical efforts are recommended. Priority should be given to regular assessment and digitalization of the education system and needs more focus on the tertiary level (Dayal, 2023). The scientific approach must apply from the primary to the university level and particular emphasis should be ensured on the inter-relationship between industry and academia to build capable and skilled citizens that will ensure our position in the global market to enter into the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Therefore, fixing the top priority agenda, reforming policies, and ensuring the quality of tertiary education is the core agenda of the government and particularly, policy-makers paying

attention to implementing programs which has also been reflected in targeted digital Bangladesh objectives. High-quality human resources with a positive outlook are getting priority in our current education system. Our goals and policy should be the same streamlining that will help to achieve primary, secondary, higher secondary, and higher education desired targets. Researcher want to justify the research question on does current education policy supportive to achieve the present government vision 2041?

2. Justification of the scoping review:

We achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our Vision 2041 is related to SDGs and quality education tertiary level highly connected.

Vision 2021, and the celebration of 50 years of independent Bangladesh, inspired us to reach our target of 2041 vision and establish us as a developed nation (Alom; Hasan; Khan; Reaz; & Saleh, 2023). The current education structure still followed the colonial period and this is the time change following the digital world. The majority of school education is mainly government-owned called the public-school system of Bangladesh and our students enjoy the benefits of government facilities. There are both general and religious education systems in our country that need an integrated approach to develop our high-quality human resources. However, the minor elite community sends their children to English-medium schools and follows the developed country curriculum (Georgiou; Trikoili; & Kester, 2023).

Government and private medium schools create quality outcomes and the majority of children attend government schools. Madrasa education is an integral part of our culture students (both in Alia and Qawmi madrasas), and digitalized education should get priority in the medium immediately. High-quality English medium may help to develop human resources but the majority proportion is out of this stream (Kim, 2021). Three major streams are crucial for developing the common foundation of our young community. Children are future tertiary-level students and for these reasons, we need to integrate and reform our education policies to address the issue immediately. Many schools are not able to meet the standards of English medium education, but we can implement a unique curriculum that can help us to minimize the current gap, which may be supportive of achieving the vision of 2041 (Islam & Inan, 2021). About 85% of the children are studying in Bangla-medium schools (Tate & Warschauer, 2017) and the digital method should adapt to the large number of learners. Primary, secondary, and tertiary education should be unique education delivery methods and new expert opinions should seek to review the current policies (Alam & Hoque, 2023). Quadrat-e-Khuda Commission, adapted in 1974 and requires it to be reviewed again. However, Quadrat-e-Khuda Commission is a comprehensive system and needs to adapt to the current digital world system. Vocational education should be reformed following modern digitalized

education and new skill development programs needs also software programming. Awami League government is working to ensure it and Vision 2041 objectives are based on it (Rahman, 2021). However, the present government reviewed Quadrat-e-Khuda Commission and amended the education policy by replacing the National Education Policy (2010) and developed guidelines for the major structural reform in the three layers of education. We believe that such an initiative will support our major changes in financing, governance, curriculum development, staff skill development and recruitment, and quality learner assessment in our education sector (Martinez-Daza; Guzmán; Castaño; Segovia-García; & Montilla, 2021). The low-cost education and elite community representing the business model need to also reform. This is a hard job but a unique model may help to accelerate the process and the middle and lower-middle mainstream of society send their children to government schools and colleges so that we support Bangla-medium education.

3. Method

The author has searched peer-reviewed documents, and published and unpublished grey literature reports to develop this paper. Online websites and newsletter reports are also included in this article. Secondary data was synthesized and the paper was developed.

3.1 Protocol Development:

A scoping review protocol has been developed followed by the PROSPERO database and the protocol was prepared using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Protocol (PRISMA-P). The researchers completed the PRISMA-P checklist. A summary of eligibility criteria for targeted articles was done.

3.2 Quality assessment:

We followed the Newcastle-Ottawa Quality Assessment Scale to assess the risk of bias regarding the selection of the studies. The researcher independently assessed the quality of the studies and verified the evaluated studies if required.

a) Primary studies list development.

The researcher searched the articles in the database using very specific keywords to find the desired articles and grey literature containing the words ‘the education system’, ‘challenges of the education system’, ‘Bangladesh education’, ‘Bangladesh education & challenges’, ‘Vision-2041 and the way forward’, and ‘Bangladesh education & challenges & way forward’. We searched eight resourceful online databases for articles and grey literature published between January 2015 to January 2024 to gather the relevant articles and grey literature on Somalia’s current education system, challenges, and the way forward. We found a total of 3304 articles and grey literature by using specific keywords and the numbers returned about 30 by searching combined keywords (Table 1).

