Education System in Bangladesh: A Conflicting Approach to Building a Good Citizen

Faisal Emon

MA in English Language Teaching (ELT) Master of governance and Development Studies (MGDS) BA Hons., MA in English Literature

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.909000168

Received: 14 September 2025; Accepted: 20 September 2025; Published: 03 October 2025

ABSTRACT

Education is of utmost importance for a country to develop by. It is one of the powerful yardsticks to measure human consciousness upon the qualities of ethics, morality, courtesy, behaviour, relationship, nationality, justice, proper power exercise, tradition loyalty, and so forth. Some countries reach to the topmost peaceful living standard whereas most of the countries struggle to stay peaceful in the midst of their so many conflicting issues. Living a good life becomes a challenge as long as the importance of education is hardly realized. Scarcity of fundamental needs, discrimination of education, and the division of the educational system under religiously traditional norms in one phase and the general system with English-medium inclusion in another phase are impeding the basic learning environment for children. A pile of textbooks is prescribed for child school learning that is hardly adaptable to real-life activism. The maxim that a child is the father of a nation is hardly pragmatic in Bangladesh. Here, a child is classified into a stratified scale upon economic and social status which is not privileged by the state for ensuring his/her education. This disparity brings to light the emergence of inequality thus creating a barrier to planting a seed of good citizen. The research tries to explore the related variables of why creating good citizens becomes very challenging in Bangladesh. For Bangladesh, a country aspiring to move beyond the limitations of poverty, illiteracy, and political volatility, education is not only a developmental tool but also a contested domain reflecting historical legacies, religious traditions, socio-economic divides, and global pressures. This research article interrogates the paradox of education in Bangladesh: while the state constitutionally guarantees education as a right and policy frameworks envision a just and equitable system, in practice, education is fragmented, hierarchical, and conflict-laden. The paper investigates why producing "good citizens" remains elusive, with children divided into streams of madrasa, Bangla-medium, and English-medium systems, each fostering different worldviews. Using the capability approach (Sen), critical pedagogy (Freire), and Marxist/postcolonial critiques, and drawing on national statistics and international reports (BBS, UNESCO, UNDP, World Bank), the paper argues that despite gains in enrollment, systemic fragmentation, underinvestment, and governance deficits constrain the formation of ethical, skilled, and civically engaged citizens. Comparative reflections from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and South Korea demonstrate that political will, policy coherence, and equitable investment can transform education into a true public good and a foundation for democratic citizenship.

Keywords: Bangladesh; education policy; citizenship; inequality; governance; capability approach; critical pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

Education has long been recognized as one of the most powerful instruments for social transformation and human development. It is through education that individuals acquire not only literacy and numeracy but also values, ethics, social awareness, and the civic consciousness needed to live as responsible members of society. The famous assertion by John Dewey that "education is not preparation for life; education is life itself" captures the essence of its role in shaping citizens capable of contributing positively to their communities and nations. For developing countries such as Bangladesh, where poverty, inequality, and political instability remain persistent challenges, the role of education in producing "good citizens" becomes all the more critical.

Yet, the education system in Bangladesh reflects deep structural and ideological conflicts that hinder this objective.

The title of this research—*Education System in Bangladesh: A Conflicting Approach to Building a Good Class Citizen*—suggests both the promise and the paradox embedded within Bangladesh's educational framework. On one hand, education is constitutionally guaranteed as a right for all citizens. Article 17 of the Constitution of Bangladesh commits the state to establish a uniform, mass-oriented, and universal system of education that will ensure free and compulsory education to all children. This vision echoes international commitments such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities. On the other hand, the reality diverges significantly from these commitments. The system is fragmented into multiple streams—general, madrasa, and English-medium—each reflecting different ideologies, pedagogical approaches, and socio-economic bases. This fragmentation contributes to the reproduction of inequality, the politicization of education, and the failure to create a coherent civic identity among students.

The need to examine this conflict becomes even more urgent when considering the broader developmental challenges Bangladesh faces. Despite commendable achievements such as steady GDP growth, improvements in the Human Development Index (HDI), and significant strides in female education, the quality of education remains a pressing concern. Bangladesh ranks relatively low in global education quality indicators, and employers frequently lament the skills gap among graduates. More importantly, **the system often emphasizes rote memorization over critical thinking, examination success over ethical reasoning, and partisan loyalty over civic participation**. This leads to a paradoxical outcome: while literacy rates may rise, the ability of education to nurture democratic, ethical, and justice-oriented citizens remains severely compromised.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study draws on the works of influential scholars such as Amartya Sen, Paulo Freire, and Martha Nussbaum to explore the relationship between education and citizenship. Sen's concept of *Development as Freedom* underscores that education is both an intrinsic good and an instrumental freedom that enables people to participate meaningfully in social and political life. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* highlights how education can either liberate the marginalized or entrench oppression when it becomes a tool for indoctrination and control. Martha Nussbaum's emphasis on cultivating humanity through liberal education suggests that a truly good citizen is one who can reason critically, empathize with others, and engage in democratic deliberation. These frameworks provide valuable lenses for analyzing how Bangladesh's education system, with its contradictions, facilitates or obstructs the making of good citizens.

The conflicting nature of education in Bangladesh manifests not only in its structure but also in its governance and practices. The curriculum is frequently revised based on shifting political agendas rather than pedagogical needs, creating instability and ideological bias. The influence of student politics, often violent and partisan, further undermines the environment necessary for nurturing civic values. Teachers, who should be role models, are sometimes appointed on political considerations rather than merit, which diminishes both quality and integrity. Moreover, the heavy reliance on private tutoring and the commercialization of education highlight a growing commodification that privileges those with economic means, thereby deepening social divides.

The concept of a "good class citizen" in this context demands unpacking. Citizenship is not merely a legal status but a lived experience shaped by the values, knowledge, and practices instilled through education. A good citizen, ideally, is one who respects laws, upholds democratic values, contributes to social harmony, and participates actively in community life. However, in Bangladesh, the production of such citizens is obstructed by systemic barriers. Instead, what often emerges are fragmented citizens: some shaped by religious conservatism with limited exposure to global perspectives, others molded by elite English-medium institutions detached from local realities, and many caught in the middle with inadequate skills and civic orientation. **The state's inability to harmonize these competing streams results in a fractured citizenry, undermining both national unity and democratic development.**

This research seeks to explore why creating good citizens through education remains so challenging in Bangladesh. It investigates the structural inequalities, political influences, and socio-cultural factors that impede the process. The study also engages in comparative analysis with other South Asian countries such as

India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka to identify lessons and alternatives. For instance, Kerala's success in achieving near-universal literacy through strong state-led policies, Pakistan's struggles with madrasa reforms, and Sri Lanka's early investment in free education offer instructive contrasts. By situating Bangladesh within these regional dynamics, the research aims to illuminate both the possibilities and the pitfalls of education as a tool for nation-building.

