NALANDA 'SCHOOL OF JOY': TEACHING LEARNING STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT SYSTEM, FOR IMPLEMENTING CHILD FRIENDLY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Child-friendly education (CFE) is very important for the children, especially the early year's students, because it fosters the holistic development of a child. Teacher plays a key role for creating child friendly education. This study intends to learn about child friendly education in Bangladesh. The purpose of the study is to explore how CFE is being practiced in Bangladesh One school, named Nalanda, was selected for the study as it claims to run the school through CFE approach. The objective of the study was to identify, how this school is different from the other schools in Bangladesh, to explore overall teaching learning system like, curriculum, teaching strategies, assessments and to investigate the support system for Child Friendly Education provided to the teachers through training or mentoring. The nature of the case study was qualitative method to get maximum information from the students, parents, teachers and school authorities. The findings were based on 3 classroom observations, interviews with 1 teacher, 1 head teacher and 1 trainer, FGD with 10 students and 6 parents, were used to collect the data. It has been found that Nalanda is different than the other schools in Bangladesh in terms of, parents' motivation about school curriculum, and sufficiency of teachers' knowledge on

joyful learning/child-friendly learning. Teachers showed particular strength in the teaching learning strategies, using materials and assessment. And Nalanda gives strong support for teacher's training. In conclusion, The Nalanda School in Dhaka was found appropriate for the requirements of Child-friendly education.

Keywords

Child friendly education, Overall teaching learning system, The requirements of child-friendly education, the alternative education approach

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 Introduction

Every child has a right to get education in a friendly environment. What we see in our country? Education in all age, are very much formal or conventional. Most of the schools' environment is unfriendly to nurture natural process of learning. In Bangladesh many good attempts have been taken for early childhood development. In 2013 our government approved the comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development policy which includes health, nutrition, emotional, social and cognitive/learning issues that are crucial during early childhood year (Roy, 2013, p.23). It signifies the inclusion of Child Friendly Education (CFE) approach from the very early stage of schooling. So it is important to understand how to make education 'child friendly'. Being a teacher or an educator, I need to think of this issue and work accordingly. Some non-government and very few government organizations are trying to incorporate CFE as an effective approach for teaching and learning. I was eager to explore how CFE is incorporated in these organizations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Generally the education system of Bangladesh consists of three levels- primary, secondary and tertiary level. The government, especially the ministry of education, has set the general objective of education to ensure proper quality at every level of education, to strengthen and widen the knowledge, skills and attitudes. It also signed the world demand on Education for All in 1990 and the Dakar Framework for Action 2000, which emphasized the importance of early childhood years as a means to achieve education for all. Participation in these major world events has influenced early childhood care and development in Bangladesh. (Haider, 2014).

Unfortunately, high drop-out and grade repetition rates, poor school attendance and low contact time in schools at primary level are factors contributing to low level of learning

achievement. Those things are affecting the entire education system of Bangladesh. It is commonly observed that our mainstream education system continuously renewed and enriched by different, curriculum reform and system management. If we talked about the support system we see, the curriculum is competency based, teaching learning strategies mostly teacher-centered, materials are not available in the classroom, there are teachers training but without monitoring, no one implementing that learning. Assessment is very much formal, exam based so they are failing to measuring appropriate learning.

Based on above mentioned situations, UNICEF proposed child friendly school framework can be used for educational development. UNICEF Child Friendly Schools (CFS) aims to provide an introduction in a child friendly concept. The key principal of a child friendly school can be derived in different context. This model contributes to quality education, system management and a wide range of national context (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3 to 5).

I have heard about Nalanda School that they do not believe in conventional teaching method, students are assessed on their overall performance; different types of activity based practices are in use for classroom learning.

2. Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

In this literature review, I am presenting the information from different books, articles and documents that I have reviewed to understand my research topic of child friendly education. I have reviewed different program, both government and non-government, national and international, that promotes Child friendly or joyful education approaches. I have organized my literature review under the following categories: a) Child friendly education and its importance, b) Child friendly education model worldwide, c) Examples of CFE model in Bangladesh

2.1 Child Friendly Education and its Importance

Child friendly education, known as non-traditional education, includes a number of approaches to teaching and learning separate from that offered by mainstream or traditional education. Child friendly education and joyful education is rooted in a number of philosophies differing from those of mainstream education. Reviewed different literature, what I found, child development is rooted in different developmental theories. Over the years, psychologists and other scientists have developed a variety of theories to explain observations and discoveries about child development. I am going to summarize many of them below. Again, there is lot more to each of them, and I have studied them for my understanding about child

friendly education. I found that various authors have defined child friendly education based on their own views. For example, "child friendly environment aims to develop a learning environment in which children are motivated and able to learn. Staff members are friendly and welcoming to children and attend to all their health and safety needs" (Young, 2002, p. 18) Another author said, classroom is not simply a place in which student learn academic lessons rather through this social context students learn social lessons such as friendship, cooperation and appropriate behavior. All this takes places provided a teacher has the capacity to attract the students by demonstrating care and making the classroom fun for young children (Lee, 2006).

Most researchers independent of their philosophical orientation seem to agree that including play in early childhood curriculum is a necessary condition for ensuring optimal growth and development of young children. However, the lack of common definition of play makes it hard to provide specific recommendations for curriculum designers and to advocate for preserving play in early childhood classrooms in the face of increasing demands for a focus on academic skills. One way to solve this dilemma is to use more specific terms like "playful learning" to make a distinction between child-initiated play and adult-initiated activities that make use of play elements in one form or another (Bodrova & Leong, 2010, p. 3).

When we examine different concept by famous educationist, at first the name come to our mind that is Froebel, a German educator, is well known as the father of Kindergarten concept. He popularized the concept of play-way learning. Froebel's kindergarten concept is full of games, songs, stories, and crafts to encourage thoughts while developing physical and other motor skills. The kindergarten program was designed to meet children's needs for physical activity, those covers creative expression, exploration of ideas and concepts, the pleasure of singing, and the experience of living among others. In his integration school the following methods were used for teaching the children (Wilhelm, 2013, P.1, 2).

Based on all above studies we see, some of psychologists have developed theories to help to look at and explain different aspects of child development. While not all of these theories are fully accepted today, they have all had an important influence on our understanding of child development. Today, modern educationist often draws on a variety of theories and perspectives in order to understand how kids grow, behave, and think.

Today's educational emphasis is depending on standardized test scores, learning outcomes, or student performance. But CFE focuses on acquiring knowledge with full of pleasure and happiness. If we see the scenario of the classroom in Pakistan how they are

developing CFE in early childhood education, one research article from International Journal of Academic research by Mr. Murtaza, can quote here, he said,

> This study found that the teacher community feels that CFE is very important in ECED setup. It is basic stage where children can develop their skills when they get a friendly environment. Both the participants of this study strongly believed in the concept of child friendly environment in ECE classroom. They also tried their level best to develop such an attractive environment and were a good source at documenting and recording their practical work and learning, yet although each of the participant teachers in this study displayed a strong connection with ECED children and teaching (Murtaza, 2011, p. 416).

2.2 Child friendly education model worldwide

Across the world we find a broad range of child friendly forms of education rooted in different philosophies. Various schools model illustrate ways to improve the quality of education however it is the Child Friendly School model that have emerged as the most comprehensive in their approach. CFS Model is based on concept the rights of all children to have access to quality basic education which includes safety and protected classroom environment, good teaching and learning strategies which promote good learning achievement. Most of the time we see in the developed countries they use Child Friendly Education for the benefit of all education decisions.

2.2.1 UNICEF Child Friendly School Framework

UNICEF worldwide suggests keeping the central focus of using this child friendly education method is to ensure good teaching method and learning outcomes. The manual, developed by education experts with support from UNICEF, provides guidelines to teachers and helps them understand how to use this model effectively. The CFS framework is a means of translating the convention on the rights of the child into school management and classroom practice, and ensuring the rights of all children to have access to quality basic education which includes safety and protected classroom environment, good teaching and learning strategies which promote good learning achievement, also ensure the most important things that is develop the quality of education. Lessons for children include essential life skills aimed at keeping them safe and building the skills they will need to fulfill their potential and contribute fully to society. It has a component of staff training so for the school staff, parents, and other community members, the framework can serve as both a goal and a tool of quality improvement through localized self-assessment, planning, and management and as a means for mobilizing the community around education and child rights (UNICEF, 2009).

