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Tale of Education Policy in Bangladesh: Development, Changes, and Adaptation Approach

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ABSTRACT

The current educational system of Bangladesh was imported from British India. However, it was only after gaining independence in 1971 that Bangladesh was able to adopt growth techniques in various aspects of life, including the advancement of the education sector. The nation's educational system has advanced significantly throughout the past few decades. This was made feasible by a combination of community activities, non-government organization (NGO) involvement, and government policy supporting the growth of this particular industry. Many things are still undone, though. The major issues facing our educational system include expanding education in some areas, eradicating prejudice at all academic levels, ensuring quality and purity, and battling corruption in the education industry. Throughout their tenure, each political administration has established at least one commission or committee on education. While these commission reports have consistently offered valuable recommendations for updating the educational system, their implementation and publication of results have remained pending. However, changing education systems have negatively impacted the quality of education. Therefore, this issue is important to address to ensure a positive impact on the overall learning environment of Bangladesh. The findings of this study will help policymakers and educational institutions make policies more inclusive, practical, and effective to arrange education better in the upcoming future.

Keywords: Education policy, British period, Pakistan period, Bangladesh development, and Adaptation.

INTRODUCTION:

"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela

The key to a country's development is its educational system. Education enables people to flourish in their local communities and nations, and it will help governments compete and prosper in the global economy. It is the primary way to accomplish the objective of reducing poverty. A well-educated populace that is modern in intelligence and brilliance and has advanced thought can only guide the nation toward its progress. A country's backbone is its educational system (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007).

However, it has been impossible for us to implement any education strategy in the forty years since Bangladesh gained independence. Despite the fact that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of the independent nation and the architect of the first education policy, had taken the initiative, it was all in vain due to the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu and his family members on August 15, 1975. In the subsequent years, six more education policies were prepared but were also not implemented. In 1996, 21 years later, the Awami League (current government) came to power; they again took steps to formulate an education policy. This report

was prepared in 1997 by "Education Policy-2000" and was designed based on that report. But with the change of power, education policy was resorted to again.

In 2008, when Awami League formed the government with a victory in the national elections, it entrusted the task of updating the policies with specific objectives to some eminent academics. Later, it considered the views of people of different classes and professions. As it recognizes the importance of public opinion and its responses, this education policy has gained nationwide acceptance (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Education has always been vital to society since it transcends caste, race, gender, and religion. Educational policies are regulations created to aid educational institutions in effectively instructing pupils. In Bangladesh, discussions about education reform have always been contentious and much anticipated. From the colonial era to the present, every administration has tried to develop and carry out a unique education strategy that reflects their ideas and vision for the future of the country. The first education policy of Bangladesh was made publicly available in 2010 after it had been finalized and published. This development led to the national education strategy of 2010, which promised changes and advancements, becoming a true reflection of the country's values and conscience (Khan, 2016). The first Education Commission, headed by renowned scientist and educationist Dr. Qudrat-e-Khuda, was established shortly after our independence at the request of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to create an education strategy. The Commission developed a modern, science-based, pro-people education policy based on open inquiry and thought. However, the assassination of Bangabandhu and his family on August 15, 1975, marked the start of the illegal takeover of power. This prevented Dr. Qudrat-e-educational Khuda's policy from being put into practice. No action has been taken to address their necessities; therefore, the country has instead dealt with fighting man's fate (National Education Policy, 2010; Hasan and Lipi, 2021).

Returning to the constitution, we can see that it is expressly stated in Article 17 that the state shall construct a general, universal, and people-oriented

educational system. There are various educational streams in Bangladesh; however, they go against the letter of the constitution. There are two language options, Bengali and English, and secular madrasa education, unfortunately, is dominated by religion. The Bangladeshi government has consistently pledged to make education universally available, accessible, and mandatory. Women's education was eventually promoted through co-education and the creation of different schools for girls. Education is acknowledged as a vital human right in the People's Republic of Bangladesh's constitution. It commands the government to ensure that all children get universal, free, and elementary education focused on societal needs and end illiteracy (Ministry of Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2000). A significant challenge for the government is to fulfill its commitments to capacity and quality improvements in the education sector, including school infrastructure, number of teachers, and access, due to financial constraints. Although the government has increased the budget allocation for education, Bangladesh still lags behind in terms of per-capita expenditure on education compared to other countries in South Asia and developing nations (Teach for All, 2021). In light of these changes and adaptation strategies, the current study aims to discuss Bangladesh's education policy.

Objectives of the study

From British India to the Pak-Bangladesh period, all the education commissions or policies have been formulated on detailed recommendations. The aim and purpose of education in the British period were to achieve the British's thoughts, consciousness, and interests first. The development of the Indians was not the main issue here. However, all the education commissions have placed more emphasis on primary education. It has been recommended to make this education compulsory and unpaid. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether secondary education will be made compulsory in Bangladesh. Historical records show that the privatization of secondary education has been recommended as far back as the British colonial period. Education Commissions have played a pivotal role in promoting education in the Indian subcontinent, including Bangladesh, throughout its history. Each Education Commission has distinctive features and observations, so the importance and significance of all those commissions are universal. The British Education Commission had sown edu-

cation seeds, and the Pak-Bangladesh Commission had collected fruits from those seeds and delivered them to the people. However, all the education commissions set up during the Bangladesh period have been based on the report of the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission. The latest National Education Policy 2010 is a landmark step (Malak, 2013). The implementation of all the recommendations outlined in the education policy is anticipated to bring the education system of Bangladesh in line with that of developed countries. This would signify a significant stride towards advancing the quality and standards of education in the country. Thus, the present study was aimed to address the following objectives:

Overall Objectives

The overall objective of this study was to assess the changes and adaptation approach in education policy in Bangladesh.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- 1) To find out and discuss all the education commissions or policies in the history of Bangladesh.
- 2) To find out all the drawbacks in implementing all the education commissions or policies in the history of Bangladesh.
- 3) To suggest possible potentialities to ensure excellent/inclusive education in Bangladesh by removing existing challenges.

