

Doing
Research

2016

**Assessing
the Social
Science
Research
Environment
in
Bangladesh
and India
[Bangladesh
Part]**

Doing Research – Assessing the Social Science Research Environment in Bangladesh and India

[Bangladesh Part]

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Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of a recently conducted research entitled *Doing Research: Assessing the Environment of Social Science Research in India and Bangladesh*. With funding support and required guidance from the Global Development Network (GDN), this study was an attempt to assess particularly the environments of carrying out social science research in Bangladesh and India that was started formally in January 2015. Although this report covers only the Bangladesh part but this is an off-shoot of a collaborative research that followed similar methodology and have been carried out, as just said, simultaneously both in India and Bangladesh. More specifically, in collaboration with Indian team based at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Unnayan Bhabna – a research house in Bangladesh was responsible to conduct this research in its country.

Ideally, the existence of serious researchers of today should contribute not only in knowledge generation, but also motivate future researchers of the country to make positive contributions for the humankind and society. It is supposed that from the young scholars of today a nation will get its serious researchers in the days to come. Needless to say, doing research is a process that embraces differing inter-connected aspects lying at micro (individual), meso (organizational) and macro (external) level. So the environments of these three levels are very important for undertaking any research.

As said, the broad objective of this study was to assess the social science research environments at micro, meso and macro levels in the country under consideration. A mixture of methods (both quantitative and qualitative) was chosen to get the answers for the research questions set for this study, which was conceived as a piloting study in nature. Owing to the piloting nature, as a part of its investigation – this study included a questionnaire survey with a very small sample size. Naturally the very low response rate makes it quite difficult, if not impossible, for this study to draw generalization from the results. But due to a number of consultations/interactions, side by side with desk review, done through some qualitative methods, this study was able to capture diverse but inter-connected aspects in the areas being investigated. Hence, the strength of this study lies in its approach, which is more towards ‘interpretivism’ than ‘positivism’, as the former not only gives culturally and historically situated interpretations, but also deals with meanings, motivations and values of social actors, structures and patterns.

To have better understanding, this study deals with five research organizations of Bangladesh belong to five differing typologies including *public university* (University of Dhaka), *research degree institute under a public university* (Institute of Bangladesh Studies), *public think tank* (Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies), *civil society think tank* (Centre for Policy Dialogue) and *research division under a reputed NGO* (Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC).

Social Science Research Environment at Macro Level

Systematic investigation of this study reveals some impressions regarding the macro level scenario of the social science research sector in Bangladesh as follows:

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) does not have any clear policy or framework for social science research. Among few others, every year it (GoB) allocates funds to Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), the public think tank under Planning Commission. BIDS is responsible for carrying out socio-economic research and supporting to prepare technical framework and background paper of five year plans. Other than BIDS, there are a number of actors active in the sector for carrying out social science research.

Soon after independence, the Government of Bangladesh founded Bangladesh Social Science Research Council (BSSRC) with an idea that it would facilitate social science research. But unfortunately this Council hardly could play its expected role as the leadership of BSSRC was captured by the bureaucrats right after the political change over¹ in 1975.

Earlier, before independence, the social science research had wide constituency and those were accepted by the political parties as well that expedited the process of achieving an independent and sovereign land called Bangladesh. In other words, these research works had tremendous macro impacts for creating socio-political changes. But at present the social science researches have gone quite isolated from the political agenda of the country, and have been more donor-driven. As a result, hardly these could create widened impacts over the society.

Although Bangladesh Government has developed an empowering and forward looking education policy known as National Education Policy 2010 but unfortunately this policy is yet to be implemented. The existing education system of the country is fragmented and is not conducive for making inquisitive minds; rather there is an increasing tendency that contributes in making competitive minds due to which the students in general remain abstained from getting absorbed in availing research degree or building career in the research field.

The reality of the research sector in Bangladesh suggests there is no public – private partnership in case of mobilizing funds for (social science) research. Environment at all three spheres (macro, meso and micro) requires fine-tuning and further improvements.

The study finds that adequate fund support is not being planned centrally, which is a big problem in the research sector of Bangladesh. This fund shortage problem exists at all levels of social science research environment that plays a vital role for not carrying out fundamental research. As a result, at present the sector is dominated by the donor driven research. At the same time, the research sector as a whole suffers from shortage of dataset to understand the

¹ Assassination of father of the nation Bangabandhu Shekh Mujibur Rahman

overall status of social science research in Bangladesh. Also there exists very limited scope for exchanging research experiences or learning from each other.

Social Science Research Environment at Meso Level

The overall research environments in the (public) universities in Bangladesh are not conducive for the social science researchers. Universities are resource poor but the overall environment offers more freedom to the Faculty members. On the other hand, the non-governmental research entities (civil society think tank or research division of a very large NGO) can mobilize adequate funds for research but the researchers of these organizations enjoy relatively less freedom due to strict working hours and other rules and regulations. The researchers belong to the public think tank has fund support from the government and at the same time, the researchers enjoy relatively more freedom than the researchers belong to the non-governmental entities.

This study finds that the faculties cum researchers get demotivated in carrying out research due to the existing inadequate support systems (in all steps of a research starting from idea formulation to publication/dissemination) in the universities. Also they are sufferers of lengthy bureaucratic process. All these used to lead them either to get involved with consultancy work or to teach students in the private universities. Considering the level of efforts and monetary aspects, most of the faculties remain abstained from doing research; rather they prefer to deliver lectures in the non-public universities.

Contrarily, the facilities, support mechanisms and working environments in other research entities (such as, think tanks – both private and public, and research division under a reputed NGO) are quite more congenial for carrying out research. At the same time, the researchers in these organizations usually get more incentives (both monetary and non-monetary). The research finding suggests that the civil society think tank can secure very large amount of funds compared to all other research organizations under this study. Also it is found that with the extent of favorable support mechanism, the nature of the problems faced by the researchers varies. This report further explores different areas, including facilities, capabilities, training, incentives that affect any (social science) research.

The scholars belong to the universities are comparatively more sufferers in terms of funding as well as mentoring support, facilities, training opportunities, and scope for publications.

Social Science Research Environment at Micro Level

The micro level environment for social science research basically captured the behaviour and characteristics of the social science researchers in terms of qualification and career path, training and capability, incentives at individual level, publications, collaboration, networks, and so on. The study findings suggest that the environment at micro level is mixed for the researcher groups (i.e. faculties, researchers and research scholars) and there are many areas that are to be improved.

Recommendations

It is vital that the country lacks an official policy or framework for carrying out social science research. It is understandable that each and every research will not contribute to the policies but they are to be done systematically following a scientific methodology and the value that these add must be published/disseminated in a manner so that the research outputs are utilized properly. This study reminds that the sector requires a conducive environment, and the researchers are to be capable to deal with the research problems. For ensuring these, a national level framework for social science research is to be developed and agreed. In other words, concerted efforts are needed to agree grand plans for carrying out social science research all over the country. More importantly, all macro, meso and micro level environments for social science research demand further improvements that would help producing quality research in the days to come. This report deems that more studies of this nature should be undertaken in the developing countries including the ones selected for piloting so that those help deriving a systematic framework to compare the research environment across countries and across time.