2.2.2 Steiner Principles

When we study the famous principles of Steiner, we find the CFE model is visible there. University of West of England advocates introducing Steiner principles into state schools. The Steiner schools' curriculum was designed by the Austrian educationist Rudalph Steiner (1861-1925). This philosophy describes the holistic, spiritual and social education, totally different from mainstream education. They give strong emphasis on English, Math and foreign language. Beside this, students do physical exercise and craft activities as an integrated lessons. Steiner schools take mixed ability group of students that helps to learn from each other. Steiner's principles mostly talked about how education addresses the whole child as a full potential of thinking, feeling and willing of spirit of soul and body and stimulates their mind with the full of traditional academic subjects; it nurtures healthy emotional and social development through experiential and child-centered learning. The purpose of Rudolf Steiner education is to reinforce the child to meet not only the challenges of school, but those of life (Curtis, 2005).

2.2.3 Reggio Emilia Approach

Like Steiner philosophy if we talk about other approach where we find CFE model in a large extend that is the Italian approach call, Reggio Emilia; it is very much innovative and inspiring approach to early childhood education. 'The Reggio Emilia Approach' was developed by Loris Malaguzzi, who was a teacher himself, and the parents of the villages around Reggio Emilia in Italy after World War II. After such a great and destructive event, people believed that children were in need of a new way of learning: the assumption was that people form their own personality during early years of development. The aim of this Reggio Emilia approach is teaching how to make them useful in everyday life. The program is based on the principles of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment based on the interests of the children through a self- guided curriculum. (Greenberg, 1987)

2.2.4 Sudbury Model

If we connect the CFE framework with 'Sudbury Model', we find almost same scenario like the other above mentioned models. 'Sudbury Valley' is a School, started since 1968. They have a system where children can enjoy their life, also have liberty to lead their life with happiness as they grow up in the newly emerging world. After enrolment of the school, no matter what their age is the student are given the freedom to use their time as they wish, and the responsibility for designing their path to adulthood. They can solve their own problem by their

innovation and creativity. So, when they grow they become trustworthy and responsible person, and can contribute something for the society. Through participation in the school's activities, the students gain different experiences and working with peers to make their own decisions. They gain experience secure their positions on important issues that affect their day-to-day life. (Sadofsky & Greenberg 1994)

2.3 Examples of CFE models in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh child friendly education or joyful education is very rare. Student's performance in primary education and secondary are not up to the mark. Many school drop-out, grade repetition, poor school attendance, and low contact time in school are the factors of low level of learning achievement. Our government has taken initiatives with the help of global partner 'Third Primary Education Development Program 2011-2017'. Now Bangladesh becomes a Global Partner for the Third Primary Education Development Program which aims to make the pre-primary and primary education system efficient, inclusive and equitable by incorporating child-friendly education. (Humme, 2015)

Alongside the government, private schools and some NGOs are also working in the field of education in Bangladesh. Some of them, such as The Nalanda School, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and Gonoshahajjo Sangstha (GSS) have been playing a key role in promoting child friendly education in Bangladesh. I would like to provide information about Nalanda, BRAC and GSS.

2.3.1 BRAC (Building Resources across Communities)

BRAC Education program aims to make significant contribution for achieving education for all goal, they are giving extending support to the poor children. BRAC have started their pre-school intervention project from 1997. They mainly working for children's holistic development through joyful learning and child friendly environment and prepare them for formal primary school. The main attraction of BRAC primary and preprimary school's teaching, which makes the students willing to come to school that the joyful teaching learning environment. The curriculum and teaching learning materials almost same, competency- based curriculum that is used in the general public schools. Following the national curriculum, BRAC develops textbooks and other materials for up to grade III and government text books are using in grade- IV & V. To make it more children friendly, they fix flexible school timing, don't have any tuition fees, and provide educational materials including textbooks (Islam, Ranjan, and Kabir, 2013, p. 08-09).