In doing so, the study contributes not only to academic discourse but also to policy debates. It underscores that the question of citizenship cannot be divorced from the question of education, and vice versa. For Bangladesh to achieve its aspiration of becoming a middle-income country with strong democratic institutions, the education system must be reoriented to prioritize civic values alongside skills and knowledge. This requires a shift from fragmented, politicized, and inequitable structures to a more unified, ethical, and inclusive approach.

Thus, the introduction establishes the problem, highlights the significance of the study, and outlines the theoretical and comparative lenses through which the issue will be examined. It sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how and why Bangladesh's education system reflects a conflicting approach to building a good class citizen, and what can be done to reconcile these contradictions in pursuit of a more just and democratic society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The question of whether the education system in Bangladesh contributes effectively to the making of good citizens has been debated for decades. Education is widely considered one of the most powerful instruments for social transformation, state-building, and democratic consolidation (Dewey, 1916; Sen, 1999). In the context of Bangladesh, the problem is multidimensional: low literacy rates, poor quality of schooling, politicization, inequity, and weak governance continue to undermine the moral and civic development of citizens (Alam, Haque, & Siddiqui, 2007). This chapter reviews relevant scholarly debates, theoretical frameworks, and comparative literature to identify the gaps and contextualize the analysis.

Education and Citizenship: Theoretical Perspectives

Theories of citizenship stress both **rights and responsibilities**. Marshall's (1950) classical model outlined civil, political, and social rights as pillars of citizenship, where education serves as the enabler for meaningful participation. Dewey (1916) emphasized that education should foster democratic habits rather than merely transfer knowledge. In contemporary discourse, the **human capital theory** (Becker, 1993) views education as essential for national productivity and growth, while **critical pedagogy** (Freire, 1970) argues education must empower marginalized groups to challenge inequality.

From a postcolonial standpoint, **new historicism** and **Marxist theory** provide critiques of how structural inequality and class-based politics shape access to education (Gramsci, 1971; Williams, 1977). Neo-liberal perspectives, on the other hand, frame education as a competitive asset in global labor markets, often sidelining moral or civic outcomes (Robertson, 2012). These diverse frameworks reveal that the function of education goes beyond literacy—it is tied to power, identity, and governance.

Historical Evolution of Education in Bangladesh

Pre-Colonial Foundations

Before the arrival of colonial powers, education in Bengal was predominantly informal and community-based. Traditional **pathshalas** (village schools) provided basic literacy and numeracy, while **madrasas** focused on religious and moral instruction. These institutions were deeply embedded in local culture, serving agrarian societies where the majority of people lived in villages.

As Eaton (1993) notes, Bengal's pre-colonial education reflected plural traditions: Islamic madrasas coexisted with Sanskrit tols for Hindu elites, creating a mosaic of knowledge systems. The objective was not to prepare

children for formal employment but to instill moral, cultural, and religious values. This indigenous character of education was later disrupted by colonial policies.

The **colonial legacy** shaped Bangladesh's educational structures. Under British rule, the Macaulay Minute (1835) and Wood's Despatch (1854) promoted English-medium education, privileging elites while sidelining vernacular and mass education (Rahman, 2019). During Pakistan's rule (1947–1971), education was politicized by linguistic repression and uneven resource allocation, which catalyzed the Language Movement of 1952 (Kamal, 2010).

After independence in 1971, Bangladesh declared education a constitutional right (Constitution of Bangladesh, 1972, Art. 17). Despite progressive rhetoric, policy oscillated between socialist commitments and neoliberal reforms. The **Education Policy of 2010** attempted to modernize curricula, expand access, and emphasize moral values, but implementation gaps persisted (Choudhury & Rahman, 2017). Thus, the historic path dependency illustrates why challenges remain unresolved.

Colonial Transformations (1757–1947)

The British colonial administration radically altered the educational landscape. Lord Macaulay's "Minute on Education" (1835) epitomized the colonial intent to produce "a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." English-medium institutions were established to train clerks and administrators for colonial bureaucracy.

While these schools created an English-educated elite, they marginalized traditional systems. Madrasas and Sanskrit tols declined, and pathshalas were neglected. This produced a sharp educational divide: a small elite gained access to English education and government jobs, while the majority remained confined to traditional or no schooling.

From a **New Historicist** perspective, colonial education was not merely about literacy; it was about control. It shaped subjectivities, producing colonial intermediaries while delegitimizing indigenous forms of knowledge. The legacy of this dual system still haunts Bangladesh, where English-medium institutions are associated with privilege and power.

Partition and the Pakistan Period (1947–1971)

The partition of India in 1947 and the creation of Pakistan marked another turning point. East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was linguistically and culturally distinct from West Pakistan, yet education policies often favored Urdu and Islamic identity over Bengali culture. The attempt to impose Urdu as the state language in 1948 sparked massive protests, culminating in the **Language Movement of 1952**.

The movement was not just about language—it was about identity, rights, and access. Students played a pivotal role, highlighting the political dimension of education. Rahman (2013) argues that the Language Movement laid the foundation for Bangladesh's later struggles for autonomy and independence.

During this period, madrasas were expanded under state patronage as part of Islamization policies, while government schools remained underfunded. English-medium institutions, though fewer, retained their elitist character. The uneven investment deepened inequalities, privileging some groups while marginalizing others.

From a **Marxist lens**, the Pakistan era illustrates how education was used to consolidate class and ideological hegemony. Elites aligned with West Pakistan benefited from state patronage, while the majority in East Pakistan remained underserved.

Post-Independence Aspirations (1971–1990s)

After independence in 1971, Bangladesh faced the monumental task of rebuilding a war-torn nation. Education was declared a priority in nation-building. The 1972 Constitution enshrined free and compulsory education as a state responsibility, with Article 17 specifically mandating universal primary education.

The first Education Commission (1974) emphasized secular, scientific, and mass-oriented education. However, political instability, economic crises, and frequent changes in government hindered implementation. Military regimes in the 1970s and 1980s revived religious education as part of their strategy to gain legitimacy, strengthening madrasa networks once again.

During the 1980s, NGOs such as **BRAC** and **Gonoshasthaya Kendra** stepped in to fill gaps left by the state. BRAC's non-formal primary education model became a global example of how civil society could innovate. Yet, this also introduced another layer of fragmentation, as NGO-led schools functioned parallel to government institutions.