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Acronyms

ARDD	Agriculture and Rural Development Division
APD	Academy for Planning and Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BFPA	Bangladesh Family Planning Association
BSSRC	Bangladesh Social Science Research Council
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BARC	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
BER	Bureau of Economic Research
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BB	Bangladesh Bank
BPA	Bangladesh Population Association
BEA	Bangladesh Economic Association
CSS	Centre for Social Studies
CARASS	Centre for Advanced Research in Arts and Social Sciences
CTI	Centre for Trade and Investment
COFOG	Classification of Functions of Government
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CUS	Centre for Urban Studies
CPMR	Centre for Population Management and Research
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
DU	University Of Dhaka
DCIs	Data Collection Instruments
DFID	Department For International Development
DG	Director General
ERC-IBS	Enhancement Research Capabilities - Institute Of Bangladesh Studies

EPMS	Electronic Performance Monitoring System
EASC	East Asia Study Center
EoI	Expression of Interest
ED	Executive Director
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FBCCI	The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FY	Financial Year
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GNI	Gross National Income
GED	General Economics Division
GNP	Gross National Product
GE	Gross Expenditure
GDN	Global Development Network
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEQEP	Higher Education Quality Enhancement Program
HRDD	Human Resources Development Division
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IPID	Industry And Physical Infrastructure Division
IBS	Institute of Bangladesh Studies
IBA	Institute of Business Administration
IHE	Institute of Health Economics
ISWR	Institute of Social Welfare and Research
ISRT	Institute of Statistical Research and Training
INFS	Institute of Nutrition And Food Sciences
IBS	Institute of Bangladesh Studies
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGI	Local Government Institute
MIC	Middle Income Country
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M.Phil	Master of Philosophy
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NIPORT	National Institute of Population Research and Training

NGOAB	NGO Affairs Bureau
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PKSF	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation
PIDE	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
PPRC	Power and Participation Research Centre
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PSD	Population Studies Division
REF	Research Endowment Fund
RED	Research and Evaluation Division
RSC	Rural Study Centre
RDA	Rural Development Academy
RIB	Research Initiative Bangladesh
R&D	Research and Development
SSR	Social Science Research
SMEs	Small And Medium Enterprises
TUP	Targeting Ultra Poor
UIS	UNESCO Institute For Statistics
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNICEF	United National Children Fund
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWS	Women For Women Society

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit....”

Rabindranath Tagore

1.1 Introduction

This report is an outcome of a Global development Network (GDN) supported research project entitled “Doing Research: Assessing the Environment of Social Science Research in Bangladesh and India”. Although social science research is, more specifically, a truth-seeking activity aimed at contributing to existing knowledge, generating new knowledge, or for application to some specific problem related to human action and interaction but one of the major challenges of understanding the research environment across a wide range of contexts is the lack of studies and data for analysis from developing countries. Therefore, this project seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors (pertaining to policy framework, institutional factors, and informal relations) that influence the organization of social science research (SSR), its quality, quantity and social relevance. One of the objectives of the proposed project is to contribute to filling that gap.

Though this study is undertaken with the main purpose of assessing SSR environment from a comparative perspective of two countries, India and Bangladesh, the present draft version of the Report focuses only on Bangladesh. The environment for doing SSR is determined by many factors and a complex interplay among them at various levels of analysis. The institutional culture determines the incentives for undertaking SSR by the individual researchers. Again, the institutions of various types such as the universities or the think tanks that undertake research in an environment is influenced by regulatory policies pursued by the government, institutional mandate and its policies including the funding mechanism and no less important is the agency of the individual researchers.

This compilation seeks to provide a glimpse of SSR in Bangladesh by focusing on the environment at three levels: individual level, institutional level and external level. Given the complexity of the policy making, this study did explore how the social science research is being conducted, its nature and implications that reveal the state of SSR in Bangladesh. It further explores as to what extent this research output is translated into policy making by the different policy actors.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

The value of social science research in the context of the national development process cannot be underestimated. Social transformation is a complex process; and, at any point of time, the country is characterized by a myriad of problems, inequities and ambiguities for which there are no technological or quick fixes. A social science research throws light on social problems, existing inequities and ambiguities. It analyzes the facts about them, evaluates options available and constructs plans for their solution.

As in most developing countries, social science competence is a scarce resource in Bangladesh. The country is in need of a social scientific development that corresponds to its further progress. An assessment of the existing environment under which the social science research is being carried out in a country like Bangladesh is a call of the time and it is relevant for both the producers (researchers) and the users (policy makers) of social science research.

1.3 Research questions and objectives

Keeping in mind the broad theme of the project entitled ‘Doing Research’ and a survey of literature, this study deals with the following research questions (although in practice, the coverage of the Report goes beyond the questions listed below).

Research Questions

1. How are professional social science researchers trained/prepared in the two countries?
2. What are the factors bringing researchers into social science research?-
3. Is there any difference between the levels of motivation and aspirations with respect to social science research in the two countries?
4. How is mode and quantum of funding related to research in social sciences?
5. Is research in social sciences influenced by policy or vice-versa?
6. What are the roles played by political, social and economic factors in influencing social science research?
7. What are the roles played by networks in social science research?
8. How do the researchers disseminate their research in the two countries?
9. What are the mechanisms to assure quality of research in the two countries?
10. How are journals utilized in dissemination of research in social sciences?

Research Objectives

1. To assess existing social science research environment (at individual, institutional and external levels) in Bangladesh
2. To unravel the factors affecting social science research in these two countries.
3. To study the interrelationships between policy environment and social science research in the two countries
4. To study the interrelationship between financing and quality of research in social sciences in the two countries.

5. To compare social science research in India and Bangladesh with respect to their social, political and economic backgrounds.

1.4 Organization of the research report

This report contains six more chapters. The distributions of these chapters are as follows:

Chapter 2: provides the conceptual framework and research methodology

Chapter 3: maps the macro-level social science research environment in Bangladesh

Chapter 4: captures the institutional performance of social science research capacity and outreach

Chapter 5: explores and analyzes the characteristics and behavior of researchers along with their engagements and aspirations.

Chapter 6: captures the inter-connections between policy and social science research

Chapter 7: provides recommendations, future of research and concluding remarks

Chapter 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter seeks to spell out a conceptual framework² to study the environment of SSR in general. The three levels at which the study will be pitched and how does the three levels interact with each other will enable us to unravel the complex process of the when the individuals and the institutions respond to the macro-level policies and respond to each other in their conduct of research. The utility of SSR in terms of its impact on policy making needs to be studied within that framework.