2.3.2   GSS (Gonoshahajjo Sangstha)

Gonoshahajjo Sangstha is also another NGO, working for quality basic education to 104,700 out of school Bangladeshi children. The GSS quality education program is a proven model for achieving holistic development of Bangladeshi drop out children. This program incorporates curriculum and materials development, teacher education and training. It consist child friendly teaching learning environment; they give emphasis on what children are like and how they like. Each child is actively engage in a powerful activity every minute inside the classroom, rather listens teachers lectures. The Successful operation of a significant number of excellent in GSS, they demonstrate knowledge and understanding not only of the pedagogy of teaching learning but also its successful application in producing results. In primary education, they integrate the key elements of teaching learning inside a classroom and deliver excellent learning achievement that are visible and measurable, and most importantly, replicable. GSS have different type of training sessions, like after joining teacher have an initial 15 day training is followed by six months on the job teacher support by a supervisor. In addition, there is a monthly follow-up training and an annual 'Refresher Training'. All training integrates hands-on experience in child-centered active learning classroom environment so that the teacher is able to alter her/his own classroom and create the desired learning environment and the activities without facing any challenges (GSS, 2015).

2.4 Conceptual framework

Child friendly education is an important issue for our country. CFS framework suggests that every child friendly schools have to promote child friendly or joyful environment. They give emphasis on holistic development through joyful/child friendly learning. Free and friendly teaching environment, where student learn by doing things, can solve their own problem by their innovation and creativity, respect for all children and their work. That is ensuring many sight of the curriculum, teaching learning strategies, materials, and assessments and finally the support system. When I reviewed some theories, models and framework about child friendly education, through worldwide popular approaches and models like (Steiner, Reggio Emilia, Sudbury model, UNICEF CFS model), and the other educational model in Bangladesh like (BRAC & GSS), I found many important information like, Steiner talked about his philosophy that through designing specific curriculum, classroom teaching learning strategies, and giving support to the teachers students' holistic, spiritual and social development can be ensured. The Reggio Emilia, and Sudbury model, has shown the same priority regarding curriculum, teaching learning

strategies and support system are in favor of child friendly approaches. Reggio Emilia approach is talking about different ways of learning engagement like thinking, discovering, and learning, it consist drawing, sculpting, dance movement, painting, modeling, and many more activities. These all activities should be valued and nurtured. These ways of learning are all a part of a child. In Sudbury schools students from pre-school through high school age explore the world freely at their own pace and in their own unique ways, they do not have formal evaluation system, there are no grades and there are no tests, they believe that the best person to evaluate a student's progress is the student. Students have a self-evaluation system so they can easily identify which subject or skills they need to improve on. They have a tendency to measure themselves against perfection - not against the good result.

According to UNICEF CFS model, the worldwide suggestion for keeping the central focus of using this CFE is to ensure good teaching method and learning outcomes. Child Friendly Schools, the style of teaching learning should be learner centered. Students must be graded with their best effort to master the prescribed knowledge, skills and attitude. The curriculum need to design such a way students develop accordingly, they gain multiple paths to knowledge and skills acquisition. CFS teachers need to be reflective practitioners, they need to think of why some child strive to understand do not do like others, need to use different techniques and strategies to get children learn and success. Teacher need to operate the children such a way so they can follow different learning paths for their success

Finally when I reviewed the examples of the government, non-government NGOs like BRAC, GSS all the models, approaches and frameworks all of them refer that the teaching learning strategies should be learner centered and child friendly. These NGOs are ensuring the quality education program is a proven model for achieving holistic development of Bangladeshi drop out children. This program incorporates curriculum and materials development, teacher education and training. It consist child friendly teaching learning environment.

Based on above all studies I found the central focus of the child friendly education are curriculum, classroom teaching learning strategies and support system, it could be the essential to make a school child friendly that is how I developed my conceptual framework based on those criteria's. These key characters are the key elements of developing child friendly school so I have focused on these three elements. I heard about one school, 'Nalanda', 'The School of Joy' who promote CFE in Bangladesh. I wanted to know in-depth about CFE in that school. That is why I developed following framework to analyze different elements of that school:

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, respondents, procedures, and different methods to be used in the study, also provides an outline of using methodology based on my research questions. Here researcher needs to discuss research approach, a description of primary data collection process for the interviews, data analysis techniques used and limitations of the accepted research method.