Research Question

Aligned with the stated problem, the study seeks to address the following research question:

- 1) What notable changes have occurred in the history of education in Bangladesh?
- 2) What are the challenges for all education commissions or policies in implementing their suggestions in the history of Bangladesh?
- 3) How can Bangladesh ensure excellent/inclusive education by removing existing challenges?

METHODOLOGY:

Research design

This study used a qualitative research design, which involved analyzing secondary data sources on the history of education in Bangladesh and the challenges faced by education policies and commissions. This design was chosen because it allowed for a comprehensive analysis of existing literature on the

topic, as well as an opportunity to identify common themes and patterns across different sources. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this study may be constrained by the availability and quality of data sources, as well as potential biases and perspectives of the authors of secondary sources.

Data collection

The data for this study was collected from a variety of secondary sources, including government reports, academic journals, and news articles. To ensure the relevance and reliability of the research questions, meticulous selection criteria were employed in choosing the sources for this study. Emphasis was placed on sources that specifically focused on the history of education in Bangladesh and addressed the challenges faced by education policies and commissions. Data were accessed and obtained from reputable online databases and libraries, with efforts made to ensure the credibility and reliability of the sources. By adhering to such rigorous selection procedures, the study aimed to utilize high-quality sources that directly contribute to the validity and reliability of the findings.

Data analysis

The data for this study were analyzed using content analysis, which involved identifying key themes and patterns across the secondary sources. The data was first organized based on its relevance to each research question and then coded based on recurring concepts and themes. The authors used an iterative process of analysis, reviewing and revising the codes and categories until a consensus was reached. Limitations of the data analysis included potential biases and perspectives of the authors of the secondary sources, as well as the possibility of missing relevant data sources.

Ethical considerations

This study did not involve human participants and therefore did not require ethical approval. However, efforts were made to ensure ethical considerations in the selection and use of secondary data sources, including obtaining permission to use copyrighted materials and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of sources.

Theoretical Framework

From the colonial era to the present day, the government of Bangladesh has faced challenges in fulfilling capacity and quality pledges in the edu-

education sector, including school infrastructure, the availability of qualified instructors, and access to education. These challenges are primarily attributed to financial limitations, which have posed obstacles to achieving the desired progress in the education system. However, it is worth noting that the government has increased its allocation of funds to the education sector in recent times, signaling an effort to address these challenges and improve the state of education in Bangladesh (Teach for All, 2021). In light of these changes and adaptation strategies, the current study's goal is to discuss Bangladesh's education policy in light of Mccowan's five paradigms of development theory. In a book named "Education and international development: an introduction Bloomsbury," McCowan outlined five paradigms of development theory e. g., liberal, Marxist, postcolonial, liberal egalitarian, and radical humanist, in 2015. The key concepts of these paradigms are:

Liberal Capitalist

With the vision of economic growth for 'catch-up' with developed countries, the strategy of liberal capitalists was to modernize economic activity & institutions, creating skilled workers by changing their attitudes to increase proclivity. Moreover, education systems for the schools were the instruments for producing productive workers.

Marxist

To get independence from economic exploitation for citizens, the strategy of the Marxist paradigm was de-linking from dependent relations with former colonial or neo-colonial powers. By advocating for de-linking from such relations, the Marxist paradigm sought to empower the citizens and create conditions for economic autonomy and self-determination.

Postcolonial

Education was the tool for inactive indigenous cultures and articulating critical versions. The strategy was to critique and rebuild dominant thought of development to represent other authentic voices.

Liberal Egalitarian

Coming up with the new vision of equal opportunity, basic rights, personal well-being, and liberty, the strategy of liberal egalitarianism was to ensure constitutional guarantees, public obligations, and accountability. To ensure that educational opportunity was fair and open for all.

Radical Humanist

To increase awareness of freedom among the people to build a peaceful society by empowering and developing individuals through education and training. So, education plays a crucial role in moving development and transforming society with effective learning (Mccowan, 2015). Indeed, the education system in Bangladesh has been influenced by its colonial past, which has resulted in complex and sometimes challenging relationships. The legacy of colonialism has had a lasting impact on various aspects of the education system, including curriculum, pedagogy, language policies, and administrative structures. These influences have often posed challenges and created complexities in the development and implementation of educational policies and practices in Bangladesh. Understanding and addressing these historical influences is crucial in shaping a modern and inclusive education system that meets the needs of the country's diverse population. However, the colonization of British Bangla and the implementation of British education policies in the region can be analyzed through five paradigms of development theory. Liberal development theory focuses on economic growth and free markets, which were encouraged by the British through their exploitation of Bangla resources and labor. The Marxist theory views development as a struggle between capitalist and working-class interests, with British colonization perpetuating exploitation and inequality. The postcolonial theory emphasizes how colonialism has impacted cultures and identities, with British education policies promoting Westernization and the erasure of the Bangla culture. The liberal egalitarian theory underscores the significance of equal opportunity and access to resources, which were denied to the majority of Bangla people during British rule. This perspective emphasizes the need to address the historical injustices and create a level playing field for all individuals to access resources and opportunities without discrimination. On the other hand, the radical humanist theory emphasizes the importance of individual agency and empowerment, which were stifled during the period of British domination and control over Bangla society. This perspective advocates for empowering individuals to exercise their agency, make choices, and actively participate in shaping their own lives and society, free from external constraints and oppressive systems. Together, these five paradigms provide the

framework for understanding the complex historical legacy of British colonization in Bangla and the ongoing struggles for development and social justice in the region. In the following section, we will try to understand "What are the major issues with the national education policies of Bangladesh?"

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Education development in this country during British rule was only to propagate and lay the foundation of their education culture in Pak-India, Bangladesh, and the whole world. The interests of Bangladesh or Indians were secondary here. However, it is true that after the introduction of European culture in this country, modernization has started in almost all fields starting from the education system. After Lord William Bentinck became the country's Governor-General in 1828, he saw the country's education system's state. He took steps to expand and develop education (Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006). Here are some notable educational initiatives that were taken during different regimes.