2.1 Conceptual framework for the study

In order to understand and assess the research environment for social sciences, we need to develop a comprehensive understanding of the environment for doing research and identify the factors in a systematic fashion to unravel the interconnections amongst the factors and the levels. This would also help us in identifying a set of indicators to capture the various aspects of doing SSR. In this context, to examine the interconnections between the research inputs and research outputs, we could envisage an educational production function where output is mainly in the form of research publications, and inputs are mainly the human resources which are supported by the financial and physical resources in their engagement with research.

Research output = f (Human resources: students, researchers, faculty, administration; Physical resources: infrastructure, library facilities, and computers; Financial resources: mode of funding, and its adequacy).

The function ‘f’ refers to the complex underlying process of production of research output which entails conversion of the research activity undertaken by the human resources, the students and the teachers. This is one form of an educational production function where the function ‘f’ does not refer to a technically well-defined input-output relationship but instead it depends on the agency of the researchers, their responses, and their level of motivations.

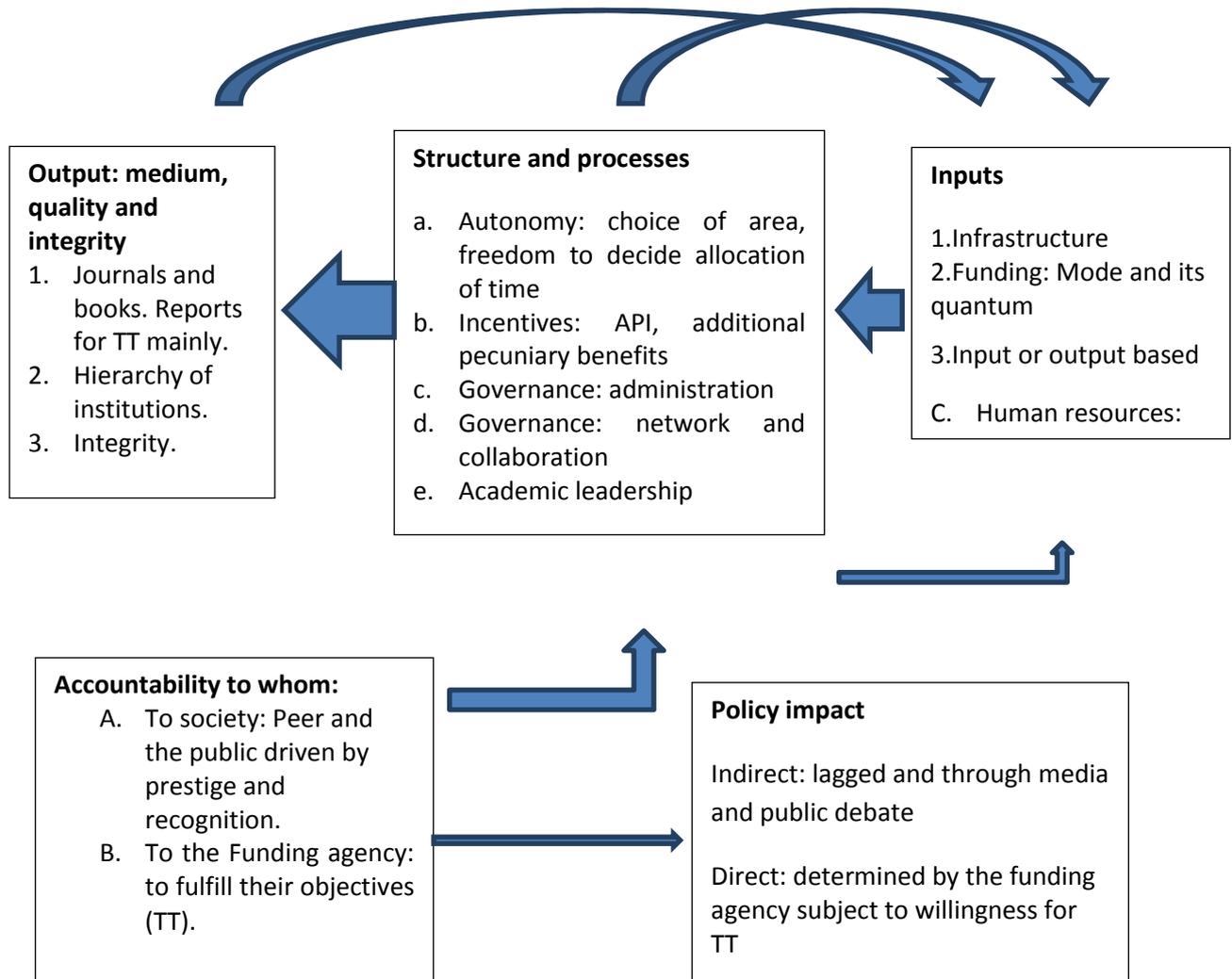
The process for doing research is, however, different from that of a typical input-output function for the production of goods³. Research is carried out by the human capital and so the persons involved, their motivations and responses are crucial to our understanding the environment for doing research. What drives an individual depends on the academic culture of the institution and how the expectations and requirements of the researchers are met which result in the delivery of research output. In order to understand why some of the institutions of higher learning do well and others do not we need to probe deeper. Some institutions are driven by ‘prestige maximization’ in absence of profit maximization, and some institutions under the same set of rules, prefer not to. An important issue is to understand how does

² Basically, this is the same conceptual framework that was conceived and followed in the Indian study.

³ Though in economics of education, the educational production function is invoked to understand and explain the function of an educational institute. This analogy between a firm and an institution has been subject to serious criticisms.

culture matter in educational governance. The students and the teachers deliver within a set of rules and norms required to be complied with by the institutions where they are located. But the institutions are also the spaces which articulate the policies framed by the government to foster research. What the institutions do to encourage the researchers also in a way reflect the policies of the government and its mandate and more importantly the funding mechanism.

Diagram 2.1: A Schematic portrayal of the linkage between funding and policy Impact in University



2.1.1 Structure and processes at the institutions

While analysing the structure and the processes, autonomy of the researcher appears to be the most important hallmark to assess the environment of SSR. Autonomy is narrowly defined here in terms of choice of research area, conduct of research and dissemination of research output. The researchers in the academe are though supposed to be intrinsically motivated, in the competitive world, the incentive structure offered is an important issue. Following are the issues which define the structure and the processes for doing research.

1. **Autonomy:** For universities, research undertaken is mostly autonomous. Focus is more on teaching and research guidance rendered to the research scholars and less on research, depending however on the the nature of the universities in terms of mandates and academic culture. For the TTs, focus is of course more on research and less on teaching and training. Research is mostly funded by outside agencies and hence research output take the shape of reports submitted to the agencies.
2. **Incentives:** How do the researchers, the faculty and the students respond to the policies and career progression scheme is an important issue because this aspect is crucial to the 'f' functional form. This is where the efficiency of SSR policy has to be judged.
3. **Governance and administration:** Doing projects require support from the administration as the funds are generally credited to the university accounts. Since projects are carried out in addition to the other regular assigned responsibilities, it is important that institution administration is cooperative to facilitate the conduct of SSR. Strict adherence of rules in the name of curbing malpractices in the use of projects funding raise the implicit cost of doing projects which turn away many faculty from doing projects or they prefer to locate their research outside the universities.