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach influences different design and provides an opportunity to consider benefits and limitations of various approaches available to the researcher. To do this study, this report uses the qualitative method, to explore the research questions as it allows researchers to conduct in-depth explorations of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). I have chosen qualitative research approach because I think this approach suits the purpose of my study. It is a primarily exploratory research, used to gain an understanding of my research topic 'Child Friendly Education' CFE, its underlying reasons, different opinions, and level of understanding. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for my topic.

3.2 Research site

This research was conducted in one of the public school in Dhaka. The school has ten levels, (two section for each level) graded as pre-primary, middle and secondary. The rational for selecting this school was that it is a unique school which has a strong interest and preference for students' extracurricular activities, which provide a better learning. Nalanda "The School of Joy" located at Chhayanaut Sangeet Bidyaton, a well-known music and dance school in the heart of Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

3.3 Research participants

Participant no:	Name:	Designation:
P. 1	Mrs. M	School head
P. 2	Mrs. J	Trainer
P. 3	Mr. M	Teacher
S. 1 to 10		Student
P. 1 to 6		Parents

3.4 Sampling procedure

In this case purposeful sampling technique was used to select the school head, two teachers and one trainer for personal interviews. For FGD a group of parents and students was

selected randomly. The selection criteria were based on Nalanda's child friendly education. Selecting school head, teachers, and trainer was purposeful, they were the primary informer of the respective school and understand best the CFE framework or process utilized within the school. To add to the understanding of the process of curriculum, teaching learning strategies, material, assessment and support system and the procedures used to collect the criteria wise data. The selection of participants for this study was based on strategies referred to as 'purposeful selection' which we can explain with one definition like, "A selection strategies in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gather as well from other choices" (Maxwell, 2005, p.88).

3.5 Data collection methods

Data collection is an important aspect at any type of research study. Themes need to be focused to extract the data. The study employed the process of organizing, general sense making, coding, drawing themes, and finally, interpreting and making meaning out of the collected data (Creswell, 2003). The research participants were informed about the nature, purpose, time and methods involved in the study. To maintain confidentiality, I have used pseudonyms for the research participants. There were 3 classroom observations, interviews with 1 teacher, 1 head teacher and 1 trainer, FGD with 10 students and 6 parents, literature/study material review were used to collect the data.

4. Results

In this chapter I am going to analyze and interpret the data that was generated through 3 interviews with 1 teacher, 1 trainer and 1 head teacher, 3 class observations, 2 focus group discussions with students and parents and reviewing some school documents. Interpretation has been arranged in four sections, namely: Background of Nalonda, difference with the other schools in Bangladesh, overall teaching learning system and teacher training). I have drawn conclusion of the findings. It should be noted that I have used pseudonyms of my participants in this entire chapter.

4.1 Background of Nalanda

When analyzing the background from school documents, it was found that the founder was a cultural minded person, and his wife also took significant role to build this institution. In 2001, there was a bomb blast in Ramna Botomul (located in Dhaka capital city) during the celebration of Bengali New Year. That incident make the founder upset, and he decided to form

a school where students can learn the cultural values and do something for this nation. Discussion with the research participants and previous study experience from the school year book 'Udgom' it brought some features about Nalanda School. Nalanda started their journey in 2003 with 16 students. The name of the school is inspired by the ancient Nalanda University. I tried to investigate and asked my participants to describe the background of Nalanda School; intention behind this discussion was to know about the school. The responses against this particular question, my interviewees mentioned same type of situations. Statement of the participant no.2 can be quoted here in this regard: (Interview #2, 03-12-15)

> Mr. W our founder, he took initiative to build a school. He has given me proposal, to work with him. The reason behind, the social context were not favorable on that time, few people were not favor of celebrating cultural activities. The incident in (2001) bomb blast in Ramna Botomul during the celebration of Bengali New Year, made him upset and finally determined to do something for Bengali nation, and then he build a school.