The 1990s and Beyond: Expansion and Fragmentation

The 1990s witnessed an expansion of educational access. Enrollment rates rose significantly, driven by initiatives like the **Food for Education Program** (1993) and later the **Primary Education Stipend Project**. By the early 2000s, gender parity at the primary level had largely been achieved, a remarkable success for a low-income country.

However, the expansion was accompanied by persistent challenges in quality. Curricula remained outdated, teacher absenteeism was common, and rote learning dominated classrooms. The tripartite division—Bangla-medium, English-medium, and madrasa—became more entrenched.

Neoliberal globalization further reshaped the landscape. The rise of private English-medium schools in urban centers reflected growing middle-class aspirations for global mobility. These schools, however, remained inaccessible to most families due to high costs. Conversely, madrasas, often supported by religious charities, expanded among poorer communities.

As Asadullah and Chaudhury (2010) note, this has produced "parallel universes of education," where children from different backgrounds rarely interact or share common civic values.

National Education Policy 2010: A Promise Unfulfilled

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2010** was hailed as a progressive reform aiming to unify the system, modernize curricula, and ensure equity. It emphasized secular values, scientific education, and integration of madrasa and general streams.

Yet, implementation has been inconsistent. Political changes, bureaucratic inertia, and resistance from vested interest groups have slowed progress. Haque (2018) argues that the gap between policy formulation and execution is one of the defining features of Bangladesh's education sector.

Moreover, education budgets have remained inadequate. Bangladesh spends less than 2% of GDP on education, one of the lowest rates globally. This chronic underfunding undermines the ambitious goals of the NEP 2010.

Literacy, Inequality, and Human Development

Bangladesh has made progress in literacy, with adult literacy rising from **29% in 1981** to **76% in 2022** (UNESCO, 2023). Yet disparities remain: urban-rural gaps, gender divides, and regional inequality persist (BBS, 2022). The **Human Development Index (HDI)** of Bangladesh stands at 0.661 (UNDP, 2023), but the education index lags behind peers like Sri Lanka. Scholars argue that without equitable education, the state risks perpetuating cycles of poverty, low productivity, and weak civic engagement (Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2010).

Kerala in India provides a **comparative case**: literacy campaigns there, driven by strong state investment and civil society activism, produced near-universal literacy and higher civic participation (Dreze & Sen, 2013). Bangladesh, by contrast, still suffers from underfunded schools, rote learning, and lack of teacher accountability.

Politics, Power, and Governance in Education

A major barrier to developing good citizens is the **politicization of education**. University student unions often act as political wings of ruling parties, undermining academic freedom and civic neutrality (Kabir, 2020). Cronyism in teacher recruitment, corruption in textbook distribution, and partisan control of curricula erode trust in education as a moral institution (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2019).

The state's **low per capita spending on education**—only around 2% of GDP compared to UNESCO's recommended 4–6%—reflects weak prioritization (World Bank, 2021). Poor governance allows elite capture, while the marginalized are left with under-resourced public schools or unregulated madrasas (Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2009). This aligns with Marxist critiques that education often reproduces existing class hierarchies rather than dismantling them (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

Civil Society, NGOs, and Alternative Models

Civil society and NGOs play a crucial role where the state fails. **BRAC's non-formal primary education** has educated over 12 million children, many from marginalized groups (Nath, Sylva, & Grimes, 1999). Such models stress flexibility, community involvement, and gender sensitivity. While NGOs help mitigate gaps, critics argue they cannot replace systemic reform, and their donor-driven agendas sometimes align with neoliberal frameworks rather than transformative citizenship (Haque, 2017).

The madrasa system, educating over 4 million students, presents both opportunities and risks. While madrasas expand access in rural areas, curricula often emphasize religious instruction with limited civic or scientific content (Ullah, 2016). Reforms in Pakistan (2002–2007) illustrate the difficulty of modernizing madrasa education without political resistance. Bangladesh faces similar challenges of balancing tradition with modernization.

Education, Economy, and Citizenship

Economic literature shows that **education drives growth** by building skills and employability (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Yet in Bangladesh, the "**educated unemployed**" phenomenon highlights a mismatch between academic degrees and labor market needs (Rahman & Raihan, 2019). Weak vocational training and absence of a **national skills framework** undermine the idea of education as empowerment.

Moreover, education's role in shaping citizenship cannot be reduced to employability. Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) argue that capabilities like critical reasoning, empathy, and democratic participation are as important as economic skills. In Bangladesh, corruption, coercion, and abuses of power persist partly because the education system has not adequately instilled civic virtues such as accountability, tolerance, and respect for diversity (Siddiqui, 2019).

Contemporary Global Perspectives

Globally, education is increasingly tied to **sustainable development goals (SDGs)**. SDG 4 emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education. Comparative studies show that countries with **integrated citizenship education**—such as Finland and Japan—achieve higher levels of trust, social cohesion, and good governance (Schulz et al., 2017). Bangladesh's policy documents mention citizenship and ethics but often lack practical implementation (MoE, 2010).

Critical international perspectives argue that neoliberal globalization pushes countries like Bangladesh toward a market-oriented system, privileging STEM over civic education (Spring, 2015). Without balancing these priorities, the education system risks producing workers rather than citizens.

In recent years, Bangladesh has achieved commendable progress in literacy rates and school enrollment. According to BANBEIS (2022), the literacy rate reached around 76%. However, challenges remain:

- **Dropout Rates**: Nearly one-fifth of children drop out before completing primary school.
- **Quality Crisis**: Only about one-third of Grade 5 students achieve expected competencies in language and mathematics (ASER, 2018).

- **Urban-Rural Divide**: Rural schools lack trained teachers, infrastructure, and resources compared to urban institutions.
- **Ideological Conflicts**: Madrasa graduates often face stigmatization, while English-medium graduates are seen as detached from national identity.

These issues reflect the broader contradiction: education is both a success story in terms of access and a failure in terms of equity and quality.

Gaps in Literature

While there is extensive research on literacy, gender parity, and NGO interventions, fewer studies explicitly link Bangladesh's education system to **citizenship formation**. Much of the scholarship focuses on access and outcomes but less on the **quality of civic values, governance, and political neutrality**. Comparative lessons from Kerala, Finland, and Pakistan remain underutilized in Bangladesh's policy discourse.

This gap underscores the need for a critical analysis that situates education not just as a developmental tool but as the foundation of citizenship and democratic accountability.