However for the TT, since projects bring funds and projects are the main activity of the faculty, the administration is generally supportive and facilitating. The TTs are much smaller in size and decision making and academic activity hover around the director who plays a crucial role in guiding and managing the TT.

4. **Network governance and collaboration:** Collaborations both within the country and outside are increasingly adding a new dimension to the governance issue. Running parallelly to the governance reform based on corporate principles as in the case of PBAS, network governance is assuming importance in some of the institutions. More effective for the TTs because of their smaller sizes, and effective leadership. For universities, depending on leadership and other administrative support, it is generally less. The degree of collaboration varies across the institutions and the social science disciplines.
5. **Leadership qualities:** the head of the institutions, the vice-chancellors in case of the universities and the directors in case of think tanks, play an important role in facilitating research and realising the overall mandate of the institutions. The heads are important for exercising their discretion and using of autonomy to foster a culture of research so important.

2.1.2 Research Output

This is the outcome of research in which the funding agencies are interested because here lies the accountability of the researchers and the institutions. The quality of research output

determines the status of the individuals and the institutions. One important issue the Report will seek to address is how to account for the variation in quality and quantity of research intra-institutions and inter-institutions, across the disciplines and across the regions. The issue is whether there exists a trade off between the quality and the quantity.

2.1.3 Research integrity

In SSR, it is extremely difficult to assess the quality of research because of the differences in perspectives to understand the social reality. There are subtleties in the conduct of research. The funding agency may influence the process of research to exercise control over the research output, the concluding remarks of Report. In a way, the integrity of doing research will also determine the social utility of research. Research integrity is however contestable as subjectivities are involved in the choice of research paradigms and research methodologies.

2.1.4 Policy impact: the issue of accountability

Research areas and freedom in its conduct: Since the universities are largely autonomous and the focus is on knowledge generation, policy impact is not direct. It can affect the policy through the generation of informed debate and providing inputs to the policy actors and the committees and commissions formed. There is also a good deal of research which is focused on theory. Research methodology is determined by the researcher. Quality may suffer because of poor training, lack of knowledge about the suitable research methodology, lack of accountability, and absence of monitoring. The impact on policy could take time. But for the TTs, it is often direct if the projects area awarded by the government agencies, departments and ministries with mandates. For TTs, the research topics are often given by the funding agencies, which explains why the policy impact is stronger and direct. It all depends on how well does it serve the political establishments.

2.2 Research Methodology

This study seeks to understand social science research at three inter-connected spheres – individual (micro), institutional (meso) and external (macro) level environment for social science research.

This study initially planned to deal with seven different research organizations of varied typologies but finally due to some valid reasons it dropped 2 organizations⁴ from the list and finally did deal with 5 organizations as shown in Table 2.1 below.

⁴ These two organizations were Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) and Institute of Education and Development (IED). Both of these organizations have been functional under the umbrella of BRAC/BRAC University. For selecting these organizations, years of inception were given priority, but finally this study dropped these two organizations with an understanding that the collected information will not be commendable enough in terms of variations. So from BRAC, this study deals only with Research and evaluation Division (RED).

Table 2.1: Sample Organizations by Typology (for Bangladesh)

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION		NAME OF ORGANIZATION	REMARK
Think Tank			
<i>Public</i>		Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)	
<i>Private</i>		Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)	
Public Academia			
<i>University</i>		University of Dhaka (DU)	
<i>Research Institute</i>		Institute of Bangladesh (IBS)	Under Rajshahi University
Non-governmental			
<i>Research Division</i>		Research and Evaluation Division (RED)	Under BRAC, a reputed NGO

By design, this is an attempt for an exploratory as well as descriptive study, and the approach of this investigation is more towards ‘interpretivism’ than ‘positivism’, as the former not only gives culturally and historically situated interpretations, but also deals with meanings, motivations and values of social actors, structures and patterns (Raddon, Undated). Norms of exploratory as well as descriptive research has been applied for collecting data and information on every aspect/phase of the study.

2.2.1 Data Collection

To meet the research objectives and get the research done in Bangladesh, relevant data and information both at primary and secondary level were collected. To answer the research questions, this study followed a mixture of methods (both quantitative and qualitative). To have a better understanding of the qualitative data collection – please see Annex Table 2.1, Annex Table 2.2 and Annex Table 2.3. The sample distribution for the questionnaire survey has been discussed in Chapter 5.

Methods used

The methods for research include:

Document review (Secondary data)

All through the study, the secondary data/information were collected from different sources including relevant books, articles, journals, official reports, research reports, newspapers and websites. The review was limited to the critical information that the research team needed. Basically, this served gathering of pre-assessment information and listing of all possible sources of existing information. The relevant written materials were used to undertake this study and were referred wherever applicable.

Key Informant Interview (KII)

The techniques can include interviews with individuals or groups. Loosely structured interviews were conducted with informants in GoB agencies, Public universities, private universities, think tank organizations, NGOs. The focus was on obtaining factual information that was crosschecked with other sources. A total of KII interview were conducted with different types of stakeholders.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The techniques were conducted with community influential to measure prospects of sustainability of services rendered through short and long-term projects and interventions. FGD was conducted with a group of 8-12 carefully selected participants with similar backgrounds. The facilitator used a discussion guideline, a record keeper who recorded comments and observations.

Questionnaire Survey

This method allowed the surveyor to gain information from a large number of people in a structured way according to specific questions, often in ways for statistical analysis. These ranged from very simple to complex. They included structured set of closed questions (yes/no or multiple choice questions) and they included open-ended questions such as semi-structured interviews. Fixed-choice or fixed response questionnaires are good for gathering data that was needed to be analyzed statistically, while open-ended or free-response questions were particularly good for determining people's feelings and attitude.

2.2.2 Preparation of DCIs

In line with the objectives of study and the variables, jointly with Jawaharlal Nehru University (with inputs from GDN) the data collection instruments (DCIs) for respective groups and checklist had been developed.

Research instruments have been designed for four categories of respondents:

1. **Research Students:** This category covers the students pursuing Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) and Doctoral Degrees (PhDs) in social sciences. They are being administered with a semi-structured questionnaire which is divided into five sections-identification details, training and capability, facilities, publication, and socio-economic environment. The questionnaire uses "Research Scholars" for Research Students as they are usually known by the term in Bangladesh.
2. **Teaching Faculty:** This category covers the faculty members of social sciences in universities. As they do both teaching and research in social sciences, they present themselves as a distinct category. They are being administered with a semi-structured questionnaire which is divided into seven sections.
3. **Researchers:** This category refers to researchers who are not engaged in teaching. These scholars trained in social sciences generally work for think-tanks, non-government organizations (NGOs) and other agencies in the development sector. They are also being administered with a semi-structured questionnaire, divided into seven sections.
4. **Key Informants:** This refers to the persons in leadership positions in universities, think-tanks and NGOs. A tentative list of such key informants includes chairpersons at the centres, heads of departments, and deans at universities; directors and such

senior people at think-tanks and NGOs. A checklist has been prepared to interview these researchers in leadership positions.

