



**SEARCHING THE REASONS OF INCREASING PAYMENT BASED EDUCATION SERVICE IN THE PRESENCE OF TOTAL COST FREE EDUCATION SERVICES: A STUDY ON PRIMARY EDUCATION OF SYLHET CITY**

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**Abstract:-** The primary objective of the study is to analyze the reason of increasing numbers of primary schools in one of the divisional cities of Sylhet. As a descriptive empirical analysis this paper used random sampling to collect data from primary sources along with secondary sources from research articles, books, newspaper, magazines and other reading materials. A well structured questionnaire was prepared by which primary data were collected from 100 people of different professions and different income structure except the lower income marginal group. By the processing of the data through Microsoft excel 07 and SPSS 19, the researchers analyzed the outputs from scientific and logical perspectives. It is found that availability of the element of quality services attract the customers who bear significant opportunity cost to get the quality services that have a very significant long term values. Guardians' showed their preference on private primary schools for the better future of their kids in the presence of incentive added free offering education by the Govt. primary schools. Though it is evident that customers are favoring private primary schools but they are not satisfied with the performance of them in all respects. So, the elements of quality services such as better teaching, proper teacher student ratio, curriculum, infrastructure and sports facilities are to be emphasized by both types of school for regaining the customers and for retaining them with the common objectives of attracting more customers.

**Key Words:** Govt. and private primary school, guardians, service quality.

**Background:**

**Introduction:** Education is the mental process

through which the inherent intelligence and dormant strength is flourished and it opens the way of the knowledge acquiring and knowledge creation. So education is the necessity of every one. It is essential element to build a rich, conscious and civilized nation. So, the education should be universal, one way and mass people oriented. Our basic education is delivered by primary and secondary schools.

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Maximum primary schools have five classes; one to five. Then the students have to face a public exam; PSC. Then the students have to start from class six in Secondary Schools and face JSC, SSC exams. In education policy 2010, primary education is extended up to class eight and secondary from class nine to class twelve. There are 68053 primary schools in Bangladesh excluding Kindergarten and NGO based schools. These schools entertain 16,848,757 students by 326,369 teachers. That is, the existing students teachers ratio is 54:1. Though primary education is supposed to be universal and one way but in fact, there are 12 types of primary educations in our country delivered by Govt. owned institutions and privately owned institutions. Govt. owned schools provide one way program in totally free of cost and incentive based<sup>1</sup>.

As education is the key to development. Guardians try their level best to ensure their kids' quality education. They opt to find out the best educational institute for their kids. The factor of best educational institution are teaching Quality, better management, students teacher ratio, expenditure, infrastructure etc. Govt. schools are offering basic education absolutely in free of cost with some incentives where private schools are offering their services in exchange of fees. Income stratification of the people of Bangladesh differentiated the choice in education like other fields. As the lower income people have no choice other than the Govt. owned schools, the researchers want to know the selection criterion on primary educational institutions of people of different income levels other than the lower income class.

Private schools are accommodating huge number of students. People and organizations are establishing new schools on regular basis to meet the need of different localities. Private schools represent a significant part of the education sector and are trying to provide competitively better services than others. Parents have the options to send their kids in private or public schools on the basis of service quality offered by both types of schools.

It is observed that enrollment in public schools is reduced over the last decade. The financially able persons prefer the private schools for their kids by considering different factors of quality education. The elements of quality services may be considered in finding out the reasons of rising private schools; reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility. Better teaching is the combination of four elements; reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Curriculum ensures the reliability and assurance. The infrastructure, teacher-students ratio etc. ensure the other element of quality service; tangibility. These factors are to be considered in finding out the underlying reasons of continuous increasing trends of private primary schools in the presence of free of cost Govt. Schools.

**Literature Review:** Primary education was introduced in Bangladesh in 1919. It was promised to be announced as universal, free of cost and compulsory in 1959. In 1973, primary education was nationalized and in 1981, separate primary education sector was established. During the past decades Bangladesh has made noticeable progress in primary education especially in private primary school. New education policy targeted to make primary education as universal, compulsory, free of cost and of similar curriculum for all. The existing different curriculum was also targeted to be changed to coordinated same curriculum<sup>2</sup>. The major categories of institutions are Govt. owned primary schools and privately owned schools. The Govt. owned primary schools are following the curriculum of Bangladesh Text Book Board and the privately owned schools are following different books and curriculums along with the curriculum of BTBB. The privately owned kindergarten model schools are very available in urban area and are spreading in rural areas also because of guardians' preference. Bangladesh is a highly populated country where about 1,118 people live in per square kilometer<sup>3</sup>. The ratio of Govt. primary school and village is 1: 2.27. So, it means that on an average a single Govt. school is for students of two villages. As a result a