Conclusion

The literature demonstrates that while Bangladesh has expanded access to education, systemic weaknesses—politicization, inequality, low funding, and weak civic orientation—prevent the education system from fully contributing to the making of good citizens. The theoretical perspectives of Dewey, Sen, Freire, Marxist and neoliberal critiques, along with comparative insights from Kerala and Pakistan, provide a framework to interrogate these dynamics.

This review highlights a crucial gap: education in Bangladesh is too often seen as an **economic instrument** rather than a **civic institution**. Without integrating moral, social, and democratic values, the education system will continue to fall short in producing the kind of citizens needed for inclusive growth and good governance.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study adopts a **qualitative, interpretive research approach** with elements of comparative policy analysis. The central objective is to understand how the education system in Bangladesh contributes—or fails to contribute—to the making of a good citizen. In line with constructivist epistemology, the research assumes that "good citizenship" is not an absolute construct but rather a **socially negotiated ideal**, shaped by cultural norms, political structures, and historical conditions (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The qualitative orientation allows for the **exploration of meanings and interpretations**, going beyond statistical trends to examine the underlying dynamics of power, governance, and policy implementation. Comparative insights from international case studies (e.g., Kerala, India and Pakistan's madrasa reforms) are incorporated to identify lessons and divergences that may inform Bangladesh's context.

By combining **document analysis, policy review, and interpretive synthesis**, the research moves beyond description toward **critical evaluation**, aiming to provide a coherent picture of the systemic challenges that obstruct the nurturing of civic responsibility.

Data Sources and Materials

The study relies primarily on **secondary data**, acknowledging both their richness and limitations. The major categories of data sources include:

1. **Government and Policy Documents**
    - National Education Policy (2010).
    - Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) reports.
    - Curriculum and textbook guidelines issued by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

- Reports from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

2. **International Reports and Indices**

- UNESCO's *Global Education Monitoring Reports*.
- UNDP's *Human Development Reports*.
- World Bank policy papers on education and governance.
- Transparency International Bangladesh's corruption perception reports.

3. **Scholarly Literature**

- Peer-reviewed journal articles focusing on citizenship education, governance, and social cohesion.
- Comparative studies on South Asian education systems (e.g., India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka).
- Books authored by educationists and political scientists analyzing the role of schools in shaping civic identity.

4. **Case Study Materials**

- Research on Kerala's literacy movement and state-led education reforms.
- Evaluations of Pakistan's madrasa reforms (2002–2006).
- Cross-national analyses of civic education programs in developing contexts.

The triangulation of these sources ensures a **multi-layered understanding**. For example, statistical data (literacy rates, dropout percentages) are cross-checked with **qualitative policy analysis** to reveal discrepancies between policy rhetoric and ground realities.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework is guided by **Critical Policy Analysis (CPA)**, with supplementary insights from **Human Capital Theory** and **Critical Pedagogy**. The rationale for combining these perspectives is to capture the **interplay of education, politics, and social reproduction**.

- **Critical Policy Analysis (CPA):**

Used to interrogate how education policies are constructed, whose interests they serve, and how they impact the making of citizens (Ball, 1993). It helps to uncover the hidden politics behind curriculum design, textbook content, and institutional practices.

- **Human Capital Theory:**

Frames education as an investment in human resources that should enhance productivity and social progress (Becker, 1994). The failure of Bangladesh's system to generate skilled, responsible citizens highlights contradictions between **expected outcomes** and **actual outputs**.

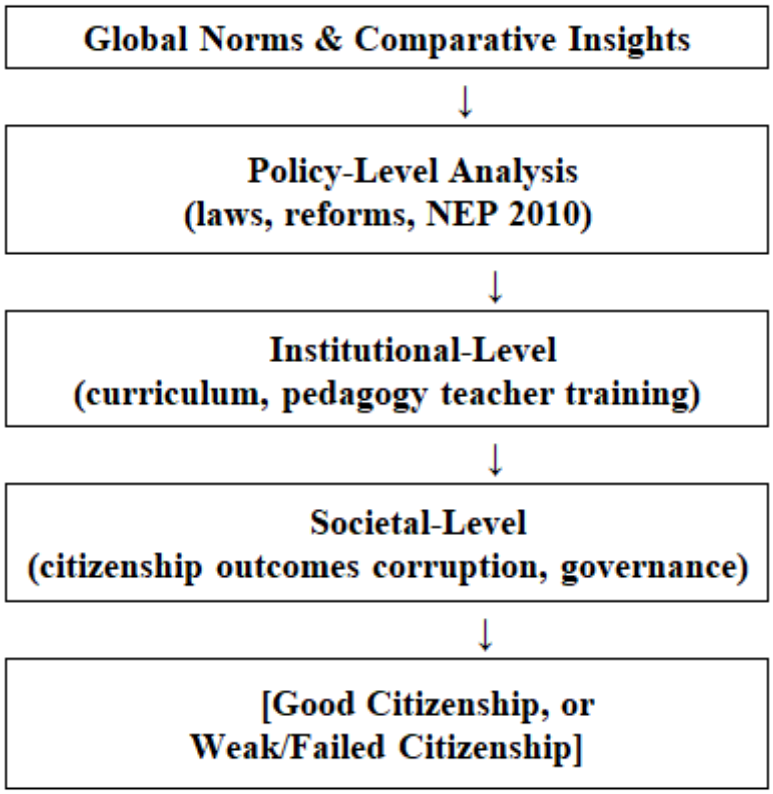
- **Critical Pedagogy:**

Inspired by Freire (1970), this perspective highlights how authoritarian teaching styles, rote learning, and political control over curriculum can suppress students' ability to think critically, thereby **undermining democratic citizenship**.

Together, these frameworks are operationalized through the following **three-layered analysis**:

1. **Policy-Level Analysis** – Reviewing national policy documents, laws, and reforms.
2. **Institutional-Level Analysis** – Examining curriculum content, teaching practices, and governance of schools/madrasas.
3. **Societal-Level Analysis** – Linking education outcomes with broader challenges: corruption, social inequality, political clientelism, and weak governance.

Diagram: Analytical Framework



This flowchart illustrates how policies shape institutions, which in turn influence societal outcomes, ultimately determining whether education succeeds in building good citizens or reproduces systemic weaknesses.