Table 1: Scoping Review Search Strategy and Outcomes

Total articles & grey literature found (January 2015 to January 2024)								
Search Databases		Search items						
Data sources	Field and access	Document Type	Education system	Challenges of the education system	Bangladesh Education	Bangladesh Education & Challenges	Challenges & Way Forward	Bangladesh Education & Challenges & Way Forward
Springer link	All	Journals	310	170	20	06	6	03
Science Direct	All	Journals	220	100	20	06	6	04
Wiley Online Library	All	Journals	260	160	30	05	5	04
PUBMED	All	Journals	440	150	20	8	6	03
PMC	All	Journals	250	135	20	08	05	03
web of Science (SCI, SSCI, HCI)	All	Journals	220	80	12	05	04	03
Hindawi	All	Journals	135	62	10	04	03	03
Google Scholar	All	Journals	230	125	15	04	3	03
Total			2065	982	147	46	38	26

b) Topicality of evaluation

The author was very careful while evaluating the standard and quality of articles and grey literature from the outcomes of the primary list of studies. The authors read all articles and grey literature titles, and abstracts, execute summaries and full text to exclude irrelevant articles and reports. Furthermore, regarding the topicality of the evaluation of collected articles and grey literature, the researcher followed the study protocol as well as inclusion and exclusion criteria (**Figure 1**).

c) Extraction and analysis of data

Extraction and analysis of the data, the researcher selected articles and the grey literature considering key details of the relevant articles and grey literature based on inclusion and exclusion criteria [13] including duration of publications, types of outcome measures, deleting similar articles, the relevance of the results and no longitudinal studies and wrong intervention. Considering the above criteria, finally, the researcher selected 7 articles and 3 grey literature and trusted websites to develop the background of the study. Figure 1 below shows the results of the search and selection of studies with exclusion steps. The researcher developed a structured format form in the Excel sheet to extract information from each study. Title, author, country, journal, publication date, the main outcome, the study design (design,

sample size, participants, exposure definition, covariates), the results, and limitations were included in the format.

