

## A critical reflection on the University of Dhaka in Educational Research: An Editorial

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The University of Dhaka was founded in 1921, marking the beginning of modern higher education in Bangladesh. The decision to build the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh was made as restitution for the 1905 partition of Bengal being declared invalid. The British authorities established the University of Dhaka in East Bengal to address social unrest and political challenges inside the nation they governed (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). The University of Dhaka was created with the intention of bringing about political harmony between Muslims and Hindus in Bengal (Kabir, 2016). However, the University of Dhaka's founding contributed to the emergence of intelligentsia with roots in East Bengal in the region at that time. Then East Bengal was incorporated into Pakistan when the British left, although neither the political elite nor the educated class noticed any fundamental differences between the British and Pakistani regimes. Higher education was viewed by East Pakistan's political elite and educated class as a catalyst for achieving political objectives during the Pakistani rule (Kabir, 2010; Kabir, 2016). Therefore, higher education's function in society changed, turning against Pakistan's military junta and political elite. Similar to what education did for India, the growth of the intelligentsia by the University of Dhaka in then East Pakistan provided the environment and actors for a social movement that accelerated Bangladesh's creation in 1971 (Basu, 1974; Quddus & Rashid, 2000; Kabir, 2010, 2016; Kabir & Greenwood, 2017; Habib, Rahman & Rahman, 2021).

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The Special Issue honours the 100th anniversary of the University of Dhaka and the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence. As the pinnacle of academic quality, the university offers opportunities for researchers, professionals, and scholars to participate in theoretical debates, carry out empirical study, and contribute nationally and worldwide to share this pride. The Institute of Education and Research (IER) publishes a special edition of *Teacher's World* on this occasion. This special issue examines the University of Dhaka's contribution to Bangladeshi research and education. Five sub-themes are offered for the articles written by various academics and researchers. Father of the Nation's Philosophy, Educational Development in Independent Bangladesh, Dhaka University's Role in Education Reform, Educational Research and Dhaka University, and Trends and Emerging Issues in Education are among the sub-themes.

The first theme, "Philosophy of Father of the Nation," examines how the education of the nation is influenced by the ideas and philosophy of the Nation's Father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as the University of Dhaka not only commemorates its centennial but also the 50 Years of Independence of Bangladesh. Since its founding in 1971, Bangladesh has drastically changed the educational system for its large population of students, from primary to secondary school to higher education. In their article, *The Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and Education in Emergencies (EiE)*, *Muhammed Mahbubur Rahman and M. Wahiduzzaman* critically examine the historical roots of Bangabandhu's ideas and actions to offer a thorough direction for the growth of the national education system both during and after any emergency. With implications for reducing the loss of education for many people during emergencies, the findings may help educators, policymakers, and other individuals working in the field of emergency education to comprehend the local contextual model of EiE based on Bangabandhu's educational concepts and ideas.

Similarly, *Zeenat Huda* explores Bangabandhu's roles in the context of gendered discourse in her article titled *Role of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Women Empowerment: A First Woman-Friendly Statesman in Bangladesh*. Bangabandhu broke the taboo by acknowledging the roles of Bangali women, their heroic and courageous deeds, dedication, and enormous contribution to Bangali nationalist discourse and political trajectory. Huda examines Mujib's conception of gender, and political study and academic debate have not yet come across his interpretation of women's empowerment.

The paper under the second theme, "Educational Development in Independent Bangladesh", critically examines Dhaka University's impact and implication on Bangladesh's present higher education system. In keeping with this subject, *Ariful Haq Kabir* looks at how ideas spread from the University of Dhaka to other public institutions in his article titled *Policy 'Trail' from the University of Dhaka to Public Universities: Construction of 'Education' as a Discipline in Bangladesh*. This article, which draws on the notion of "policy trail," aims to comprehend how "education" as a field of study was established at the University of Dhaka in 1959 and how, 50 years later, the concept of "education" as a separate discipline has spread to other

public universities in Bangladesh. This article tries to increase understanding of how policy is transmitted through various public institutions within a nation-state and how it is transmitted from the Global North to the Global South.

The third subtheme, “Dhaka University in Education Reformation,” examines how Dhaka University has influenced education over the past 50 years. The articles examine Dhaka University’s role and contribution to academic leadership and innovation. *Saira Hossain and Md Ahsan Habib*, in their article titled *Applying Psychology Science to Improve the Teaching-learning Process and promote educational success in Bangladesh: Role of IER in Research, Practice, and Future Directions*, examine how Dhaka University as an institution or specific faculty members contribute to bringing change both at the national level and in various educational programs. Since the Institute of Education and Research (IER) was established, the Educational Psychology and Guidance (EPG) department has made significant contributions to research, education, and training through advocacy, the development and adoption of novel, creative practices through research, and capacity building through education and training. It also significantly impacted the creation of laws governing child-friendly education. The study begins by looking at the setting for educational psychology research in Bangladesh. This study evaluates trends from the preceding 60 years of educational psychological research. It also considers how EPG spreads the multidisciplinary knowledge of educational psychology and aids in the long-term development of a skilled workforce.