single school is burdened with too many students. The comfortable environment of quality education is broken down due to this density. Thus the guardians of these kids are not interested to send them in Govt. primary school. They search for alternative academy to put their kids to educate. Private primary schools have been teaching since 30 years last with their vision and mission alongside Govt. primary school. Private primary schools are increasing gradually in our country to provide education to our children as the part of education for all (EFA) initiative developed by UNESCO<sup>4</sup>. The rate of increasing private primary schools in urban area are more than in rural area. The guardians search for quality education and the performance of better education is indicated by the performance of students. The quality of school, the teaching quality of schools, the size of classes, the gender friendliness of school environment and the compensation package of teachers are determining factors of students' performance. The performance of students is the reflection of the qualities of all the teachers. They also found that performance based pay of teachers could increase the students achievements<sup>5</sup>. For various reasons mainly the political influences in primary Schools of Bangladesh, the implementation of performance based pay is not possible in Govt. owned Primary Schools. It is also found that remedial program for students with poor performance have a great impact on their achievements<sup>6</sup>. Such remedial after school coaching program can be carried out by the dynamic management of privately owned schools. Parental choice of schools mainly depends on the performance of the students of specific school. Different factors such as availability of Govt. Schools, quality of education, ability of guardians, arrangement of better class rooms etc. are playing major role in decision of sending kids to the schools. It is found that Govt. Schools are not available proportionately to the population (for example near about 20 million people live in 1600 square kilometer area, average 12500 people per square kilometer), guardians are able to bear the cost of private primary schools, the better quality

education provided by private schools than the Govt. primary school, and the well furnished class room and so forth attracted the people to the private primary schools.

The ratio of students – teachers is one of the important factors of increasing private primary school sharply in our country<sup>7</sup>. The current ratio of govt primary school and students is 1:251. It means that every govt primary school has more than 250 students. But, in case of Private primary school, it is found as 1: 158. It means that on an average every private primary school has less than 160 students. In these circumstances, guardians think that the education environment of their kids will be better in private primary school than in government primary school. Another important factor is that the ratio of teacher and student. This ratio, in case of Govt. primary teacher, is found as 1:58. It means that a single teacher is educating at least 58 students. On the other hand this ratio in private primary school is 1:38. It means that every single teacher is educating 38 students<sup>7</sup>. Besides, many Govt. primary schools are suffering from lack of sufficient teachers. This is why the guardians tend to send their children at private primary school. The sincere guardians of children are conscious about the learning materials of school<sup>9</sup>. This is the age of information and technology. Primary schools are also using modern technology such as multi media projector, internet etc. These equipments make the learning of the kids' easier, increase the attraction of learning to the children. As a result the children feel interested to study. On the other hand the govt primary schools do not use such a modern equipments to teach the children. The students of govt primary schools feel less interest or less attraction to go to school. Private primary school makes the teaching method attractive and interesting by using visual presentation by multimedia projectors. Govt primary schools are facing some challenges to reach up to the appraisable standard, such as Quality education, decentralization of education administration and some special needs<sup>10</sup>. To provide quality education it requires quality teachers, quality

environment, quality equipments and so many things. But most of the times Govt. primary schools are lack of this facilities. As a result the guardians are not interested to send their children to the Govt. primary schools. On the contrary private primary schools charging high tuition fees for providing education and the guardians are convinced that they are trying to provide quality education to their target students. Additionally, the quality of teaching learning process, achievements, teacher motivation is also some more dilemmas for Govt. primary schools<sup>11</sup>. The quality of teaching learning process is very important to teach the primary school kids. It is important to attract the children in the school ground, and in the class rooms. Teachers and appropriate authorities should implement the policy of growing interest of students to the schools. They should feel amusement in learning. But currently, private sectors primary schools are implementing various programs to attract the children to the school. Effective teachers' training is a must for that purpose. Approximately, 24% Govt. primary schools teachers are untrained up to date<sup>12</sup>. Teachers training help teachers to be skilled and updated which ultimately provides benefits to the students. This training provides different information to the teachers so that they can teach the students accordingly.

**Objectives:** The main objective of the research is to investigate the reasons of popularity of private primary schools in the presence of free cost incentive providing Govt. Schools. The specific objectives are:

- a. To find out the preference of families of different income level except lower income group in acquiring primary education from Govt. Schools or Private Schools.
- b. To find out the preference of schools in respect of better teaching, teacher-student ratio, infrastructure, sports and other facilities.
- c. To find out the financial penalty of selecting private schools in presence of Govt. Schools.