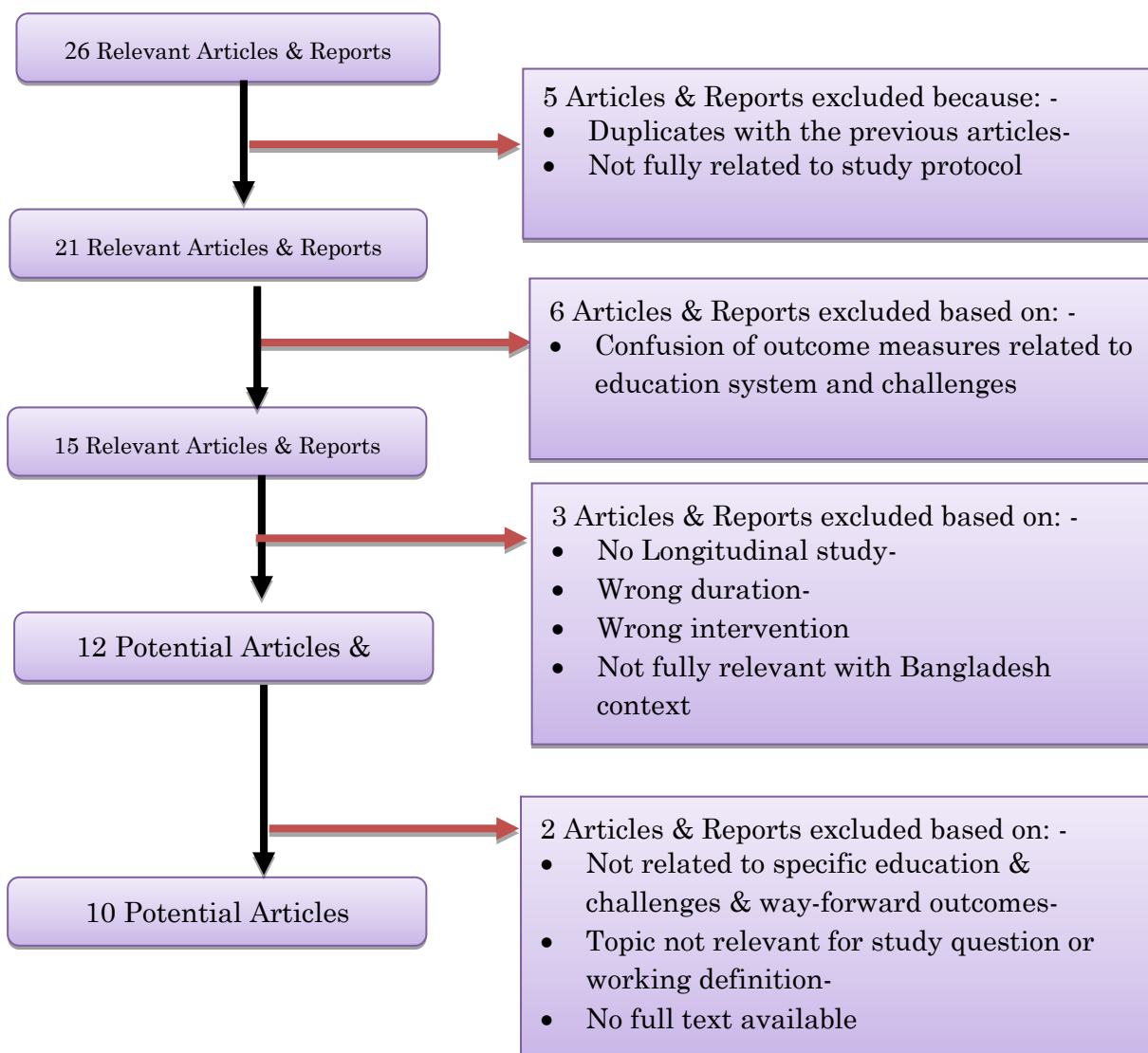


Figure 1. Results of the search and selection of studies

3.3 Participants:

In our scoping review, we collected data from reliable online sources following the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Published peer-reviewed articles and grey literature were included in this study.

3.4 Data collection tools:

Researchers have developed an Excel data collection sheet and summarized data in the sheet following the study protocol. Excel data sheet was the primary tool for synthesis and enhancing the understanding of analyzing the data.

3.5 Data Analysis:

Themes and sub-themes of the synthesis data were developed and categorized according to the keywords. Excel sheet used to extract information from each study. Title, author, country, journal, publication date, the main outcome, the study design (design, sample size, participants, exposure definition, covariates), the results, and limitations were included in the format. In the case of multiple studies that used the same data source, we considered the study as the most recent data. We used RevMan V.5.4 to synthesize the data and search for the outcomes that are relevant to our study goals.

3.6 Ethical issue:

In the study, there is no ethical issue involved.

4. Results and Discussion

After a thorough review and assessment of the full text, a total of 26 studies were selected and finally, 10 articles were included in this scoping review (figure 1). Our primary education is universal and free of cost; however, this is time to think about the quality of education and outcomes of teaching methods. Formal and informal education getting priority in our education system, although about 4.3 million children are not in education coverage and about 42 million people are still illiterate in our society. The government must address both quality and quantities and allocate enough budget in GDP. Digitalizing the whole education sector is a bit difficult without support from development partners and stakeholders. Increasing the number of school attendees, training high-quality teachers and classroom facilities are highly priority areas to achieve the vision of 2041. In our study 3 papers discussed on necessity of digitalize of education at level of education, however, poor budget and lack of skilled human resources are barriers to address this issue in developing countries like Bangladesh. Synthesis documents reveal that the primary level may be easy for the poor and marginal community but secondary and tertiary level education is still a challenge for this group. The majority of parents like to send their children to the primary level but in some cases, are not able to continue their children's education at the secondary and tertiary level. In this case, our drawback is to start distance learning, and the digitized education method may be a good option for them. Vocational training and education would be another good option and develop semi-skilled manpower to attend foreign countries as immigrants. Our three-layer education curriculum is still not well focused on computer programming and religious education needs reform and brings it under the coverage of the modern science education system.

The literature indicates basic features of the education system in Bangladesh but weakness is visible in providing quality scientific education, creating a unified educational curriculum, modern quality reading and writing facilities, and engaging learners in a creative education platform. The progressive and scientific methods may help us to prepare them for future development, we develop quality infrastructure but fail to adapt it with quality digital education delivery methods. This is the right time to address such a gap, especially at the tertiary level, which will provide students with skills to enter professional life. Documents show that even though the constitution calls for a unified curriculum there is a great disparity