4.2 Difference with the other schools in Bangladesh

While I was reviewing the school documents one senior coordinator Mr. B expressed his thought in his article about differences, he mentioned a range of reasons of why Nalanda is different than the other institution. Nalanda is different type of institution, not like the other institution in Bangladesh. I have asked my participants to describe if they have experienced any differences in Nalanda. The common thing I found from everyone, including Teacher, parents and students. One example I can mention like one participant said,

> There are so many differences you will see in Nalanda, up to grade-3; we don't have any written formal examination. Students learn from their everyday experiences, education system is different from other school, we give emphasis on our children's holistic development, not only academic, school uniform is different from other schools, boys and girl same color and design, students call their teachers, brother and sister not sir/madam. Parents give tuition fees according to their abilities; that are rare in other school, provide healthy Tiffin and many more (Interview #2, 03-12-15)

On the other hand, some of the participants told about some exception, that there are few numbers of schools they are same as Nalanda, Oroni, and Fulki, one parent mention the name in her discussion, she said, "No, most of the schools are teaching in an old traditional manner, but I know about two schools, Oroni and Fulki, they are almost same as Nalanda. May be there are some other school like Nalanda but we don't know". (Focus group notes #1, 30-11-15)

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Almost all the parents talked about their children's good behavior and open-mindedness, the differences than the other schools in Bangladesh. (Focus group notes #1, 30-11-15) from a father should be mention in this regard:

> Most of the time we see children in different schools, they don't know about their family, neighbor or distance relatives, only know about the close relative, like uncle, aunt, grandfather, grandmother etc, but I see difference in my child, he knows most of my family members, we do visit our village once in a tear, may be during Eid vacations, he can easily make friend with any one, know the name of the children as his age, our neighbor and distance relatives, so I am not looking my child's learning only for academic side, in this regard I am satisfied with Nalanda.

Another important aspect of the Nalanda School is students don't need to go for private tuitions. But most of the schools in our country, teachers' force their students for private tuition. Almost all the teachers, parents and students agreed on this point. They expressed that students learning engagement in 'Nalanda' are strong so they don't need extra tuitions. Focus group notes from a student, (Focus group notes #2, 30-11-15) "No I don't have home teacher, I can do my homework on my own, and sometime I help my little sister with her homework".

Another notes from the parents FGD should mentioned regarding this matter, one father said,

> Private tuition is not matching with Nalanda. Because few days ago one letter came with the sign from the authority, regarding this matter, private tuition is not allowed at home. Last week one parent share his bitter experience with us, both the parents are doctors, they can't give time to Nalanda and their child, so they kept one home tutor for their child, after two months that child became confused, could not decide which instruction he will follow, he got face treble. Finally the parents realized that he needs to keep connection with the class teacher. (Focus group notes P no.1, 30-11-15)

4.3 Overall Teaching Learning System

The teaching learning system of Nalanda are mostly children centered because they believe the classroom is not simply a place in which students learn academic lessons. It is a social place, beside academic lessons students learn cooperation and friendship and it develop positive behavior.

All the teachers and students admitted that the classroom teaching procedure and teaching learning strategies is child friendly. According to the students, most of the time they do variety of activities, singing, dancing, role play, cooking and enjoys the lesson. Like one girl mentioned

that, "Sometime we start our class with a chorus song, like any 'Tagore Song' or any common 'Sora Gaan', we actually do many activities, such as, cookery show, book making, watching movie, and circus; these are the activities we like most" (Focus group notes #2, 30-11-15)

Teacher's mentions different reasons why they think using variety of activities is important, it developed student's basic skills, rather doing formal classroom activities. It was observed through classroom observations that the teachers encouraged students through verbal praise mostly for their class participation. The teacher promoted students participation by saying words of praise, "Very good, Wonderful" by clapping. In this regard a classroom observation can be noted:

> Students were arranged according to the requirements of the lesson. Classroom management reflects teachers are aware of student's needs and ability. Teacher generally models expected behavior. Innovative disciplinary technique has been used for classroom management, like using praising words, very good, wonderful, encourage their learning by clapping. (Classroom Observation #1, 03-12-15)

4.3.1 Curriculum

Discussion on curriculum most of my research participants mentioned same statement like they follow National Curriculum, but to enrich their curriculum, the school follow some philosophy, such as one teacher said, "We follow national curriculum, as pre-primary to grade IV they don't sit for any board examination, so we are not fixed with the curriculum, like up to grade 3 student don't have any written examination, we follow Steiner, Montessori, & Rabindrawnath's philosophy to enrich our curriculum" (Interview #1, 02-12-15)

4.3.2 Teaching Learning Materials

All teachers (research participant) strongly felt that children learn better when they use concrete materials. Nalanda School, they mostly use low cost materials for their classroom teaching.