Limitations of the Study

While the methodology provides a structured approach, it is not without limitations:

1. **Dependence on Secondary Data** – The study does not generate primary field data due to time and logistical constraints. Hence, findings rely on the accuracy and reliability of published reports.
2. **Contextual Biases** – Much of the scholarly literature and policy reports may carry ideological biases. For example, government documents often highlight achievements while downplaying failures.
3. **Comparative Generalizability** – Case studies from Kerala and Pakistan are used for comparison, but their contexts are not fully identical to Bangladesh. Thus, lessons drawn must be applied with caution.
4. **Dynamic Policy Environment** – Education reforms and political priorities shift frequently in Bangladesh. The study captures conditions up to 2025, but subsequent changes may alter its relevance.
5. **Conceptual Ambiguity of "Good Citizen"** – Since citizenship is socially contested, the research adopts a working definition (ethical, responsible, law-abiding, participatory individuals). However, societal interpretations may differ, affecting the applicability of conclusions.

Despite these limitations, the methodology remains rigorous and suitable for achieving the research objectives. By combining **critical analysis** with **comparative insights**, the study ensures that its findings are both contextually grounded and globally informed.

Analysis of Key Conflicts in Bangladesh's Education System

Socio-Economic Inequality and Educational Access

One of the most visible conflicts in Bangladesh's education system is inequality in access and outcomes. Children's opportunities are shaped not only by their intelligence or motivation but by their family's income, location, and social class.

According to BANBEIS (2022), the net enrollment rate in primary schools exceeds 95%. However, dropout rates remain high, particularly among children from low-income families. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES, 2019) reveals that children from the richest quintile are **three times more likely** to complete secondary education compared to those from the poorest quintile.

This inequality is evident in the **types of schools** families can access:

- **English-medium schools** cater to elites who can afford tuition and seek global opportunities.
- **Bangla-medium government schools** serve the majority but suffer from overcrowding and poor quality.
- **Madrasa schools** provide free or low-cost education, often with food and lodging, attracting children from poorer households.

The result is not just inequality in education but the creation of segmented social classes with divergent life trajectories.

Case Study: A BRAC (2018) survey in Dhaka found that nearly 80% of students in English-medium schools had parents with tertiary education, while only 12% of madrasa students' parents had studied beyond secondary school. This intergenerational transmission of advantage/disadvantage reinforces inequality.

From a **Marxist perspective**, this stratification reflects how education reproduces class divisions. Instead of being a ladder of mobility, the system functions as a sorting mechanism, channeling elites into positions of power while limiting opportunities for the poor.

Contradictions in the Bangladeshi Education System

The education system in Bangladesh is marked by a series of contradictions that directly affect its ability to produce responsible and ethical citizens. The first contradiction lies in the **parallel streams of education**. Bangladesh has three dominant streams: the general education system, the madrasa system, and the English-medium system. Each operates with its own philosophy, content, and purpose. While the general stream largely follows a government-prescribed curriculum, the madrasa system integrates religious instruction with limited mainstream subjects, and the English-medium schools follow international curricula such as Cambridge or Edexcel. This division produces unequal social outcomes: English-medium students often dominate elite professions and global opportunities; general stream students compete in an overcrowded job market with limited critical skills; while madrasa students face marginalization due to insufficient integration into modern knowledge systems (Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2016). Such fragmentation prevents the creation of a **common civic identity** necessary for building a cohesive citizenry.

A second contradiction lies in the **urban–rural divide**. Schools in urban areas, particularly in Dhaka and Chittagong, benefit from better infrastructure, qualified teachers, and digital resources. Rural schools, by contrast, often lack classrooms, textbooks, and trained educators. UNICEF (2020) reports that dropout rates in rural areas remain significantly higher, particularly among girls, due to poverty, early marriage, and lack of transportation. This divide perpetuates structural inequalities in society, undermining the constitutional commitment to equal opportunity.

A third contradiction is rooted in **political interference** in the education system. Textbooks have often been revised to reflect ruling party ideologies rather than objective civic values. The politicization of student unions has led to violence, corruption, and the normalization of coercive practices in campuses (Manzoor, 2018). Instead of being centers for moral and intellectual development, many universities become battlegrounds for partisan interests. Thus, the education system itself—rather than resisting corruption—often reproduces the same culture of impunity that plagues governance.

These contradictions collectively hinder the role of education in shaping good citizens. Instead of functioning as a tool for empowerment, the education system often reinforces existing divisions and inequalities.

Regional Inequality in Literacy and Schooling

Regional disparity is another conflict. Urban centers like Dhaka and Chittagong enjoy better schools, infrastructure, and teacher availability. In contrast, remote districts such as Kurigram or Sunamganj face chronic shortages.

Table 1: Literacy Rate by Region (BANBEIS, 2021)

Region	Literacy Rate (%)
Dhaka Division	79
Chittagong	77
Rajshahi	75
Khulna	74
Barisal	72
Sylhet	70
Rangpur	68
Mymensingh	67

This data shows a **12 percentage point gap** between Dhaka (79%) and Mymensingh (67%). Such disparities are not trivial—they translate into unequal human capital, employment opportunities, and civic participation.

From **Amartya Sen's capability approach**, children in Mymensingh or Rangpur have fewer opportunities to expand their capabilities. Their educational deprivation becomes a form of "unfreedom," constraining their ability to live fulfilling lives and participate as equal citizens.

Education and Citizenship Formation

Citizenship in Bangladesh remains narrowly understood as legal status rather than an **active practice of civic responsibility**. The education system contributes to this limited understanding. While the National Education Policy (2010) emphasized moral and civic values, actual implementation has been weak. Civic education exists more as a token subject than an integrated philosophy across the curriculum. Students are taught theoretical knowledge about democracy, governance, and rights, but rarely do they practice **participatory learning** that cultivates critical thinking, responsibility, and empathy (Rahman, 2019).

Another problem is the **overemphasis on examinations**. Bangladesh's system rewards rote memorization, high scores, and credentialism rather than creativity or moral integrity. From primary school to university, success is measured by grades and certificates, not by contribution to community life or ability to resolve ethical dilemmas. This culture not only sidelines weaker students but also undermines the formation of integrity and accountability. Scholars argue that exam-driven systems often produce individuals skilled at compliance rather than those committed to justice and fairness (Pritchett, 2013).

Equally critical is the **disconnection between schools and community ethics**. In many cases, schools operate as isolated institutions with little linkage to social responsibility. Students may excel academically yet remain disconnected from the problems of corruption, poverty, or inequality in their surroundings. This disconnect fosters what Freire (1970) termed the "banking model of education," where students are passive recipients of information rather than active agents in their own societies.

Therefore, while education has the potential to form active, ethical citizens, the current system in Bangladesh often reinforces passivity, hierarchy, and compliance—qualities that contradict the ideals of good citizenship.

Ideological Conflicts: Secular vs. Religious vs. Global

Bangladesh's education system is not only divided by class and region but also by ideology. The three dominant streams (madrasa, Bangla-medium, and English-medium) embody distinct worldviews:

- **Madrasa system** emphasizes Islamic knowledge and values, often criticized for insufficient integration of modern subjects.