- d. To find out the elements of significant importance to improve the service quality of both types of schools.

**Methodology:** This descriptive analytical research is conducted by random sampling design. A well designed questionnaire was constructed to collect the primary data from 100 selected respondents. The Guardians of kids are selected as respondents as in the case of kids primary education the parents and or guardians are the main decision maker and they are the customer as they have to bear the cost and or opportunity cost. The collected data were processed through well designed Microsoft excel 2007 and SPSS 19 to get the outputs. The outputs were analyzed by objective and subjective analysis of the researchers with the help of secondary data collected from reading materials of different sources as research journals, books, newspapers and magazines etc.

**Findings:**

Guardians' selection among private and Govt. owned schools supposed to depend on the affordability. The purchasing capacity is largely depends on the earning capacity of family members. Primary Education is the basic need of citizen. So, Government tries to fulfill the need by encouraging the citizen to take the education in totally free of cost. Rather there are different motivating programs to bring the children to the schools. The prosperity of people mainly depends on the acquired quality of education. So, people are supposed to spend highest of their capacity for kids education. It is found that 98% of the guardians select private schools for their kids education despite the considerable cost involved in those schools. Only the lower income family may select the Govt. owned primary schools for their kids. But middle to higher income families do not compromise in the quality of Kids' education. Out of 98% guardians, 14% prefer the English medium school assuming the better quality of education in those schools (Table 1).

According to guardians opinion, they are spending in excess of TK. 17,800 to TK. 78,800 with a mean of 40627 for a kid's schooling in private schools rather than Govt.

owned school. This amount claim on an average 8%-9% of total income of the families surveyed. This is rather tough for the families earning minimum income. But it is mentioned earlier, they are determined to acquire better education for their kids (Table 2).

Among the different professionals teachers are supposed to be more conscious about kids education. The cent percent of surveyed teachers and businessmen opt for private school for better quality. Only two employees' select Govt. school may be due to their budgetary, location and other problems. It is inferred that all financially able persons irrespective of profession prefer private school for their kids (Table 3).

Searching the reason for preference on private schools, the teacher-student ratio is considered as most important factor by all educationists. The researchers found that private schools maintain the ratio in more optimum level though they have to ensure the flow of fund for smooth operation. Seven percent of the respondent opined that Govt. Schools are better performer in maintain that ratio in optimum level (Table 4).

Better infrastructure attracts the students in learning. Sufficient accommodation with comfortable, suitable and attractive arrangement is needed for effective teaching-learning practices. The preference in public school in this respect is 24% where 76% opined that private schools have better arrangement. Some private schools may have poor arrangement that reduce the attraction to those schools. On the other side Govt. Schools are supposed to make better arrangement as Govt. provides necessary fund for such schools. But mismanagement and corruption bring constraints in timely construction of buildings in proper arrangement (Table 5).

Learning needs proper interaction between teacher and students. It should be two way communications. But with students-teacher ratio of 54:1, it is not possible to establish two way communications. So the objective of learning transferred to memorize something in a painful process and deliver it in the exam script. So,

Govt. should increase their allotment in basic education and employ sufficient numbers of teacher in the school to maintain optimum students and teacher ratio as it is one of the most important factors of quality education. Ninety three percent respondents identified that element as significant and most significant (Table 7).

Admission in renowned Govt. school is very complex and hazardous. Admission in class three in those handful numbers of renowned schools is a dream to many of the parents. In the name of written test and interview many unscrupulous practices is held by the authority. It is also complained by the respondents that the admission process in the Govt. primary school is painful rather than easy and friendly. So importance of easy and transparent admission process is identified by 50% of the respondents as significant (Table 8).

People select private school for comparatively better caring but the need of better teaching is not satisfied by the performance of private schools. The ninety nine percent respondents identified the importance of better teaching in those school as most significant and one percent as significant. Better teaching is the combination of the four of the five elements of services quality as mentioned earlier. So better recruitment, training, motivating and getting feedback is required to satisfy the need of better teaching in those schools (Table 9).

To ensure the necessary fund for smooth operation of those private schools, the authorities become more flexible in allowing more students in a class. It hampers the optimum teacher-students ratio in private schools also. The ninety five percent of the guardians opined that the teacher-students ratio in private schools should be reduced to optimum level (Table 10).

Sports and recreation is very important for mental and physical development of students. But in the certificates of public exams there are no score for that by which they could compete for better career except sports. It hampers the students from such important development as teachers and guardians give more emphasize on



academic activities. School authorities take the opportunities as they do not have to invest for more space for sports and thus it is ignored. Though 85% guardians are indifferent in that issue but it should be emphasized for kids better life physically and mentally (Table 11).