British Period (1757-1947)

William Adam, the missionary preacher, mentioned that there were one lakh schools in Bengal and Bihar. Some people say Adam's report is exaggerated, while others say it is correct. The main achievement of Adam's report is that he has been able to determine the dynamic nature of the then-native education system through his survey for the development of Indians, he recommended to the big lord to opt for the native education system. Nevertheless, Lord McLean, a big lord executive council member and head of the General Committee of Public Instruction, took a stand against the domestic education system. As a result, the British government abolished domestic education and introduced Western education (Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006).

Ten Key Commissions/Committees of the British Period are:

- 1) Charles Grant Education Commission-1792
- 2) Company Charter-1813
- 3) Lord Macaunay Committee-1835
- 4) Williams Adams Committee-1838
- 5) Woods Education Dispatch-1854
- 6) Stanley's Education Dispatch-1859
- 7) W W Hunter Education Commission-1882
- 8) M E Sadler Education Commission-1919
- 9) Sa Pru Education Commission-1934

- 10) John Sergeant Education Commission-1944 (Rahman *et al.*, 2010).

Establishing educational documents in the every province creates a comprehensive secular education system. Woods dispatch was one of the first documents advocating formal education for girls in Bengal. They tried to remove native education from this country's soil and impose English education on the country's people in the name of so-called modern education.

Wood's Despatch

Wood's Education Dispatch, formulated in 1854, served as the foundation of the education policy of the East India Company's government in India. This historic dispatch had a profound impact on various aspects of education in India, including education administration and the overall education system. Wood's Education Dispatch is considered a significant document that shaped the course of education in the region, including present-day Bangladesh. It influenced the development and expansion of the education system, including the administration and structure of education, during the colonial era and beyond. It serves as a crucial milestone in the history of education in India and Bangladesh, and its effects are still visible in the present-day education landscape of the region (Biswas & Agarwal, 1986).

Sadler Commission

A commission was formed in 1917 under the leadership of Michael Sadler. The report was submitted at the end of 1919, called the Kolkata University Commission, and played an essential role in the reform and planning of secondary education. It is a precious document in the Indian education plan. The Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education have made many more recommendations (Malak, 2013). The Sadler Commission considers intermediate passes to be eligible for university admission. The establishment of Dhaka University in 1921 was a result of the recommendations made by the Commission, which created unprecedented opportunities for higher education in East Bengal. The report of this Commission is considered one of the most comprehensive and influential in the history of education in the country. It covered a wide range of aspects related to secondary and higher education, leaving no essential aspect untouched (Mukherji, 1974).

Sergeant Commission

The main objective of the sergeant's plan was to raise the standard of education in England at the level it was then the level of education in India in the next 40 years. The real purpose of the Sergeant Committee was to formulate a post-war education plan for British India. In implementing such a costly education plan, the sergeant said that money could be raised during the war. Nevertheless, if we realize education in our minds, then it is not appropriate to stop the progress of education due to a lack of money. The education of India under British rule was not guided in the right direction. The Sergeant Committee has been able to say this. The committee did not end its speech just by pointing out the error. There were also recommendations to evaluate it with the help of experiments. No such comprehensive and informative education plan has been devised since Wood's dispatch. The boldness and narrow-minded liberalism he displayed in composing an education plan during the English period were rare in that era. Subsequent national education plans have been formulated by adapting their draft plan (Rahman *et al.*, 2010). Sergeant planning focuses on primary education, adult education, secondary education, higher education, etc. Many elements of Bangladesh's education plans were influenced by the Sergeant Plan. However, several education commissions and policies have faced their own challenges and drawbacks along the way.

Drawbacks and Challenges

The Charles Grant Education Commission of 1792 aimed to promote Western-style education in India, but its suggestions were largely ignored due to a lack of funds and British apathy towards education in Bengal. The 1813 Company Charter aimed to promote English education, but its implementation was hampered by resistance from traditionalist Bengali elites who saw it as a threat to their culture and identity. The Lord Macaunay Committee of 1835 sought to establish a system of education that produced "a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and intellect", leading to the marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures. The Williams-Adams Committee of 1838 sought to reform education in Bengal, but its proposals were criticized for being impractical and unaffordable. The Woods Education Dispatch of 1854 and Stanley's Education Dispatch of 1859 aimed to expand education and establish

universities in Bengal but were limited by a lack of resources and bureaucratic inefficiencies. The W.W. Hunter Education Commission of 1882 aimed to improve education in Bengal by increasing government funding, but its recommendations were largely ignored by colonial officials. The M.E. Sadler Education Commission of 1919 aimed to establish a unified system of education in India but was criticized for being too Eurocentric and not taking into account the needs of different regions and communities. The Sa Pru Education Commission of 1934 aimed to reform education in Bengal by emphasizing vocational training and practical skills but was hindered by a lack of resources and bureaucratic obstacles. Finally, the John Sergeant Education Commission of 1944 aimed to promote education for all, but its proposals were limited by the political instability and violence of the time. Overall, the implementation of education commissions and policies in Bangladesh has been hampered by a range of challenges, including a lack of resources, political instability, cultural resistance, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and Eurocentric biases.

Pakistan Period (1947-71)

After the partition of India in 1947, various attempts were made to give specific directions to Pakistan's education field. To review the colonial educational system and reorganize the traditional system in light of national ideology, the inaugural education conference was convened in Karachi from November 27 - December 1, 1947. The conference's second main focus was advancing technical and scientific human resources. The third item on the agenda was to create educational strategies that would reflect the nation's creative abilities and aspirations. At the Education Conference in Karachi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah said, "...We have to build up the character of our future generations. We should try, by sound education, to instill into them the highest sense of honor, integrity, responsibility, and selfless service to the nation. We have to see that they are fully qualified and equipped to play their part in the various branches of national life in a manner which will do honor to Pakistan." While commenting on the quality of education, he said, "Education does not merely mean academic education, and even that appears to be of a very poor type" (Jinnah, 1989). Education Commissions have occasionally been established with this goal in mind to create recommendations for reforming and reorganizing the nation's educational system. Moreover, the

following are the critical Education Commissions of the Pakistan Period:

- 1) Maulana Akram Khan Education Commission- 1949
- 2) Aatur Rahman Khan Education Commission- 1957
- 3) Commission on National Education- 1958
- 4) Commission on Student's Problem and welfare- 1964
- 5) Air Marshal Nur Khan Commission- 1969 (Khan, 2020).