Questionnaires are designed to understand the processes involved in social science research. The questions, thus, seek to gather perceptions, views and unravel different aspects related to research. There are very few questions on facts or crude number related to any aspect. The outline of the data collection instruments are given in Annex Table 2.4.

2.2.3 Pretest and Finalization of DCIs

All data collection instruments used for collecting relevant information was pre-tested to assess how relevant the questions/items are, how well the respondents understand the questions, and whether there are problems in administering the instruments. Pre-testing of the instruments took place with the people other than the samples. On the basis of the pre-test results, the draft data collection instruments was modified and finalized. The final version was then printed and necessary copies were done for field data collection. The pre-testing interview team included, among others, the Consultant and the other researchers. This ensured the quality of the interviews, understanding of the field situation, and thereby quality of the final data collection.

Recruitment and Training of Staff

This activity was consisted of recruitment and training of Field Enumerator, Supervisors, FGD Moderators, Note Takers/Recorded Data Transcriber, FGD Organizers, Research Assistants. All these staffs were recruited by inviting and interviewing eligible candidates; and in selecting these personnel 'gender equality' was strictly adhered to. A two day training session has been conducted. The topics of training included, among others, overall objective of the study, data collection instruments, sample drawing techniques, techniques of interview, techniques of conducting Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Key Informant Interviews (KII). Training was conducted through classroom lectures, demonstration interviews, role playing, field practice; review of lessons learned and suggested solutions. The training was provided by the Team Leader of this study in Bangladesh.

2.2.4 Qualitative data analysis

Following is the outline of approaches to qualitative data analysis:

1. Documentation of the data and the process of data collection
2. Organization/categorization of the data into concepts
3. Connection of the data to show how one concept may influence another
4. Corroboration/legitimization, by evaluating alternative explanations, disconfirming evidence, and searching for negative cases
5. Representing the account (reporting the findings)

The steps that were followed for qualitative data analysis are summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Steps to Qualitative data analysis

Step	Title	Task
01	<i>Data collection</i>	Data were collected through interviewing selected personnel. The data collection methods involved in-depth interviewing and key informant interviewing
02	<i>Script preparation</i>	Collected data were transformed into detailed written scripts
03	<i>Identify and define segments</i>	The written scripts were read and analyzed to identify and define different segments relevant to study objectives and research questions
04	<i>Coding and editing</i>	Coding and editing were done by means of the defined set of segments
05	<i>Revisiting</i>	The scripts were then reviewed in line with the defined segments, and searched for new findings
06	<i>Recoding</i>	If there appeared insights from the reviewed scripts, the segments and codes were revisited. Coding and editing were revised in tune with the new findings.
07	<i>Enumeration</i>	The recoding were followed by enumerating of qualitative data
08	<i>Creating Hierarchical Category Systems</i>	Such coding systems were created (if possible) through secondary analysis and brainstorming of the core team members. Enabling such systems created a greater opportunity to find relationship among categories
09	<i>Memoing</i>	The idea involved writing memos of ideas and insights that were achieved and incorporating those memos as additional data for analysis.
10	<i>Examining Relationships and Displaying Data</i>	The process of examining relationships was captured in a matrix that showed how different concepts are connected, or perhaps what causes are linked with what effects
11	<i>Corroborating and Validating Results</i>	The results were validated through validation workshops and meetings with personnel and stakeholders relevant to the process.
12	<i>Drawing Conclusions</i>	Conclusions were drawn from the qualitative data analysis keeping in mind ‘ <i>How credible was the information and validation</i> ’ and ‘ <i>Were statements made in response to the research questions, or were they spontaneous?</i> ’

2.2.5 Result Analyses

To address the research questions, efforts were made to analyze the data and information that were collected under this study. A systematic procedure was followed in this regard. The available data and information collected under this study were coded, electronically recorded, processed and finally, analyzed using relevant software/package (SPSS Win and MS Excel).

2.3 Limitations of the study

The most challenging part of this research was that this inquiry dealt with the researcher groups (scholars, researchers and faculty) as its respondents. This study finds dealing with researcher as respondents was very difficult as rather than giving responses smoothly, most of the time they remained suspicious/nosy about the objective of the research. One limitation that the study team faced was the length of the questionnaire. Dealing with a lengthy question was another challenge to get time and responses. Some institutions were not welcoming especially for allowing the team to interact with their researchers. During the fieldwork, the

summer vacation was on in the universities that also played constraining role in getting respondent groups. This study dealt with a very small sample size that limits the team to generalize the results that came through the survey.

Chapter 3

MAPPING THE MACRO-LEVEL SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT IN BANGLADESH

3.1 Situating Bangladesh: South Asian Perspective

In order to understand where Bangladesh is situated among few other South Asian countries, few socio-economic indicators are chosen from the database developed by UNESCO. The data of these indicators from five South Asian countries including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are summarized in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: *Socio-economic Scenario of Five South Asian Countries in 2013*

Socio-economic Indicator	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Total population (<i>in thousands</i>)	156595	1252140	27797	182143	21273
Annual population growth (%)	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.7	1
Population aged 14 years and younger (<i>in thousands</i>)	46977	364250	9633	61610	5353
Rural population (% of total population)	71	68	83	63	85
Total fertility rate (<i>births per women</i>)	2.2	2.5	2.5	3.3	2.3
Infant mortality rate (<i>per 1,000 live births</i>)	33	44	34	69	8
Life expectancy at birth (<i>years</i>)	70	66	68	66	74
Prevalence of HIV (<i>% of population aged 15-49 years</i>)	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1
Poverty head count ratio at 2 PPP\$ a day (<i>% of popln.</i>)	76.5	68.8	57.2	60.2	23.8
GDP per capita (<i>PPP\$</i>)	1851	3813	1457	2741	61.46
Annual GDP Growth (%)	6.2	3.2	4.9	4	6.4
Total debt service (<i>% of GNI</i>)	1.2	1.6	1.2	2	3.1
GDP in billions (<i>PPP\$</i>)	286	4716	40	491	125

Source: UNESCO Database (*UNESCO website*) (compiled by Author)

The table suggests that the scenario of Bangladesh in terms of almost all these socio-economic indicators is comparatively better than the other four countries. In his lecture at Dhaka last year, the Noble Laureate A K Sen appreciated this progress that Bangladesh made and foresaw this as Bangladesh's stepping in to the group of LMI Countries (Daily Star, 2014). He further remarked that Bangladesh has performed better in social indicators (such as gender equity, women's empowerment, mortality rate, life expectancy, immunization etc), which are remarkably better than India. Finally calculating through World Bank Atlas method, it (WB) announced on July 1 this year that Bangladesh has graduated from the lower income country to the status of lower-middle income country (WB website). Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, affirmed as soon as this announcement made that Bangladesh would become a middle-income country (MIC) within the next three years before the targeted 2021 since the country has already stepped into that stair through becoming a lower middle-income country (The Daily Sun, 2015).