Better schooling mainly depends on better teaching. From the respondents' opinion, it can be concluded that Govt. Schools are going to be failed in ensuring the quality education. So, the guardians with minimum livelihood prefer the private schools though Govt. School offers education in totally free of cost with various incentives. May be only the marginal income family have to select the Govt. primary School. But such respondents are excluded from the survey to find the option of guardians with minimum financial support. Importance to be given to the teaching quality of the Govt. owned schools as opined by the respondents about its importance at highest 5 points in 5 point Likert Scale. In private school the corresponding mean is 4.99 (Table 12). A little bit lower than the Govt. School. It mean people have to select the private schools for their Kids' Education for comparative better performance but they are not satisfied in the teaching performance of those school. The Govt. schools should give utmost efforts in good teaching and the private schools also have to prioritize the task

Teacher-Student ratio of Govt. School is not optimum according to the opinion of the respondents. Govt. should develop infrastructure and recruit more teachers to reduce that ration at optimum level. According to the respondents' opinion, the mean importance level for Govt. Schools and colleges in 5 point Likerts scale is 4.42 while in private institutions it is a little bit high 4.43. So the efforts should be given in this respect to attract the guardians and students to the Govt. Owned school and ensure the basic right of citizen. Private Schools should try to optimize that ratio by doing other imperatives to ensure the flow of fund for smooth operations. Similarly, admission process of both types of institutions should be made more easier to ensure the basic right of citizens. In case of private institutions,

the customers may suffer because of high charges and in public schools this is because of procedural hazards of the process. The concern authority should take steps to simplify the process. Cost of education in private institutions should by more optimize by ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency in the operations to minimize the cost of operation. Infrastructure of the institutions is not a factor of dissatisfaction as the respondents has given emphasize at below the average of 5 point scale (Table 12).

**Overall Interpretation:** It is found that financially able person irrespective of income level do not compromise in their kids' education. They prefer better education by investing their highest efforts in the presence of free education with incentives offered by the Govt. schools. It can be easily understood the opportunity cost of lower middle income people in buying the service of private schools for better education of their kids (Table 1). Financial investment in education of kids in private schools is on an average around 8%-9% of the total income of the families. It can be multiplied by the number of school going students (Table 2). The families are sacrificing their present benefits for better future of their kids as they perceive the importance of education to achieve it. To search the reason of their investment, it is found that 95.2% of the respondents have the perception of comparatively better teaching in private schools (Table 3). This better teaching ensures the availability of four important factors out of total five elements of service quality. One of the most important elements of better teaching is optimum teacher student ratio. The guardians are convinced that private schools are maintaining this ratio in expected level better than Govt. Schools (Table 4). The fifth factor of service quality, i.e. tangibility is to be ensured by the infrastructure where students have to meet and get their support in suitable environment. The perception of guardians about the capability of arranging a better infrastructure is gone to the private school authority as there are comparatively minimum procedural hazards in such arrangement (Table

5). To enlist the imperatives of Govt. Schools in serving the citizen by education- the basic right of all, the cent percent respondents perceived that ensuring better education is a must (Table 6). Providing better education, firstly the student teachers ratio is to be reduced to optimum level, so that teachers are able to exchange the ideas by two way communication (Table 7). The admission process of the schools is to be simplified as opined by 50% of the respondents. It is not possible for the busy person in involving more time in the admission process of their kids. They need simplified and shortest process as offered by the private schools (Table 8). Preferring private schools do not indicates that guardians are happy with the performance of private schools. To attract and restore the customers, the authority should think to improve their teaching quality by doing all arrangement of it (Table 9). One of the important issues is teacher student ratio. It should be optimized (Table 10). Though, guardians do not emphasize the need of sports and recreation (Table 11) of kids as it does not increase the scores. But their mental and physical health will be hampered if the kids do not involve in sports and recreation. So the guardians and the authority should give proper attention for its implicit value. The descriptive statistics regarding the imperatives of the Govt. and Private primary schools and the indicative reasons of increasing acceptability of private primary schools (Table 12) highlighted the first priority on better teaching in both schools with a very little difference. It is followed by the elements of better teaching that is maintaining optimum teacher student ratio. Simplified the admission process to save efforts and time is also prioritize in both type of schools. Sports facilities are also indicated by the respondents with more than average score in likert 5 point scale.