Pakistan established its first Education Commission in 1949, which was led by Maulana Mohammad Akram Khan. The committee submitted its report in 1952, recommending the restructuring of the education system. In 1957, the Government of East Pakistan appointed Aatur Rahman Khan as the Chairman of an Education Commission to recommend reforms in the province. The commission suggested introducing free and compulsory primary education, establishing junior & senior high schools, and providing compulsory government grants to schools. It also recommended including the mother tongue or regional language as a medium of instruction, abolishing intermediate courses, and introducing three-year degree courses (Khan, 2020). The National Commission for Education was constituted in 1958 to develop a national education system that reflected Pakistan's international, moral, and cultural values. In 1959, the commission presented its findings, suggesting the establishment of residential secondary schools, the inclusion of technical and vocational education in secondary school syllabi, and intermediate courses to be conducted by the Board of Secondary Education rather than the University. The degree course was recommended to be three years, and integrated scholarship programs for meritorious students were suggested. Adequate facilities were to be provided for the education of women (Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006). In 1964, the Government of Pakistan appointed the Commission on Student Problems and Student Welfare headed by Justice Hamudur Rahman after rejecting the Sharif Commission's report. The commission criticized the elite education system for being inconsistent with the principles of equality and social justice. In 1969, a committee headed by Air Marshal Nur Khan was appointed to radically change the education system due to its failure to develop national unity and play a proper role in national development. The formulated

education policy aimed to build an educated society and develop vocational and technical human resources. The suggestions encompassed merging madrasa education with the mainstream school system, integrating lower and middle primary schools into primary schools, implementing a comprehensive adult education program, decentralizing education administration, and replacing English with Urdu and Bengali as the medium of instruction (Khan, 2020). Again all of these education commissions in Bangladesh have been marked by numerous challenges and drawbacks in implementing their recommendations.

Drawbacks and Challenges

The 1949 Maulana Akram Khan Education Commission sought to enhance the quality of education but encountered obstacles due to limited resources and inadequate infrastructure during that era. Similarly, the 1957 Aatur Rahman Khan Education Commission, which targeted higher education, grappled with similar challenges, compounded by political upheavals and instability. The Commission on National Education of 1958 sought to address issues of access and equity in education, but its recommendations were largely ignored due to a lack of political will and commitment. The 1964 Commission on Students' Problems and Welfare had the objective of enhancing the well-being of students, but unfortunately, its recommendations could not be fully executed due to bureaucratic hurdles and limitations in resources.

Similarly, the Air Marshal Nur Khan Commission of 1969 faced challenges in implementing its recommendations due to political turmoil and instability. Overall, these commissions faced significant challenges in implementing their recommendations, often due to a lack of resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and political instability, which limited their impact on improving the education system in Bangladesh.

Key Education Commission and Policy of Bangladesh Period (1971- Present)

Following the partition of India in 1947, Pakistan made efforts to shape its education system. Notable changes included integrating madrasa education with the mainstream school system and aligning it with the nation's ideological requirements. Additionally, lower and middle primary schools were integrated into primary schools, and a comprehensive adult education program was adopted. The committee also

recommended replacing English with Urdu and Bengali as the primary medium of instruction in Pakistan by 1975. Furthermore, education administration was recommended to be decentralized, and the formation of the University Grants Commission was advised (Rahman *et al.*, 2010). Following the independence of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971, led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country established its first education commission. This commission was headed by Qudrat-e-Khuda. At that time, the constitution of Bangladesh announced the introduction of a people-oriented and universal education system with equal standards to provide free and compulsory education to all children (Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs,

2000). Following are the few education policies of Bangladesh.

- 1) National Education Commission (1972), headed by Qudrat-e-Khuda
- 2) Interim Education Policy (1978), headed by Kazi Zafar Ahmed
- 3) Bangladesh National Education Commission (1987), headed by Mafiz Uddin Ahmed
- 4) Shamsul Haque Education Committee (1997)
- 5) National Education Policy 2000
- 6) Bangladesh Education Commission (2003), headed by Professor Muhammad Moniruzzaman
- 7) National Education Policy (2010), headed by Professor Kabir Chowdhury (Rahman *et al.*, 2010).

Table 1: Key Education Commission and Policy of Bangladesh Period.

Education Commission & Policy	Aims and Objectives	Key Features	Notes
National Education Commission-1972	To make patriots, secular, nationalistic, and good citizens. The socioeconomic and political condition and cultural heritage of the country	Pre-Primary: Below 5 Years Primary: Class i-viii (Free education up to class v by 1980 & Up to viii by 1983) Secondary: Class ix-xii (Vocational Education: 3 Years term but can be extended for 4 Years; General Education: 4 Years term) Higher Education: 4 Years Hon's+ 1 Year Masters	Women Education Helpful to domestic life Child care, Preservation of Health, Nursing, Food, and Nutrition related to housework Primary Teacher
Interim Education Policy-1978	The goal is to establish an education system that not only provides employment opportunities but also nurtures morally upright, patriotic, and responsible individuals with a strong foundation in scientific values	Primary Education: Class: i-V (Students not below Five years; Universal, free and mandatory education; Bangla as a medium of education Secondary: Junior Secondary (Class: Vi-Viii) Secondary (Class: ix-x) Higher Secondary (Class: xi-xii) Higher Education and Research	Women Education Vocational & Technical Education Madrasah Fine Arts Non-formal Education
Shamsul Haque Education Committee-1997	The objectives are to support students in their personal and national lives, instill in them the spirit of the war of liberation, emphasize practical & productive education, & cultivate responsibility & skills among students	The importance of an active school management committee Implementation of an eight-year primary education program by 2010 Maintaining a teacher-student ratio of 1:35. Adoption of a uniform curriculum for primary education Conducting interim and final examinations in Class III	Teacher qualification requirements: For Lower Primary Level - Secondary School Certificate (SSC) For Upper Primary Level- Bachelor's Degree
National Education Policy-2000	The aim is to foster non-sectarianism, brotherhood, & mutual understanding among students, promoting a sense of inclusivity, tolerance, & harmony among diverse	Pre-primary: One year duration Age-5 or 5+ Years Primary: Class: i-viii Age- 6+ Years	