- **Bangla-medium system** reflects a nationalist, secular orientation but suffers from outdated methods and politicization.
- **English-medium system** reflects globalization and neoliberalism, producing globally competitive graduates but often criticized for detachment from national identity.

These divisions raise critical questions: Whose values define a "good citizen"? Is it loyalty to religion, the state, or global markets?

Case Study: A study by Asadullah & Chaudhury (2010) found that madrasa students often had limited employment opportunities outside religious institutions, while English-medium graduates were overrepresented in multinational corporations. Bangla-medium students were stuck in between, facing stiff competition in government job markets.

This creates a fragmented society, where citizens hold divergent understandings of morality, justice, and national loyalty.

Political Instability and Governance Deficits

Education does not exist in isolation; it reflects broader governance patterns. Bangladesh's history of political instability—military coups, partisan rivalry, and weak institutions—has directly impacted schools.

According to Transparency International Bangladesh (2020):

- Teacher recruitment is often politicized, with party loyalty influencing hiring.
- Funds for infrastructure are mismanaged, leading to corruption in school construction projects.
- Student wings of political parties sometimes turn campuses into arenas of violence.

The **World Bank (2022)** estimates that inefficiencies and corruption in the education sector cost Bangladesh nearly **$1 billion annually**. This governance failure undermines both quality and trust in the system.

The **neo-liberal critique** highlights how governance gaps often invite donor-driven reforms and NGO interventions, further fragmenting the system rather than strengthening the state's responsibility.

Education, Economy, and Human Development

Bangladesh's economy has grown rapidly, with GDP growth averaging over 6% since the 2000s. The country graduated from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2021. Yet, education investment remains inadequate—only 1.9% of GDP compared to UNESCO's recommended 4–6%.

This underinvestment limits the potential of education to drive human development. The **UNDP Human Development Report (2021)** ranked Bangladesh 133rd out of 191 countries. While improvements in health and income contributed to progress, education lagged.

Figure 1: Components of HDI in Bangladesh vs. South Asia Average (UNDP 2021)

- Life expectancy: Bangladesh (72.6 years) – above South Asia average
- GNI per capita: Bangladesh ($5,138 PPP) – below South Asia average
- Mean years of schooling: Bangladesh (6.2) – below South Asia average (7.3)

This shows that education remains the weakest link in Bangladesh's human development. Without strengthening it, economic growth may be unsustainable, and the vision of cultivating skilled, ethical citizens will remain unfulfilled.

Civil Society's Role: Critique and Innovation

Civil society and NGOs have often filled gaps left by the state. **BRAC's education program** has provided schooling for millions of disadvantaged children, particularly girls. **ASER reports** show that BRAC schools achieve better learning outcomes than many government schools.

Civil society also plays a critical role in **holding the government accountable**. Organizations like **Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)** regularly expose corruption, while advocacy groups push for higher education budgets. However, their influence is limited by political resistance and donor dependence.

From a **Gramscian perspective**, civil society represents a counter-hegemonic force. Yet, without systemic reform, NGO initiatives cannot replace the state's constitutional responsibility.

Comparative Lessons from Other Contexts

International comparisons help to clarify why Bangladesh struggles and what it can learn.

Kerala, India offers a significant lesson. In the late 20th century, Kerala achieved near-universal literacy through a **state-led campaign** that integrated community participation. Education was treated not only as a technical requirement but also as a **collective cultural project**. Teachers, local governments, and civil society collaborated to ensure that literacy translated into social awareness. Today, Kerala ranks among the highest in India in terms of Human Development Index (UNDP, 2021). Bangladesh, by contrast, still treats education as a segmented bureaucratic function rather than a social movement, which weakens its transformative potential.

Pakistan's madrasa reforms in the early 2000s also highlight useful parallels. The government attempted to modernize madrasa curricula by adding English, science, and mathematics. However, the reforms largely failed due to lack of teacher training, poor monitoring, and resistance from religious leaders (ICG, 2007). Bangladesh faces a similar challenge: attempts to integrate madrasa students into mainstream knowledge often face cultural and political pushback. This suggests that without deep consultation and trust-building, reforms risk alienating communities rather than uniting them.

Finland's education model stands at the opposite end of the spectrum. Finland abolished streaming, reduced testing, and invested in teacher training. The system emphasizes equality, creativity, and moral responsibility as much as academic learning (Sahlberg, 2011). Although Bangladesh cannot simply replicate Finland's system due to resource constraints, the emphasis on **equality and teacher empowerment** offers inspiration.

These comparisons reveal that Bangladesh's challenges are not unique, but they highlight the need for systemic reforms that integrate education with values, community, and equality.

Theoretical Lenses for Understanding the Contradictions

Several theoretical perspectives help explain why Bangladesh's education system struggles to produce good citizens.

Amartya Sen's capability approach argues that education should expand human freedom and the ability to lead a life of dignity (Sen, 1999). In Bangladesh, however, education often limits rather than expands capabilities, as students are constrained by rote learning, exam culture, and lack of opportunities. This prevents education from functioning as a real enabler of citizenship.

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy emphasizes education as a practice of freedom, where learners critically interrogate their social realities (Freire, 1970). Bangladeshi education, dominated by memorization and hierarchy, contradicts this ideal. Students are rarely invited to challenge corruption, power abuse, or social injustice through structured civic learning.

Martha Nussbaum's human development and global citizenship framework stresses the importance of cultivating compassion, critical reasoning, and cross-cultural understanding (Nussbaum, 2010). In Bangladesh, education rarely emphasizes empathy, intercultural awareness, or ethical reasoning, thereby narrowing citizenship to narrow utilitarian goals.

Finally, **Marxist critiques of education** highlight how class inequalities are reproduced through schooling. In Bangladesh, English-medium schools function as elite pipelines, while general and madrasa systems reproduce

poverty cycles. This segmentation ensures that the ruling class maintains dominance, preventing education from becoming a tool of liberation.

Together, these theories illuminate why Bangladesh's education system is caught in contradictions: rather than liberating students into responsible citizenship, it often reproduces the same inequalities and injustices of society.

The Burning Question: Can Bangladesh Build Good Citizens?

All these conflicts converge on the central question: Can Bangladesh realistically achieve the project of producing "good citizens"?

- **From Sen's view**, unless education expands real freedoms—by reducing inequality, ensuring quality, and integrating values—it cannot fulfill its purpose.
- **From a Marxist critique**, as long as education reproduces class hierarchies, it will fail to create equal citizens.
- **From a neoliberal lens**, privatization risks commodifying education, undermining citizenship.
- **From democratic theory**, politicization of education erodes its civic mission.