3.2 Gross Expenditure on Research and Development

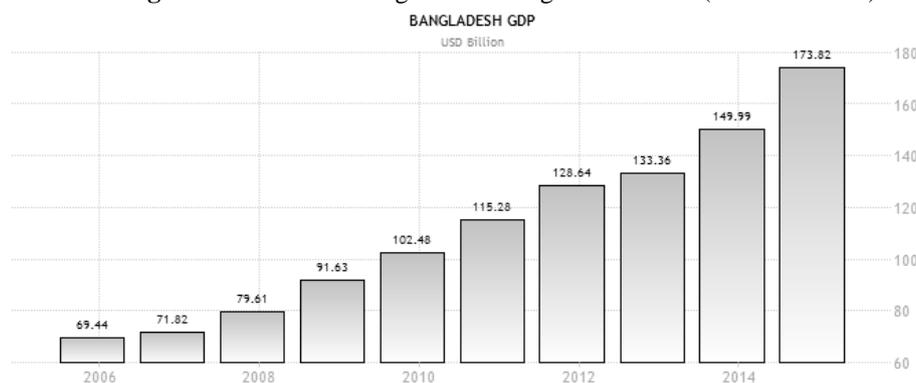
In practice, scientific knowledge is applied to assess current conditions and future prospects in relation to sustainable development. Scientists usually advance their knowledge on policy-relevant issues including growth in resource consumption rates, demographic trends, climate change and environmental degradation, and so on (UNESCO, Undated).

Investment share of GDP, in providing more precise complementary indications on the level of financial resources devoted to Research and Development (R&D). Basically, the expenditure on R&D is an index of a country's orientation to science and technology (GED, 2012). This indicator is usually required "to assess the level and trends of R&D expenditure in relation to GDP, at a given point of time". It is thought that the adequate R&D funding that is commensurate with economic growth and national income is necessary for ensuring sustainable development (UNESCO, Undated). In devising long-term strategies for development, changes in R&D investments in these and other areas matter.

At the national level, the availability of these data depends on the existence and frequency of R&D surveys. To construct this indicator at the international level, the GDP data can be obtained from the World Bank whilst those relating to R&D expenditure can be obtained through UNESCO Institute for Statistics' (UIS) international surveys on scientific research and experimental development.

Although the temporal data for GDP⁵ of Bangladesh, showing an increasing trend, is found in the database of World Bank (see Diagram 3.1 below) but the Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D as a Percent of GDP for Bangladesh has not been found in UNESCO database.

Diagram 3.1: GDP in Bangladesh during 2006 – 2015 (in billion USD)



Source: World Bank website

The following table (**Table 3.2**) contains the proportion of GDP invested in R&D during 2011 – 2013 to South Asian countries as well as few selective developed countries (with proportion of GDP for R&D >1.6). It is clear from the table that the data for this indicator are not reported for most of the South Asian countries, indicating R&D surveys hardly take place

⁵ The gross domestic product (GDP) measures of national income and output for a given country's economy. The gross domestic product (GDP) is equal to the total expenditures for all final goods and services produced within the country in a stipulated period of time, usually a year.

in these countries. At the same time, the value of this indicator for the South Asian countries those reported (including India) are found quite low compared to the developed countries.

Table 3.2: *Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development as a Percent of GDP*

South Asian Countries	2011	2012	2013	Developed Countries	2011	2012	2013
Afghanistan	na	na	na	Australia	2.39	na	na
Bangladesh	na	0.62 ⁶	na	Germany	2.80	2.89	2.92
Bhutan	na	na	na	Japan	3.25	3.39	na
India	0.8	0.81	na	Netherlands	1.86	2.03	2.16
Myanmar	na	na	na	Norway	1.68	1.65	1.65
Nepal	0.3	na	na	Sweden	3.39	3.39	3.41
Pakistan	na	0.33	na	UK	1.77	1.78	1.72
Sri Lanka	0.16	na	na	US	2.74	2.76	2.79

Source: UNESCO Database (UNESCO website) (compiled by Author)

Although no R&D data of Bangladesh has been found in the UNESCO database but the perspective plan of GoB (GED, 2012) reported that Bangladesh spends 0.62 per cent of GDP on R&D, which is higher than some LMI countries.

3.3 Evolution of Research System in Bangladesh: Macro Scenario

In order to comprehend the evolution of research or knowledge generation system in Bangladesh, we are to consider the different phases that changed the structure of this very State (country) time to time along with the intermingling of global and local contexts. If we look back – we see the educational institutions and system had been evolved from the colonial periods of British Raj. After 1947, the people of the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) had to face neo-colonial phase. After long democratic movements and a nine-month long bloody liberation war against Pakistani *junta*, a new sovereign country – Bangladesh – was born in this earth.

During colonial phase, side by side with the Britishers - the most inhabitants in the Eastern Bengal had been exploited/governed by the Hindu landed aristocracies (mostly absentee *zamindars*). Although all of them were human beings but coincidentally most of them were Muslims by religion and poor in terms of any economic as well as social indicators. With the increment in the degree of exploitation/deprivation over time, these affected community people had to revolt and fight against this system time to time. At this outset in 1921, a University was founded in Dacca (now Dhaka), which was known as University of Dacca. Although the exposed intention of establishing this University by the British Raj was to educate as well as enlighten inhabitants of this part of the country but echoing the substance of Lord Macaulay's 'minutes of education', the hidden objective was to perpetuate their rule over the *natives* forever.

As Lord Macaulay suggested to employ 'the fund' in teaching in English as it was better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic. He believed that it would be possible to make natives

⁶ This data has been collected from GED (2012).

of this country thoroughly good English scholars, but considering impossibility to educate the whole body of the people with limited resources, Lord Macaulay emphasized to form (Edwards, 1967):

a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

But the hidden agenda of the British Raj was not succeeded as having gained knowledge, the faculties as well as the students started questioning the system and the society around them. During 1960s, the faculties of Dacca University had conducted a body of social science research works that established the clear disparity in all respect between Eastern and Western wing of Pakistan. The intelligentsia got so motivated due to the mass demand that was being alive on the street. It was due to their existential crisis as well as the urge of forward moving. The internal dynamics across the society played a vital role. During Pakistan regime (August, 1947 – March, 1971), this part of the country (now Bangladesh) experienced two economies, but the independent Bangladesh experienced emergence of middle class (or intermediate class) that took advantage of accumulating capital irrespective of public or private entities. Also this class contributed in moulding/changing the knowledge system at tertiary level education.