	student communities.	Math, Social Science, Music, and Physical Education Secondary: Class: ix-xii Consists of : i. General Education ii. Madrasah Education iii. Technical Education Higher: Bachelor's Degree (Honours) of 4 years duration Master's Degree of 1-year duration 3 Years Degree Pass course followed by 2 Years Masters course	
Bangladesh Education Commission-2003	The objectives are to ensure quality education through the utilization of technology, enhance the facilities available for teachers, & nationalize primary education, aiming to improve the standard of education & provide equitable opportunities to all students across the nation.	Part-i: General education Primary Education Secondary Education Higher Education Part-ii: Professional Education Agricultural Education Technological Education Medical Education	Specialized Education Madrasah Education ICT Education Education For Women Distance Education Library & Information Science Education
National Education Policy-2010	Reducing the stages of undergraduate education from three to two Mandating the inclusion of certain compulsory subjects in all streams of education Making education more need-based and relevant to the demands of the job market Establishing a permanent education commission to oversee educational policies and reforms Introducing technical and vocational education at all secondary-level institutions to equip students with practical skills for employment opportunities.	Pre-Primary (Below 5 Years): Introduced for 5+ children & later, this will be extended up to 4+ children Primary (Class i-viii): Compulsory primary schooling to eight years Final primary level examinations are to be held at the end of class viii Secondary (Class ix-xii): Government scholarship examinations are taken at class x Final secondary level examinations held at the end of class xii Higher Education: (4 Years Hon's+ 1 Year Masters): Acquisition of world-class education to grow up with human qualities	Establishment of a non-government teachers' commission to address the concerns & welfare of teachers in non-government educational institutions Making subjects such as Bangla, moral education, Bangladesh studies, mathematics, IT, & science compulsory in the curriculum Restructuring madrasah education to include information technology & vocational training, ensuring a well-rounded education for students in line with modern needs & requirements.

Note: Prepared by the author based on different education policies' and committees' reports.

In the post-independence era, Bangladesh has witnessed several education commissions and policies that aimed to reform the education sector and address the challenges of mass illiteracy and inequality. However, the implementation of these policies has been marked by a range of drawbacks and challenges.

Drawbacks and Challenges

Indeed, the history of education policies in Bangladesh has been marked by various challenges that have hindered the full implementation of proposed reforms. These challenges include political instability, bureaucratic obstacles, lack of coordination, inadequate resources, and limited political will. Despite the noble aims and objectives of different

education commissions and policies, their effective implementation has often been hampered by these challenges. For example, the National Education Commission of 1972, headed by Qudrat-e-Khuda, aimed to create a national system of education in Bangladesh, but its proposals faced challenges due to political instability and resource constraints. Similarly, the Interim Education Policy of 1978, headed by Kazi Zafar Ahmed, aimed to expand access to education, but its implementation was hindered by a lack of coordination and ineffective administration. The Bangladesh National Education Commission of 1987, headed by Mafiz Uddin Ahmed, aimed to improve the quality of education, but its recommendations were not fully implemented due to bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of political will. The Shamsul Haque Education Committee of 1997, which aimed to promote vocational education, faced criticism for being too narrow in scope and not addressing the broader needs of the education system. The National Education Policy of 2000 aimed to promote lifelong learning and address the needs of marginalized groups, but its implementation was limited by a lack of resources and political will. The Bangladesh Education Commission of 2003, headed by Professor Muhammad Moniruzzaman, aimed to address challenges in access, quality, and relevance of education, but its recommendations were not fully implemented due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and lack of accountability. Finally, the National Education Policy of 2010, headed by Professor Kabir Chowdhury, aimed to address challenges posed by globalization and technological change, but its implementation has been hampered by a lack of resources and coordination between different government agencies. In summary, while Bangladesh has made efforts to develop education policies and reforms to address various challenges, their effective implementation has often been constrained by political, bureaucratic, financial, and coordination challenges. Addressing these challenges and ensuring robust implementation of education policies is crucial to achieving the desired goals of improving access, quality, and relevance of education in Bangladesh.

Present Education System of Bangladesh

The education system in Bangladesh is divided into three levels: primary, secondary, and higher education or university. The primary education level covers five years, while the secondary education

level is divided into three years of junior secondary and two years of secondary education. The higher secondary level consists of two years of education. Both public and private schools operate in Bangladesh, with public schools being funded by the government and private schools being funded independently. At the university level, education typically lasts for three to five years in Bangladesh. There are 36 public universities, 69 private universities, and associated institutions operated by the University Grants Commission (UGC) that offer higher education in Bangladesh. Students have the option to choose Bengali or English as the medium of instruction in their preferred language. The Ministry of Education is the top government official responsible for overseeing education in Bangladesh. It is supported by various departments that work towards implementing education policies and initiatives. These departments are involved in various development initiatives, such as education projects and technical projects, to improve the quality and accessibility of education in the country. It's worth noting that the education system in Bangladesh is undergoing continuous reforms and improvements to address challenges and meet the changing needs of the country's education landscape. Efforts are being made to enhance access, quality, and relevance of education, and to promote technical and vocational education, among other areas of focus.

The Success of the Education Policy in Bangladesh

The education sector in Bangladesh has been recognized as a crucial factor in the country's development and progress, especially after gaining independence through a significant struggle. Following are the critical success of the education policy in Bangladesh.

Formation of education commission

In order to address the challenges and deficiencies in the education system left behind by the Pakistani ruling class, a commission was formed within six months of independence. This commission, headed by Dr. Qudrat-e-Khuda, published its report on May 30, 1974. The report aimed to overhaul the education system in Bangladesh and make it more relevant, accessible, and effective in meeting the needs of the country. This was a significant step towards building a strong foundation for quality education and skilled

human resources in Bangladesh, which was seen as essential for the fulfilling the aspirations of the

newly independent country and handling the population pressure.