If they need any costly materials, parents are very much willing to provide that. When I talked to the participant no. 2 she mentioned,

> We use, mostly low cost material, but for books and costly materials our parents help us willingly. The specialist teachers, like the Math teacher make special sticks for counting, language teacher make props for drama, and teachers ask students also to bring waste materials to reuse as a teaching resources (Interview #2, 03-12-15)

After observing several classrooms, I found the learning materials, for Math lesson, teacher used colorful sticks. Students enjoyed the songs and dances, reciting rhymes, and answering teacher's questions. Few study materials like books, blocks, sticks, were kept on the book rack, for that specific lesson teacher used mostly black board. There were few sticks for counting; they used their fingers, clapping and memory. Students enjoyed participating group activity. (Observation notes # 2, 04-12-15)

4.3.4 Assessment for CFE

Regarding assessment, Nalanda does not believe on conventional teaching method, they evaluate their students on their overall performance as a student, not the basis of their result. They do different kinds of activities: like peer activities, involvement in extracurricular activities, field trip and others. Most of the teachers mentioned about one common things that for elementary level students, they learn from their surroundings, for that they don't need to sit for formal examination, teachers only observe their performance, up to grade 3, students don't have any written examination.

Another important aspect of the assessment system of this school, they use alternative assessment strategies for their students. Comment of one teacher, Mr. M, can be quoted here,

> Yes, Our most of the assessment criteria's are, alternative type, students are assessed on their overall performance, different type of activity based practice are using for classroom learning, participation in class, peer activities, involvement in extracurricular activities. All these should be taken into account, one example can give, like in History class students are not furnished with dull numbers and dates, but are asked to conduct plays about the lives of people from bygone ages, this way they learn to relate to others (Interview #1, 02-12-15)

4.4 Teachers' Training

Support system plays a vital role for teachers; to promote child friendly education every teacher need to be well trained and qualified. All the teachers (research participant) agreed upon one common thing, they have very good professional development opportunity through demo sessions. In teachers' opinions, trainer and head also admitted every year during holiday or special vacation time, school arrange different sessions or training for every teacher. It is worthy to quote a lecture, the trainer said,

> During Summer vacation and winter break, sometime strike's time, our authority arrange different training sessions, call renown educationist, like M. Bhai, who is famous for every subjects, F. Apa comes for Montessori training, she is also expert in Math, S. Apa give us

valuable lesson on Bengali, beside these our head M. Apa also conduct sessions for English, B. Bhai is a creative person for teaching Math (Interview #3, 04-12-15).

5. Discussion & Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The study was investigated in one School, 'Nalanda', how the school offers a child friendly education in Bangladesh. What are the key features behind the teaching learning strategies and support system, whether the students in primary levels are working in a child friendly environment or not. What type of teaching learning strategies, assessments teachers are using for CFE and for the support system what type of training is available in the school in respect of child friendly education. Qualitative interview, FGD, Class observation, document review were the instruments to gather data. Data analysis indicated that the participants in this study looking for appropriate intervention strategies. Finding from the current study suggested by the literature, that Child Friendly Education is important for better learning especially in the early year's classes. This research seeks to explore this understanding within Bangladeshi context.

While analyzing at the data it suggest the presence of a number of factors, classroom environment, teaching learning strategies, curriculum, assessment, and teachers' training. The data was associated with the concept of CFE. This discussion will seek to describe how each of these sectors led to the fulfillment of child friendly education in Nalanda's classroom. From the whole process it appears that teachers (research participants) were in favor of child friendly education. They tried to understand and provide students child friendly teaching strategies, in the classroom.

The other significant point which has rightly come out from the interview is that, most of the teachers are well trained and qualified. The teachers and head teacher think that the support system plays a vital role for school development. Every week teachers have demo sessions, where they share each other ideas and learn from each other's. Monthly, yearly or in vacation time school arrange different training sessions based on their needs.