The contradictions suggest that Bangladesh is at a crossroads. The current system risks producing fragmented identities rather than cohesive, ethical citizens. Yet, with targeted reforms—greater investment, unified curricula, stronger governance, and integration of civic values—education could still fulfill its transformative promise.

Synthesis: What This Means for Bangladesh

The analysis suggests that Bangladesh's education system is structurally weak in producing good citizens. The multiple streams fragment society rather than unify it; political interference normalizes corruption; exam culture discourages creativity and responsibility; and weak civic education leaves students ill-prepared for participatory democracy.

The comparative case studies highlight that success is possible when education is treated as a **cultural project** (Kerala), when inclusivity is prioritized (Finland), and when reforms are undertaken with community trust (Pakistan's failures as warning). Theoretical perspectives reinforce the same lesson: education must expand capabilities, nurture critical agency, and challenge inequalities.

For Bangladesh, this means three things. First, reforms must **integrate values and ethics across all curricula**, not just as add-on subjects. Second, the system must reduce its dependence on exams and instead promote creativity, civic engagement, and problem-solving. Third, equity across streams must be addressed by building bridges between madrasa, general, and English-medium systems to foster a common civic identity.

Without such reforms, education in Bangladesh risks remaining a fragmented system that produces graduates but not citizens.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Restating the Central Argument

This study sets out to examine the contradictions in the education system of Bangladesh and their implications for building good citizens. The findings have made clear that, while education is universally acknowledged as the foundation of citizenship, the Bangladeshi case reflects a troubling paradox. On the one hand, Bangladesh has made commendable progress in expanding access to schooling, improving enrollment, and reducing gender disparities at the primary level. On the other hand, education has struggled to produce graduates who embody civic responsibility, ethical awareness, and a commitment to collective good.

The core reason lies in systemic contradictions: the persistence of parallel streams of education (general, madrasa, English-medium), rural–urban inequalities, exam-centered pedagogy, political interference, and insufficient integration of civic values into learning. These contradictions do not merely weaken individual outcomes but also reproduce structural injustices across society. In effect, education in Bangladesh often reproduces divisions rather than healing them, producing professionals without necessarily producing responsible citizens.

Thus, the central argument of this research is that **citizenship cannot be separated from the quality and character of education**. Unless education systems are reoriented toward inclusivity, critical thinking, and ethical practice, the dream of building good citizens will remain unrealized.

Implications for Citizenship Formation

The analysis has shown that citizenship in Bangladesh is still largely reduced to a legal identity: the right to vote, to pay taxes, or to hold a passport. However, democratic citizenship goes beyond legal status—it requires civic virtues such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and participation in the common good. Education should ideally be the site where these virtues are cultivated.

The current system, however, encourages compliance rather than responsibility. Students learn to memorize and reproduce information but rarely to engage in critical inquiry. They are taught about corruption as a social ill but are simultaneously exposed to corrupt practices within schools and universities—from bribery in admissions to partisan capture of student politics. This contradiction sends mixed signals: it teaches young people that corruption, nepotism, and coercion are normalized aspects of public life.

As a result, the failure of education is not only an academic problem but also a **civic crisis**. It undermines the possibility of democracy by producing citizens who lack the confidence, competence, or courage to challenge injustice. It also weakens governance by normalizing unethical practices at the very level of leadership formation.

Key Recommendations

To address these challenges, this research proposes several recommendations. These are divided into three levels: **structural reforms**, **curriculum and pedagogy reforms**, and **societal engagement**.

(a) Structural Reforms

1. **Bridging the Parallel Streams of Education**

   Instead of allowing general, madrasa, and English-medium systems to remain isolated, Bangladesh should create a framework for cross-stream integration. While each stream can maintain its distinctive identity, shared civic subjects (ethics, history, constitutional values) should be compulsory across all streams. This will foster a common national civic culture while respecting diversity.

2. **Reducing Urban–Rural Disparities**

   Special investment must be directed toward rural schools, particularly in teacher training, infrastructure, and digital technology. Without addressing rural inequality, education will continue reproducing social injustice rather than challenging it.

3. **Depoliticizing Education**

   Political interference in curriculum design and student organizations must be reduced. Universities should be made spaces of dialogue, research, and critical inquiry rather than partisan recruitment grounds. Independent commissions involving educators, civil society, and students should oversee reforms.

(b) Curriculum and Pedagogy Reforms

1. **Revising Curriculum with Civic Emphasis**

Civic education should not be limited to a single subject but embedded across disciplines. For example, science courses can emphasize ethical responsibility in research, literature courses can explore moral dilemmas, and economics courses can discuss justice in wealth distribution.

2. **From Rote Learning to Critical Thinking**

Exams should be redesigned to test analytical ability, problem-solving, and creativity rather than memorization. Classroom practices should encourage debate, group projects, and experiential learning such as community service.

3. **Teacher Empowerment**

Teachers are central to shaping values. Continuous professional training should be institutionalized, not just for subject knowledge but for methods of nurturing empathy, integrity, and participatory skills.

(c) Societal Engagement

1. **Community-Based Education Programs**

Schools should not be isolated from society. Programs that involve students in local governance, environmental projects, and voluntary service can bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and real-life civic practice.

2. **Collaboration with Religious and Cultural Leaders**

Since moral authority is often shaped by religious institutions in Bangladesh, collaboration between educators and community leaders is vital. Religious education should be harmonized with civic education so that faith-based values support, rather than contradict, democratic values.

3. **Use of Media and Technology**

Civic education campaigns through television, social media, and digital platforms can extend citizenship formation beyond the classroom. Youth-led digital initiatives can highlight values of honesty, tolerance, and accountability.

Long-Term Vision

If Bangladesh can implement these reforms, education could transform from being a fragmented, exam-driven system into a **national project of character formation**. The long-term vision must be to align education with the aspirations of democracy, justice, and equality. A truly democratic Bangladesh cannot emerge unless its citizens are prepared to think critically, act ethically, and participate actively in public life.

This vision resonates with the insights of global scholars. As Amartya Sen (1999) argues, education is the foundation of capabilities; as Martha Nussbaum (2010) stresses, it is also the seed of compassion and global responsibility. For Bangladesh, the stakes are even higher: without building good citizens, the dream of sustainable development will remain fragile.

Final Reflection

The research concludes that education in Bangladesh, while achieving progress in access, still falls short of its transformative role. Unless the contradictions are addressed, education will continue producing degree-holders but not necessarily citizens committed to justice and democracy.