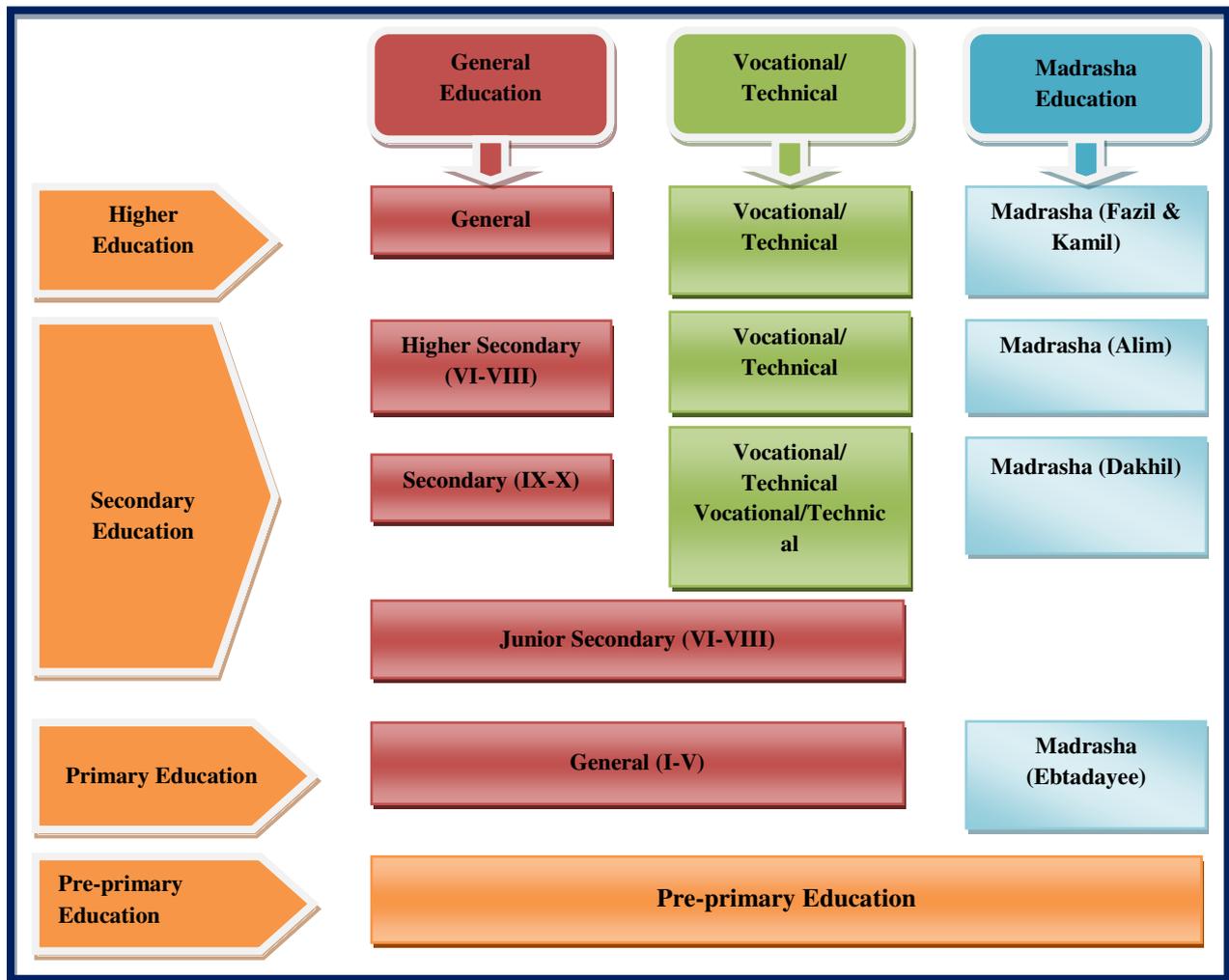


Fig. 1: Current structure of the education system in Bangladesh.

Note: Prepared by authors from "Second Primary Education Development Program, Program Completion Report," by GoB, 2011, Dhaka: Ministry of Primary & Mass Education.

Compulsory and unpaid primary education act

Unpaid and compulsory education has been included in our supreme law and constitution as principles of the state. Article 17 of the constitution states that the state shall: (a) put in place the necessary steps to create a people-centered, universal education system that will guarantee all boys and girls free, compulsory education up to the minimum legal level (Ministry of Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2000). Despite such a constitutional obligation, it made no significant progress until 1990. Bangladesh passed the Compulsory Primary Education Act in 1990, shortly after the Declaration of the World Education for all was announced at the Jamatian Conference in Thailand in 1990. In 1992, brought 68 police stations and since 1993, all police stations in the country have been under this law (UNESCO, Universe PG | www.universepg.com

1990). The transformation of the Department of Primary and Mass Education into the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education in Bangladesh in 2003 was a significant addition to the education system, aimed at meeting the minimum education needs. While primary education enrollment has reached almost 100 percent, ensuring quality education remains a continuous effort that requires ongoing attention to curriculum, teaching methods, and infrastructure.

Teacher-Student Ratio

As of 2008, all types of schools in Bangladesh had less than five teachers on staff, indicating a challenge in maintaining adequate teacher-to-student ratios. At the tertiary level, maintaining small class sizes is crucial for ensuring quality education. The teacher-

student ratio in public schools was 54, and in private schools-including madrasahs-it were 35. On June 2, 2003, the government transformed the Department of Primary and Mass Education into the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, with a commitment to meet the minimum education needs, which has resulted in almost universal enrollment in primary education. Despite questions about the quality of primary education, this law has been a significant addition to the education system in Bangladesh, with nearly 100 percent enrollment, which is commendable for a developing country.

Quality improvement in tertiary education

Except for university teaching and research, which require specialized knowledge in a particular field, the acceptable higher educational requirement for the majority of occupations was fixed in this program to reduce the unemployment. Additionally, institutions were told to require three credits of ICT and English coursework in each of their fields. This regulation also guarantees training resources for university instructors.

Book distribution

The education sector entered a new horizon in 2010. From this year onwards, free book distribution activities have started in all education streams up to the secondary level. From 2010 to the 2019 academic year, 296 crores 7 lakhs 89 thousand 172 copies of textbooks have been distributed to the students at different levels.