My result revealed significant difference with the other mainstream schools in Bangladesh. In our country the education system is very much formal or conventional. Most of the school environment is very critical to nurture natural process of learning. Whereas children of Nalanda were found enrich with quality education that reflects the holistic development. They

showed particular strength in the task like reading, creative writing, performing song, dance, drama etc.

It has been found from different data/source, that parents of Nalanda are motivated and knowledgeable on Child friendly or child focus education, teachers' knowledge were mostly sufficient on joyful learning/child friendly learning. The students took part in the extracurricular activities followed the national curriculum, as well as Steiner, Montessori and Rabindratath's principles. Teachers showed particular strength in the teaching learning strategies and assessment. It seems the case that everyone (research participants) are individually directed by self-motivation, and aware of their own needs followed by specific school culture. Another reason for the success is parents support in following school culture and donating teaching materials. Finally this case has two significant contributions, first this school is different than the other schools in Bangladesh and secondly, from the observational data, interview/FGD notes, and document information, they are favor of child friendly education.

If I compare the result with other studies done in the same field, I found many similarities and very fewer differences. From the review of the related literature and studies some research has proven the reliability of this CFE approach. Specifically summaries of intervention literature based on worldwide popular approaches like (Steiner, Raggio Amilia, Sudbury model, and UNICEF CFS model), other education model in Bangladesh like (BRAC & GSS) have shown that curriculum, teaching learning strategies and support system are in favor of child friendly approaches. All the models, approaches and frameworks refer that the teaching learning strategies should be learner centered; they give emphasis on holistic development through joyful/child friendly learning. Free and friendly teaching environment, where student learn by doing things, can solve their own problem by their innovation and creativity, respect for all children and their work. The physical environment should be large class with a learning corner, and adequate learning materials. For cognitive development, child friendly school's teachings inspire its curricula, which includes developing an appreciation for the environment, art and music, and athletics in addition to traditional subjects, so balanced development of personality and self-discipline. If we discuss the social environment, CFS practices equity, in terms of gender and religion and culture, parent's involvement, community support and a range of extracurricular activities constitute an integral part of a student's schooling. For support system, in child friendly schools, all the school models, philosophies & frameworks mention about teacher training, so the teachers can support the students to accomplish their learning. This

training can be on different subjects, like art, music, athletics and early childhood. Thus many education researchers have been able to understand much about the favorable condition of a child friendly school model.

I found most of the above mentioned criteria's are visible in Nalanda School, so the child friendly education in Nalanda can be the new approach in Bangladesh. It may be the case, different from the other schools, these result may be used to improve the educational situation in Bangladesh.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, I can say that, the process of education especially for early years, should be in child friendly. However child friendly education requires competent teachers, supportive school authority and good school culture. Realizing this fact, The National education policy 2013 recognized and approved the comprehend Early Childhood Care and Development policy which includes health, nutrition, emotional, social and cognitive/learning those are the needs of early childhood year. The plan with its suggested strategies was good but practically are not implementing properly.

This study provided evidence that the school teachers of Nalanda have demonstrated effective child friendly teaching. They are well trained and competent to help the children developing their, required knowledge, specific skills and positive attitudes. This study strongly believes in the concept of child friendly education. All the research participants have maintained such an attractive learning environment in the classroom. Yet although each of the participant teachers, students in the study displayed a strong connection with each other. All research studies have some limitations. My honest opinion about the limitations are, initially I have decided to visit one more research site to get more idea about child friendly education but due to lack of time I was unable to do that. I also wanted to observe teachers training sessions, but no sessions have been scheduled for the next one month, so I was unable to observe the sessions.

The study also concludes that the school of Bangladesh, (who follow national curriculum) may need to reflect on and understand how their classroom environment and teaching strategies are likely influence student learning. They need to reflect on what strategies and skills they apply to develop child friendly education. Further research can be going on this topic to get new information and knowledge about child friendly education in various schools in Bangladesh. The schools in Bangladesh can reflects an environment of good quality, which promoting both physical and emotional health for teachers and learner.

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