Building good citizens requires more than classrooms and exams; it requires schools that are moral communities, teachers who are role models, and curricula that nurture both intellect and character. Only then can Bangladesh break the cycle of corruption, inequality, and poor governance that has long undermined its development.

In short, the question is not whether education matters for citizenship—it is how education is structured, delivered, and lived. The challenge for Bangladesh is to make education a lived practice of citizenship rather than a mechanical pathway to jobs. That is the only way the nation can fulfill its constitutional promise of equality, justice, and democracy.

REFERENCES

1. Ahmed, M., & Nath, S. R. (2021). Education in Bangladesh: Overcoming challenges and looking ahead. BRAC Institute of Educational Development.
2. Andrabi, T., Das, J., & Khwaja, A. I. (2006). Student learning in Pakistan: When will schools be equal? Journal of Economic Perspectives, 20(4), 91–112.
3. Asadullah, M. N., & Chaudhury, N. (2010). Holy alliances? Religion and school performance in Bangladesh. Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, 72(3), 293–318.
4. ASER Centre. (2018). Annual Status of Education Report (Bangladesh) 2018. ASER Centre.
5. Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS). (2021). Bangladesh education statistics 2021. Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh.
6. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). (2022). Statistical yearbook of Bangladesh 2022. Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh.
7. Bangladesh Ministry of Education. (2010). National Education Policy 2010. Government of Bangladesh.
8. Becker, G. S. (1993). Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
9. Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.
10. Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life. Basic Books.
11. BRAC. (2020). BRAC annual report 2020. BRAC Bangladesh.
12. Chowdhury, F. D. (2022). Democracy in crisis: Governance, legitimacy and civil society in Bangladesh. Asian Journal of Political Science, 30(2), 129–145.
13. Dewey, J. (1916). Democracy and education. Macmillan.
14. Dreze, J., & Sen, A. (2013). An uncertain glory: India and its contradictions. Princeton University Press.
15. Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. Continuum.
16. Giroux, H. A. (1988). Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning. Bergin & Garvey.
17. Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the prison notebooks (Q. Hoare & G. N. Smith, Eds. and Trans.). International Publishers.
18. Haque, M. S., & Siddiqui, T. (2020). Policy–practice gap in Bangladesh education reforms. International Journal of Educational Development, 76, 102213.
19. Harvey, D. (2005). A brief history of neoliberalism. Oxford University Press.
20. Hobsbawm, E. (1997). On history. Abacus.
21. Hossain, N. (2017). The aid lab: Understanding Bangladesh's unexpected success. Oxford University Press.
22. Human Rights Watch. (2019). Learning to deceive: Corruption in education in South Asia (report). Human Rights Watch.
23. ICG (International Crisis Group). (2007). Reforming Pakistan's madrassas: Risks and opportunities. ICG Asia Report No. 134.
24. Jayasuriya, R. (2012). Education and social policy in Sri Lanka. Journal of South Asian Studies, 35(3), 345–360.
25. Kabir, A. H. (2020). Student politics and governance in Bangladesh. South Asian Journal of Politics and Society, 8(1), 56–78.
26. Kabeer, N. (2003). Gender mainstreaming in poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals. Commonwealth Secretariat.

27. Khan, M. H., & Rahman, M. (2019). Education, inequality and employability in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Development Studies, 42(2), 45–78.
28. Klausen, J. (2015). Citizenship education as a public good: Democratic aims and civic practices. Comparative Education, 51(4), 453–468.
29. Little, A. W. (2010). Education for all and the new development compact: A view from Asia. Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 40(5), 575–588.
30. Marshall, T. H. (1950). Citizenship and social class. Pluto Press (repr. 1992).
31. Mishra, A., & Sinha, S. (2020). Inequality and education in South Asia: Regional patterns and policy options. South Asia Economic Journal, 21(1), 23–48.
32. Nath, S. R., Sylva, K., & Grimes, J. (1999). Raising basic education levels in rural Bangladesh: The impact of BRAC's non-formal primary schools. International Review of Education, 45(1), 5–26.
33. Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). Creating capabilities: The human development approach. Belknap Press.
34. OECD. (2018). The future of education and skills 2030. OECD Publishing.
35. Oommen, M. A. (1999). Kerala's development: Challenges and prospects. Economic and Political Weekly, 34(37), 2651–2656.
36. Piketty, T. (2014). Capital in the twenty-first century. Harvard University Press.
37. Pritchett, L. (2013). The rebirth of education: Schooling ain't learning. Center for Global Development.
38. Psacharopoulos, G., & Patrinos, H. (2018). Returns to investment in education: A decennial review. Education Economics, 26(5), 445–458.
39. Rahman, M. H., & Sultana, R. (2020). Education reforms and policy-practice gaps in Bangladesh. International Journal of Educational Development, 76, 102213.
40. Ramachandran, V. (2001). Education in Kerala: Issues and policies. Oxford University Press.
41. Riaz, A. (2008). The many faces of Islamic education in Pakistan. Comparative Education, 44(3), 241–257.
42. Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). Globalizing education policy. Routledge.
43. Room to Read Bangladesh. (2018). Annual report 2018. Room to Read.
44. Robertson, S. L. (2012). The strange non-death of neoliberalism in education. Critical Studies in Education, 53(3), 347–360.
45. Sen, A. (1999). Development as freedom. Oxford University Press.
46. Sen, A., & Dreze, J. (2002). India: Development and participation. Oxford University Press.
47. Shah, M., & Zafar, S. (2016). Madrasa education and reform in South Asia: Policy, practice, and politics. Comparative Education Review, 60(4), 589–611.
48. Siddiqui, K. (2019). Governance failures and citizenship in Bangladesh. Asian Journal of Political Science, 27(2), 115–134.
49. Spring, J. (2015). Globalization of education: An introduction (2nd ed.). Routledge.
50. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). (2022). National Integrity System Assessment 2022: Bangladesh. TIB.
51. UNESCO. (2020). Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and education — All means all. UNESCO Publishing.
52. UNICEF Bangladesh. (2021). Education and COVID-19: Lessons from Bangladesh. UNICEF Bangladesh.
53. UNDP. (2022). Human Development Report 2021/2022: Uncertain times, unsettled lives. United Nations Development Programme.
54. World Bank. (2019). Bangladesh education sector review: Learning for All. World Bank.
55. World Bank. (2022). World Development Indicators 2022. World Bank.
56. Zaman, H., & Rahman, A. (2020). Literacy, inequality and citizenship in Bangladesh. Journal of South Asian Development, 15(3), 289–310.
57. Žižek, S. (2009). First as tragedy, then as farce. Verso.