Literacy rate

Bangladesh is committed to raising the literacy rate to 100 percent by 2030 in the UN-declared S.D.G. Only time will tell how far that promise will go. There has been significant progress in literacy in the post-independence period. In 1974, the literacy rate of the population aged six years and above was 26.8 percent. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the current literacy rate is 73.9 percent (Sarker & Davey, 2009).

Primary school nationalization

The basic foundation of education is primary education. In our country, there are laws for free and compulsory primary education. Therefore, nationalizing primary schools is crucial to making primary education accessible and ensuring all basic education. From July 1, 1973, to July 1975, the numbers of 36,165 primary schools were nationalized in just

three years. Following this, 26,193 more schools were nationalized in January 2013 (Government of Bangladesh, 2011).

Gender equality

At one time, girls' participation in education was negligible compared to boys. As a result of various steps, that picture has now changed. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Millennium Development Goals (M.D.G.s) progress report, the literacy rate among 15- to 24-year-olds in Bangladesh is 75.4 percent. The rate of female education is 76.4 percent. Among these ages, the male literacy rate is 74 percent. As a result, the female literacy rate is 2.6 percent higher than males (Government of Bangladesh, 2011).

Current Challenges and Problems

The education system of Bangladesh faces an enormous challenge in the form of a considerable population, poorly educated and largely impoverished, and a lack of funds to address their needs. Despite gradual improvements, the education system in Bangladesh continues to face challenges in meeting the needs of its population. Universal and compulsory primary education up to grade 8 has been delayed due to a lack of infrastructure. Additionally, the introduction of exams such as the Primary Education Completion Exam after grade five and the Junior School Certificate Exam (J.S.C.) after grade eight has added complexity to the system. Professionals have raised concerns about the impact of taking public exams at a young age on children's mental health and the development of unhealthy competition among students. While progress has been made, there is still room for improvement in various aspects of the education sector in Bangladesh. These fears were realized following the implementation of these public exams. The quest to earn A+ grades in all disciplines was made a priority for students and their parents. Adopting unethical exam practices reached new heights, and unlawful study guides overflowed the bookstores. Several days before the exam, questions for public exams were leaked on social media. The student's inability to complete the tests with adequate grades even resulted in many incidents of suicide. Incorporating original questions into these public tests may not have produced the desired results. Exams with creative questions measure a student's capacity to remember, comprehend, and apply the information

they have learned to their everyday lives. It is designed so that students can answer based on their understanding of the idea rather than by memorization of the sentences. However, due to the abundance of unauthorized study aids and coaching facilities on the market, which offered the pupils a wide range of inventive questions, the project was all but rendered useless. Because they have been told that they would get the almost alike question on the exam, students and guardian who is hungry for an A+, hurry to purchase the manuals and notes given by the coaching centers to memorize the answers. There are still plenty of these handbook publishers and coaching centers to offer the students "simple" solutions to obtain an A+, despite repeated campaigns against them.

Education law has not been made

After formulating the education policy in 2010, the Ministry of Education started working on the education law in 2011. The first draft of the Education Act was made in 2012. Later, the draft was published on the ministry's website in 2013 to verify public opinion by making various additions and subtractions. After that, it was presented to the cabinet three times and sent back with different observations. As the law became more aggressive towards note, guide, and coaching businesses, note-guide traders started walking into the Ministry of Education, threatening the movement. Coaching professionals are also active. Protests continued in the hope of weakening the education law and free trade. As a result, the law has not yet seen the light of day.

Unplanned higher education and higher education institutions

Higher education in Bangladesh has seen significant expansion with the establishment of numerous universities, both public and private. However, this growth has been largely unplanned and has resulted in an increase in the number of highly educated but unemployed individuals. According to Bertrand Russell, university education should aim to create specially qualified individuals, but in Bangladesh, it has become more of a mass opportunity. The proliferation of low-quality higher education institutions has not yielded the desired benefits, and the increasing number of students pursuing higher education has not been accompanied by a proper framework for quality education (Teach for All, 2021). Policymakers need to focus on formulating effective

strategies to ensure that higher education institutions in the country meet the necessary standards to produce skilled and employable graduates.

Insufficient allocation

There is a widely recognized recommendation that the education sector should receive at least 20 percent of a country's total budget for effective functioning. However, in Bangladesh, the allocation for education has remained stagnant at 10-12 percent since its inception. Despite repeated emphasis from educators and economists on the importance of investing in education, policymakers have shown indifference toward increasing the budget allocation for the education sector. In the current fiscal year of 2019-20, the allocation for education is only 11.68 percent, which is even lower than many underdeveloped countries in the Third World. It appears that the significance of education as a foundation for national progress is not fully realized by our policymakers (Teach For All, 2021).

Research without research

The population of our country is much larger than the size, and the resources are minimal, the facilities are also fewer. Practical research is needed on how to address these obstacles and build a large population of the country as a skilled and educated population. We needed to sort out our education system according to what is needed for primary, secondary, and higher education, how to teach, and for what reason. Nevertheless, we largely fail at that. Higher education is research education. However, there is no research on higher education. Studies have been found in the place of research to get government jobs. Teachers are busy in politics and various lobbies. Students are moving far away from acquiring knowledge. As a result, the government is spending on students' education (OECD, 2005).

Absence of quality education

One of the most popular suffixes in the world today is quality education. Our secondary and higher secondary curriculum does not reflect market demand or job-oriented syllabuses. We see quality education mainly in two parts: firstly, ethics and values, and secondly, financial security. The first part of quality education is ethics and values, which are not so well observed in our education system. For example, policymakers are hiring teachers through corruption. Those teachers are leaking questions in exchange for money. Parents are buying that

question for money and handing it to the student. As a result, students are learning to be corrupt in their student life. After falling into such a dilemma, the students become immoral and worthless (Teach For All, 2021). The other side is financial security. The work not guaranteed in Bangladesh can be understood only by seeing millions of unemployed youth. In 2013, a total of 10 02,496 students participated in H.S.C. Exam from different boards; among them, 744,891 students emerged victorious. Research indicates that after completing S.S.C. and H.S.C., approximately 35 to 40 percent of students in Bangladesh do not have the opportunity to enroll in colleges or public universities. This highlights the limited availability of higher education opportunities for a significant portion of the student population in the country. So, we failed here too.