**Conclusion:** Services provided by Govt. and private institutions in educational sector especially in the primary education is to be evaluated. This is the great concern that the offering of services in free of cost with various incentives by the Govt. institutions cannot

attract even the persons who have marginal financial ability. So, in the presence of such institutions private primary schools of various types are increasing continuously by giving comparatively better attention to the elements of quality services. The guardians are ready to bear the opportunity cost for their kids' education but the services of Govt. Schools cannot satisfy them in all respect. The preference of private schools does not mean the expected satisfaction of the guardians. So both types of schools must give proper attention to the factors. The Govt. Schools are to regain the customers and the private to retain the customers and attract more to them.

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**Appendix:**

**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Monthly Income * Type of School	100	100.0%	0	.0%	100	100.0%

Table 1: Selection of Schools by Guardians of different Income levels:

			Type of School			Total
			Govt.	Private(Bangla)	Private(English)	
Monthly Income Lower medium	Count		0	1	3	4
	% within MonthlyIncome		.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Medium	Count		0	31	5	36
	% within MonthlyIncome		.0%	86.1%	13.9%	100.0%
Medium Higher	Count		2	32	4	38
	% within MonthlyIncome		5.3%	84.2%	10.5%	100.0%
Higher	Count		0	20	2	22
	% within MonthlyIncome		.0%	95.0%	5.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		2	84	14	100
	% within MonthlyIncome		2.0%	84.0%	14.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 2: Excess of cost of different items involved in private schooling

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Excess Cost in Private School in Book (yearly)	100	1000	2000	1315.00	215.264
Excess Cost in Private School in Transport(monthly)	100	300	1500	556.00	206.618
Excess Cost in Private School in Coaching(Monthly)	100	400	2000	1307.00	286.834
Excess Cost in Private School in Fees (monthly)	100	400	1500	789.00	211.725
Excess Cost in Private School in Other (monthly)	100	300	1400	624.40	227.837
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014



Table 3: Perception about Better teaching offered by both types of Schools

			betterTeaching		Total
			Govt.	Private	
Profession	Teacher	Count	0	18	18
		% within Profession	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Employee	Count	2	40	42
		% within Profession	4.8%	95.2%	100.0%
	Businessmen	Count	0	40	40
		% within Profession	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	2	98	100	
	% within Profession	2.0%	98.0%	100.0%	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 4: Better Teacher-student ration in both types of school as perceived by Guardians of different professions.

			BetterTeacherStudentratio		Total
			Govt.	Private	
Profession	Teacher	Count	0	18	18
		% within Profession	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Employee	Count	5	37	42
		% within Profession	11.9%	88.1%	100.0%
	Businessmen	Count	2	38	40
		% within Profession	5.0%	95.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	7	93	100	
	% within Profession	7.0%	93.0%	100.0%	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 5: Better infrastructural facilities offered by both types of schools according to the guardians of different professions:

			Good Infrastructure		Total
			Govt.	Private	
Profession	Teacher	Count	3	15	18
		% within Profession	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
	Employee	Count	14	28	42
		% within Profession	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	Businessmen	Count	7	33	40
		% within Profession	17.5%	82.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	24	76	100	
	% within Profession	24.0%	76.0%	100.0%	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 6: Importance of Better Teaching in Govt. Schools

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Significant	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 7: Importance of Optimum Teacher-Student Ratio in Govt. Schools

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid insignificant	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Indifferent	6	6.0	6.0	7.0
Significant	43	43.0	43.0	50.0
Very Significant	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 8: Importance of Easier Admission in Govt. Schools

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Insignificant	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
insignificant	3	3.0	3.0	7.0
Moderately Significant	43	43.0	43.0	50.0
Significant	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 9: Importance of Better Teaching in Private Schools

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Significant	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Very Significant	99	99.0	99.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 10: Importance of Better Teacher-Student Ratio in Private Schools

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid insignificant	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Moderately Significant	4	4.0	4.0	5.0
Significant	46	46.0	46.0	51.0
Very Significant	49	49.0	49.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 11: Importance of Sport & Recreation in Private Schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Insignificant	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	insignificant	7	7.0	7.0	11.0
	Indifferent	85	85.0	85.0	96.0
	Significant	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics of importance to different elements of Schools:

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Govt. better teaching	100	5	5	5.00	.000
Govt. teacher-student ratio	100	2	5	4.42	.654
Govt. Easy Admissions	100	1	4	3.39	.737
Govt. Sport	100	1	5	2.64	.746
Govt. Good Infrastructure	100	1	4	1.52	.689
Private better teaching	100	4	5	4.99	.100
Private teacher-student ratio	100	2	5	4.43	.624
Private Easy Admissions	100	1	4	3.53	.745
Private Sport	100	1	4	2.89	.510
Private Cost	100	1	4	2.15	.626
Private Good Infrastructure	100	1	5	1.53	.846
Valid N (list wise)	100				

Source: Field Survey conducted on May-July 2014