in the curricula and standards of the schools in Bangladesh and as stated earlier this is a major drawback. Skilled workers are essential for our foreign remittance and vision 2041 is mostly relevant to this goal. Many criticize on going about our current low expenditure on education and the lowest among many South Asian countries. We observed poor allocation for education in the national budget for FY2022-23. Everyone believes that education is a major driving force of development in any modern society and this is the appropriate time to realize it and allocate enough budget to achieve the Vision 2041 objectives. High-skilled workers are the central determining factor of economic progress for middle-income countries. Therefore, Bangladesh needs to focus on improving the quality of vocational education that will help the development of skilled workers to meet all the needs of the jobs of today and tomorrow. The present government emphasizes setting up technical schools and colleges in different upazilas before that we need to develop high-quality teaching staff. Undoubtedly, vocational training could be an important element for future development, and in reducing unemployment, inequality, and poverty. We may follow polytechnic education systems like Singapore and Vietnam. Programming-based digital education and semi-skilled manpower are friendly for our rising economy. Pre-vocational education, information and communication technology (ICT) based education must be considered a priority area, and inclusive for basic skills development programs for the tertiary level, and so that our learners can use it in creativity work. We need to ensure they have skilled teachers, lab facilities, safe and supportive learning environments, and, more importantly, offer the most up-to-date technical, professional, and job-oriented courses for young graduates.

Experts opined that our country tends to think of our large population as an asset. There is no denying the fact that the population of a country is the greatest social capital it can have. People without education are like weapons without bullets. More research needs to be conducted on the present, working-age people and find the gap in skilled development programs at the tertiary level. Our young people need to be trained properly so they can contribute to the development of the nation. Otherwise, Bangladesh may find it very difficult to achieve higher economic growth and achieve Vision 2041.

MDGs, SDGs, and Vision 2041 are interrelated themes that aim to eliminate extreme poverty and reach Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) status by 2030 and High-Income Country (HIC) status around 2041 keeping in mind other development factors. We can convert Vision 2041 into a development strategy if we integrate the education sector with our other relevant stakeholders. Government Plan 2022-2041 (PP2041) and policies and programs need more realistic and practical. The PP2041 builds on the successes of PP2021, and we prove it in our MDGs achieving strategy. Our target for 2041 is to improve the quality of education and ensure the continuous growth of the economy without any barriers. High access to tertiary-level education in Bangladesh mostly depends on social and economic indicators. This reveals that we need a digital tertiary education system and we found a clear association between the level of education and social and economic factors.

If we want to create sufficient employment for our potential workforce in the country it's important to address quality education with modern facilities, particularly in the context of the changing nature of jobs and employment driven by new technologies. The reform education system and enhancement of the relevant skills and competencies of people have to get priority.

Many countries of the Asia-Pacific region achieve their goal following this method, and Bangladesh has the second largest tertiary level educated unemployment rate in the South Asian region. Self-driven skilled manpower is essential for our country (Kallunki; Kinnunen; Tuononen; Haarala-Muhonen; Pyörälä; & Myyry; 2023). A key measure would be to reform the education sector and enhance the skills development sub-sectors program in the education sector to create employment for graduated learners. Our data revealed that the unemployment rate increased frustration among graduates and quality digital education may reduce this trend. We have both options for skills development and job creation, and it is necessary to look at both sides including the quality of education/training and the nature of the employment market. Increase the allocation of GDP in education under education investment policies that lead to jobless growth, and employment creation with short duration. This paper helps us to understand the context and complexity of how education and training lead to skill formation and how digital methods improve the skills to turn into productive and decent work opportunities that have to be recognized. Further research is required to find the skills gap, and future data will help to unpack this relationship between social and economic factors. Our three layers include primary secondary (technical and vocational education) and training (TVET), and tertiary education needs to address the following issue carefully. To create access (enrollment and number of institutions), internal efficiency (cycle completion, dropout, and repetition rates), and quality (quality inputs indicated by teacher numbers and characteristics and learning outcomes indicated by available assessment data). Political commitment is essential to achieve successful outcomes of Vision 2041. Integrating key facets into the development agenda in general and the education agenda in particular. We proposed a combined effort from government and development partners to reach Vision 2941. Updating legal obligations will be supportive of creating an ethical environment for different actors. We suggested that specific strategies, objective-based programs, and target audience education governance to achieve the Vision 2041 goal immediately.

5. Conclusions

Modern digital Education at the tertiary level is considered to achieve the goals of any government and the Bangladesh context vision of 2041 is mostly depends on integrating and reforming of education sector. Transforming old skills into the latest method by using digital technology. Our manpower is well skilled and talents are becoming unfit for the future global market. In this case, quality education, teaching methods, and global standards curriculum may be helpful for us if we can change and update following the demand of time. The present government is implementing various programs to bring qualitative changes in the education sector, and experts welcome such initiatives. Radical changes are being made in the assessment method of examinations but need to adapt the digital methods in the classroom. Teachers' skilled development programs should get priority and vocational training programs are key factors in achieving the government's Vision 2041.

Conflict of Interest:

The author declares that there are no competing interests.

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