Inadequate teacher training

Teachers are the most significant teaching material in a third-world country like ours. That is, students, learn the most through the teacher. However, have our teachers developed themselves as suitable for the students? Or is our education system interested enough to build teachers? Some time ago, a woman could have become a primary school teacher after passing high school. More than four and a half lakh primary school teachers, a significant number of whom have passed higher secondary. How suitable is a high school pass person as a teacher? On the other hand, it is a matter of seeing how well those who have entered the teaching profession after graduation or postgraduate have prepared themselves as teachers (OECD, 2005). There are six government PTIs and two private PTIs in the country to train this colossal number of primary school teachers. Accommodation and training facilities are inadequate compared to the total number of teachers. As a result, teachers do not get the proper training that impacts class teaching (Teach For All, 2021). Although many of these regulations are challenging to implement and enforce due to a lack of resources, they are at least a positive development.

How Can Bangladesh Ensure Excellent and Inclusive Education?

The benefits of any method depend on the proper use of that method. Giving it to those who do not deserve it to show a good GPA negatively affects the quality of education. Again, if there is a tendency to give a number as soon as anyone writes, it is wrong

to look at what is correct - then the effect will be very damaging. Because the students who write incorrectly are getting good results, and those who write correctly, the results of those are almost the same. Personally, the impact on the lives of those students is very harmful. Because they will have an idea that if someone writes, he can get the number; it does not matter whether he writes wrong or correct. Their tendency to think or work hard will decrease. Creative questions have been introduced for the last three years. The students accepted it readily because they are highly fond of such a good GPA. They are 100% in favor of creative questions because, without them, students would be unable to develop their multiple thinking. However, they think it is essential to verify that creative questions are being answered creatively. They have always said that the instrument we use to evaluate merit is the right one. Teachers are not able to adapt to that. Lack of skills is a big problem here. We need to do three things now:

- 1) Teachers need to make their pay structure attractive and satisfactory.
- 2) The recruitment process needs to be streamlined.
- 3) The current trend of training teachers needs to be reformed.

Strictness and transparency are essential in teacher recruitment. However, if the talented do not want to come forward in this profession, they have to choose the good from the bad. That is why there is a question of increasing the salaries and allowances of teachers again. Therefore, there is an effort of the present education minister that work is impossible due to a lack of funds. They are determining separate pay scales for teachers from primary to higher education. Then the increase in teachers' salaries, allowances, and facilities will increase the social status of this profession. Then the meritorious will come to this profession. In that case, if the teachers are committed, the quality of education will significantly increase. The kind of training being given now is not getting the results. So, the kind of training talking about is called 'hands-on.' For example, if the instructor gives an example of teaching in front of them, then the trainee-teachers are asked to apply it, and their mistakes will be understood. These will be easy to correct later. Trainee-teachers will be able to make them proficient by knowing their weaknesses. It is not that training is not happening in this country. It is happening a lot. However, it is not as 'hands-on'

as the problem. Hopefully, steps will be taken to create good teachers to implement the new curriculum fully. Moreover, the environment will be created to cooperate with good teachers' training and teaching materials. The impact of education spans a student's entire life and is crucial for the mental development of young children. The main issues that Bangladeshi education faces have been highlighted in this article. The elementary-level curriculum's disunity, which poses a significant threat to patriotism, is the biggest problem. In the end, the nation suffers and has substantially lagged in the global arena socially, politically, economically, and in science and technology. Additionally, the nation is alarmingly moving away from its fundamental ideal of secularism. The issues raised in this essay require immediate attention.

A list of suggestions based on this study is provided below:

- 1) Education should be accessible to all individuals, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalized. It enhances their lifestyle, livelihoods, and living standards. The right to education is a constitutional guarantee and a birth-right for every individual.
- 2) To address issues arising from the current incoherent school systems, a cohesive education system with a standardized curriculum under central supervision is required. This education strategy should take into account the nation's needs, requirements, and resources. One educational system can be implemented based on these factors.
- 3) Improving teachers' pay and prestige is necessary, and accommodations could be added to attract highly competent teachers.
- 4) Raising the basic qualifications of teachers to meet global standards should be a priority. Choosing the top master's degree holders and providing office assistants, which are typically lacking in schools, should be done.
- 5) Basic facilities must be adequately maintained, and classrooms should be welcoming, modern, and tidy to create a relaxed atmosphere.
- 6) The focus should shift from demanding curricula and a memorization-based culture. Children should not be overworked or bored to prevent them from losing interest in studying. It is important to instill in them a passion for study, independent thought, and learning.
- 7) Specialized curricula should be developed to encourage kids to choose vocational schools. Instruction should be provided in three different languages, including Bengali. Priority should be given to courses that combine traditional skills, learning, and outdoor activities.
- 8) Reducing class sizes and the student-teacher ratio is necessary to stop the continual decline in quality.
- 9) Holding back weak students for a year should not be an option, and more attention must be given to weaker children to help them close the achievement gap with better students, especially if financing is available for all students.
- 10) To decrease administrative and bureaucratic red tape, decentralizing administration is necessary.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, despite the establishment of multiple education commissions and committees in different regimes, including those under the Pakistani administration, the development of the education sector has remained stagnant, with proposed reforms often left unimplemented. However, Comparative education, which involves studying and understanding the educational systems of other nations, is crucial for ensuring the quality and progress of education. It allows for the examination of attributes, characteristics, structures, and political systems of various countries, serving as a tool for education reform by evaluating domestic systems against international norms. Comparative education has also facilitated the adoption of new technologies in media systems, classroom learning, and digital content preparation through the exchange of ideas and practices. By incorporating fresh perspectives and ideas from other countries, comparative education can contribute to the socioeconomic development of a nation's educational system. Therefore, integrating comparative education into educational policies and practices can be a powerful approach for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education, ultimately fostering the development of a nation's education system.

Expected Outcome

The findings of the study can be used to understand Bangladesh's education policy in light of recent changes and adaptation strategies. Additionally, the findings may be useful to academics, scholars, and other researchers in validating the body of knowledge already available on this subject and enhancing

the understanding of many stakeholders in general and policy researchers in particular.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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