At this stage, the whole world started suffering from oil crisis and cold war. This oil crisis and cold war helped building a new knowledge system, which is popularly known as neo-liberalism. And this system has been operationalized through structural adjustment programs. The key principles of this system included deregulation, liberalization and privatization. With these changes, the research system also started changing and Bangladesh was not an exception: the researchers turned to mere ‘consultants’ or ‘contractors’ due to an active demand of research all over in a new packaging known as ‘consultancy services’.

At the same time, the government started allowing emergence of private universities all over the country. Side by side, a trend was found that huge numbers of students went abroad, particularly in the United States, and got enrolled in different North American Universities, not for higher studies but for their basic (undergraduate level) education. These made the atmosphere of public university drier. Due to geo-political as well as local contextual reasons, private/non-government organizations became relatively influential in the sector and on the other hand, the governmental organizations were politicized.

The common practice in the developed countries is that the research work is substantially supported centrally by the government, which is not true in a country like Bangladesh. Current political culture of the country does not help promoting a knowledge-friendly atmosphere. At the same time, the existing education system in Bangladesh, which fragmented as well as faulty to some extent, does not promote students to be research-minded.

To have better understanding, the next two sections deal with education policies and importance of research, and about the neo-liberal shifts of the higher education in Bangladesh.

3.4 Education Policies and Importance of Research

Although education is considered as the backbone of any nation, as well as the key to a nation's development, but unfortunately it is a point of disappointment for the whole nation that since the Independence of Bangladesh, the country could not implement any Education Policy in the last four and half decades.

The first Education Policy was formulated under the initiative of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as well as the leadership of Professor Kudrat e Khuda based on the needs of an independent country. But this policy could not be implemented due to the dreadful killing of Bangabandhu and his family members in August 1975 by the conspiratorial forces of anti-liberation faction to take revenge of their defeat that followed series of actions to destroy the values, goals and spirit of the Liberation War including the Education Policy. During the subsequent years, six more education policy/reports were prepared but they also remained unimplemented.

Another Education Policy (Education Policy 2000) was undertaken by Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, when she came to power in 1996 but that too was shelved and nullified with the change of government in 2001. Again in 2008, following the overwhelming victory, the Awami League-led Grand Alliance under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina formed the government that reinitiated and moved ahead with the process of formulating a National Education Policy and its implementation.

The Awami League manifesto to bring about change in the quality of life, Vision 2021 and the promise of establishing a digital Bangladesh drew immense support from the people and that created positive grounds for the realization of these huge possibilities.

Bangladesh Education Commission Report is the first ever education policy of the country that was formulated in 1974. It has given due importance to higher education endorsing it plays a crucial role in the acquisition of learning and in the formation of character. It puts emphasis on 'educational system of high standard' for achieving quick progress of the country. Terming the 'capacity for work' of the citizens as the 'greater national resources', it reminds the truth that social as well as economic progress of the country is dependent upon how these resources are utilized for development. This policy suggests provision for higher education for all irrespective of socio-economic status so that their full development could be possible through discovering their talents and creating an appropriate environment.

This policy deems the importance of research side by side with teaching at tertiary level and considers that 'research makes teaching productive, makes substantial addition to knowledge and enriches human life through its discoveries in important fields of science'. (Khuda, 1974; p 81) Also it helps the teachers to acquire familiarity with modern learning that extends the

frontiers of knowledge and makes for greater competence in teaching (*ibid*; p – 85). For any country, as the Policy suggests, aspiring for being progressive and powerful, necessary provision for original and applied research must be there.

For the universities, this first education policy gives emphasis on carrying out original research in all fields connected with national development. It has been expected that the universities themselves will determine the subjects in which research should be carried on without any repetition. (Khuda, 1974; p – 86)

According to the current education policy known as National Education Policy 2010, one of the objectives of education is to ensure quality of the higher education in all disciplines and motivate students in research and to create a congenial and necessary environment of research within the country through the cultivation of knowledge and sciences (GoB, 2010; p - 2).

This policy also gives importance to knowledge generation, particularly at the tertiary level education. Among other aims and objectives of higher education identified in this document, the following two specifically deal with knowledge generation/research:

- to expand the horizon of knowledge through ceaseless cultivation of knowledge and through multidimensional, original and practical research
- to innovate new areas of knowledge through cultivation, research and creativity (GoB, 2010; p - 23)

In order to execute higher education, this Education Policy suggests a number of strategies. Among them, there are few that care about research. The key points of these very strategies are encapsulated in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1 *Proposed strategies for carrying research at University level*

First, the higher level degrees (Masters, M.Phil or Ph.D) are considered as specialized education for those who are interested in research and teaching positions at tertiary level. In order to ensure pursuance of research, graduate programs are to be introduced in all departments of all universities. (7: p - 24)

Second, at the universities, special emphasis is given on original research and it has been expected teachers and students together would take part in research work. To carry on innovative research, adequate as well as attractive funds are to be made available to the brilliant students. Also larger number of fellowships should be there along with the recently introduced fellowship (such as, *Bangabandhu* fellowship). (10: p - 24)

Third, the teachers at tertiary level are to be swayed to carry on their research in their own institutions. In order to strengthen research activities, measures are to be taken to initiate institution-based consultancy. “Teachers involved with such [research] projects will be entitled to standard honorarium”. To evaluate and assess these research activities at university level, a policy guideline should be formulated. (19: p - 25)

Source: National Education Policy (2010)

Although Bangladesh Government has developed these education policies that are expected to help growing its population with scientific, secular, liberal, humane, progressive and forward-looking mindset but the irony is, as said earlier, no such policies have been implemented so far. Rather over time, the higher education sector in Bangladesh embraces neoliberal shifts bringing in private universities in the scene. The following section discusses this aspect.

3.5 Higher Education Sector in Bangladesh: Shifting towards Neoliberalism

Perhaps with introduction of the Private University Act 1992, the higher education sector in Bangladesh started shifting towards neoliberalism⁷ (Kabir, 2010). The Act endorsed that having got permission from the government – any well wishing persons, association, charitable funds, or institutions of the country can set up private universities. Afterwards, this Act was amended two times – in 1998 and in 2010.

In its recent amendment, the government has brought some major changes in the Act (known as Private University Act 2010) to regulate private universities. Such as existence of a formal board of trustees (with minimum 9 to maximum 21 members), to have a University space (own or rental) of at least 25,000 square feet, to have a reserve fund worth tk. 50 million for Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitans, and tk. 30 million for other metropolitan areas and tk. 15 million for other areas and so on.

Earlier in December 2004, the World Bank (WB) identified seven major crises in the higher education sector of Bangladesh. The problems mainly included the decline of the quality of higher education, and limitations of the existing legal framework for both public and private universities. On the basis of this, the WB made recommendations to the government as conditions to its financial and technical support for developing this sector. This paved the way to formulate a twenty year strategic plan for the higher education sector, known as “Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2006-2026” (SPHE), in 2006 (University Grants Commission, 2006).