The articles under the fourth theme, “Educational Research and Dhaka University,” critically examined Dhaka University’s own higher education system and how the University of Dhaka is constantly dealing with problems, adopting new procedures, and undergoing reforms. In her article titled *Effect of Social Factors on Female Teachers’ Professional Preparation at the University of Dhaka: Exploring the Challenges*, *Aparna Rani Dey* explores female integration into high-status professions (like teaching at Dhaka University) has been viewed in Bangladesh as a kind of female empowerment and freedom of choice. This study investigates how social influences impact female teachers’ professional preparation and the problems’ dynamics. This article argues that social variables have a strong, significant impact on the professional preparation of female teachers, which limits their professional credibility and ability. The research also revealed the difficulties that affect social aspects. The report provides a critical analysis of current, developing challenges and will help to improve understanding of how female teachers’ professional growth is seen at the University of Dhaka.

In the next article under the same theme, *Md Shahrier Haider* looks at the institutional technology resources available to students with disabilities at the University of Dhaka in his article, “Provision or Limitation? Digital Technology Experiences of Students with Disabilities at the University of Dhaka.” It focuses, in particular, on the university’s offerings of digital technology support services and how such offerings affect the daily lives and academic experiences of students with disabilities. The results consistently show that, in most

situations, the undeveloped service delivery is not due to a lack of resources but primarily due to the perceived insignificance or “negligence” of the demands of students with disabilities. These effects of societal values and conventions exclude students like these by purpose. The research findings also show how technology use aided disabled pupils in mainly becoming self-reliant.

Similarly, in their article, Residential Lives of the Students with Disabilities in Higher Education Institutions: Case of the University, *Md Tahmid Anjum Nishat and Asim Das* sought to locate the current residential facilities and investigate the living circumstances of Dhaka University’s disabled students. The article shows numerous problems, constraints, and places for development and how these events impact the students with disabilities (SWD) personal and academic lives. The university authorities might take into account the study’s conclusions as part of its ongoing mega-plan for university reformation and to create a better and more welcoming atmosphere for SWD.

In the following article, *Md Mahmud Hussain and Md Alamgir Hossain* examine how an organisation like the Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka, is depicted and perceived by many in their study, Representation, News Media, and the Institute of Education and Research at the University of Dhaka. The news is now easily accessible and somewhat intrusive. Therefore, its representation has grown more significant, extensive, and policy-influencing. This article shows that IER, with secondary representation in several feature articles, is largely regarded as an authoritative institution in Bangladesh’s education and research sphere.

The last theme, “Trends and Emerging Issues in Education,” highlights significant educational trends and problems that recently surfaced in Bangladesh. Under this theme, *Md Khairul Islam*, in his article, named Education through Human Rights as an innovative right-based pedagogical approach to promote quality Education: A Case Study in Bangladesh, explores the development of right-based pedagogical techniques to support quality education at a government secondary school in Bangladesh. The insights gained from this study expand our understanding of how Bangladesh may implement a universal framework for human rights education—“education through human rights”—in order to deliver high-quality education. In the following article, on the contrary, *Tahmina Hoq* explores whether the practicum experiences of Pre-service Teachers (PSTs) in biological science education contribute to shaping and developing self-efficacy beliefs in her article, Exploring Self-efficacy Beliefs of Pre-service Teachers: An Evidence from Biological Science Education Programme in Bangladesh. The biological science education programme has been shown in this study to have influenced all four areas of self-efficacy beliefs, including naming, mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states, during practicum. This study emphasises the necessity of providing varied contexts to support self-efficacy beliefs in biological science education.

*Rayhan Ara Zaman and A B M Ahasan Raqib*, in their article titled Perception of Different Stakeholders and Practice of Disability-inclusive Education at Secondary Schools in Bangladesh, concentrate on the state of disability-inclusive education in Bangladesh at the secondary level of the school, including policies and practises. The study explores that although parents and instructors expressed sympathy for people with disabilities, they felt special education was the best option for kids with disabilities. However, the teaching-learning environment and school infrastructure are not particularly convenient. In order to effectively implement disability-inclusive education, the article advises that training facilities, resources, and the current infrastructure be reformed and improved; curriculum modification and adaptation in the evaluation system should be included.

Finally, in their article, Exploring the Challenges of Mathematics Teaching-Learning Process at Primary School Level During COVID-19, *Rubaiya Sharmin, Md Abdul Halim, and Tamanna Sultana* examine the difficulties that teachers and students faced while engaging in the mathematics teaching-learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three different viewpoints on obstacles are highlighted in this study: issues connected to the curriculum, challenges faced by teachers, and challenges faced by students. They note that the main curriculum-related difficulties instructors have while teaching mathematics online are the appropriateness of the material, alignment of contents regarding time schedules, curriculum objectives, and teaching methodologies provided in the curriculum. Additionally, giving lectures, running classes, grading students, instructors' lack of technology expertise, and the accessibility of physical facilities emerge as the main problems. This article outlines the practical ramifications for educational institutions, curriculum designers, teacher educators, and legislators.

Even though this special issue aims to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence and the centennial of the University of Dhaka, these articles, organised under five major themes, provide some examples of how the University of Dhaka contributes to the nation's education policy development and practices. This project suggests that more thorough, insightful, and critical research is needed to examine the University of Dhaka's position in several sectors. We hope this special issue encourages other academics and researchers to consider more projects to generate knowledge about the University of Dhaka and the historical roots of nation-building in Bangladesh.

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