Although the SPHE document was prepared by the Bangladeshi academics but instead of properly considering the indigenous philosophy or socio-politico-economic context, the neoliberal philosophy (or WB philosophy) was incorporated in this record that helped

⁷ ‘Neoliberalism’ is a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights (cf. especially Mises 1962; Nozick 1974; Hayek 1979). This conviction further suggests upholding the belief that the state ought to be minimal or at least drastically reduced in strength and size, and that any intrusion by the state beyond its sole legitimate purpose is unacceptable (ibid.). These beliefs could apply to the international level as well (Friedman 2006). It promotes spread of global capitalism and consumerism (Chomsky 1999; Touraine 2001; Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005; Plehwe *et al.* 2006).

privatizing the higher education sector of the country (Kabir, 2013). In order to formulate the SPHE, it is fact that the UGC followed a process through which it attempted to ensure participation of people from different spheres of the society but further investigation suggests that there was no student, parent or community representation in the six expert groups formed for them (*ibid.*).

In light with the principles of SPHE, the UGC and MoE jointly launched a project called ‘Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project’ (in short, HEQEP) for the higher education sector (World Bank, 2009 and University Grant Commission, 2010). This project covers for components including *promoting academic innovation, building institutional capacity, raising the connectivity capacity of the higher education sector, and project management*. The objectives of these four components are given in Box 3.2.

Box 3.2 Objectives of four components of HEQEP

Objectives for first component

- Establish enabling conditions to enhance the quality and relevance of teaching, learning and research in universities
- Introduce an efficient instrument for the allocation of additional public funds to universities with an emphasis on innovation and accountability

Objectives for second component

- Enhance and improve strategic and institutional capacity both in the UGC and universities

Objectives for third component

- Disenclave Bangladesh universities and integrate them in the globalized world of knowledge

Objectives for fourth component

- Ensure proper implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the project

Source: UGC (2010); WB (2009)

Notably, the main activity for component three was to establish Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN). And it was thought that through subscribing in various libraries the project would also facilitate access to the global repository of knowledge (World Bank, 2009 and University Grant Commission, 2010).

Study by Kabir (2013) observes a nexus between the international financial institutions (IFIs) and the power elite⁸ that played role in infusing neoliberal policies to the higher education sector of Bangladesh. The neoliberal policy agenda, historically and philosophically, has been linked with the structural adjustment policy (SAP) in which a broad range of policies are

⁸ In his study, Kabir (2013) used the concept of ‘power elite’ developed by Mills (1956). According to Mills, “the power elite is composed of men ... in positions to make decisions having major consequences ... they are in command of major hierarchies and organization of modern society. They rule the big corporations, they rule the machinery of the state and claim its progressives..... They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in which now are centered the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy” (cited in Barrow, 2007, p. 404).

recommended by the IFIs for development sector in Bangladesh (Sobhan, 2002). Actually through reforms in policy, the IFIs could get easy access to the higher education sector due to the approving role of the power elite (Kabir, 2013). The expansion of Institute of Business Administration (IBA) at the University of Dhaka (providing computers and constructing buildings) in 1984 was the first WB intervention in the higher education sector in Bangladesh (*ibid*). Kabir (2013) indicated that the power elites in Bangladesh advocated for opening up the higher education sector for the private sector due to which a range of broader neoliberal policies had been incorporated during 1990s. These power elite also played role to convince the government to enact the Private University Act in 1992, which was further repealed in 2010 due to strong criticisms. However, the new Act also confronted condemnation due to significant limitations.

Reality in the higher education sector is that the private universities in Bangladesh pick up the global drift and produce skilled labour for the multinational companies (MNCs) and the developed world. It means the future destinations of the students are being determined not by the urge for gaining knowledge but by the market demand due to which the private universities are found to be more inclined to offer degrees that meet market demands, such as BBA, MBA, Computer Science, and so on. In response to the expansion of private industries, various public universities, particularly IBA and the faculty of business at the University of Dhaka introduced market related degrees. As a result, commodity-centric mentality has been dominating the higher education sector bypassing critical thinking as well as research oriented mind, which in turn endangering the future generation. Due to lack of proper environment for carrying out research, the teachers in public universities are getting compelled to be involved in the private universities, commercial consultancy or research firms, and even in investing money in the stock markets to expand their salaries. These take away a significant number of hours a day hindering their normal duty in the public universities (University Grants Commission, 2009)

3.6 Research Landscape for Bangladesh

As per the mission statement, the Planning Commission of Bangladesh basically formulates national plans such as Perspective Plan, Five Year Plan for the attainment of socio-economic development of the country. Also it prepares Annual Development Plan (ADP) and Revised Annual Development Plan (RADP) as per national plans and formulates necessary policy guidelines in this regard. But to do this, the Commission facilitates supportive role for overall development of the country through formulation of national development plans, policies and conducting research activities.

Side by side with other functions, the Commission seems very serious about research as it is committed to undertake research for socio-economic development, provide incentives in this regard, conduct surveys and investigations to support for effective planning and economic development, and publish reports/journals on those (MoF, 2015).

Besides, there is a dedicated organization in Planning Commission known as Bangladesh Social Science Research Council (BSSRC). The main objective of BSSRC is to carry out

dedicated social science research so that outputs of these research projects could be fed in to the government policy making. Beyond supporting government in the policy making process, BSSRC also serves as a window for providing funds to the scholars who get enrolled in different universities for pursuing MPhil or PhD degree or carrying out a research in the area of social science. Four decades ago, it started as a development project. Basically it worked to support government body at the time of plan formulation and sector analysis through conducting support studies. Even it has been serving for quite a long time but unfortunately due to different governmental inertia, this organization could not be institutionalized.

BSSRC receives research funding from government on a regular basis and following a due procedure, it finances interested as well as qualified research house/consultants for carrying out approved research projects. These research projects are carried out under three different arrangements: 1) promotional research fund to support and inspire young researchers (students pursuing Master, MPhil or PhD degree) or young government officials, 2) fellowship supports for any individual researcher(s), and 3) institutional research fund support to any qualified research houses. Side by side with the budget process, the planning division follows a formal bidding process for funding research projects in the area of social science. Every year this organization seek budget from the government through Planning Division. Basically, an allocation (as research fund) for BSSRC is added in the budget of the Planning Division. At the initial stage, this allocation was relatively very less but it has been now grown a lot: for the last two years it has been receiving an annual allocation of four crore taka. But in practice this money is not being fully utilized as a portion of this budget remains unused every year. Usually it is due to the mismatch of objectives between the two parties (BSSRC and research fund applicants). Very naturally BSSRC wants to fund projects for the research areas that Planning Commission endorses but the applicants used to seek funds for their own research agenda that most of the cases differ with the funder's interest.

The personalities/high officials who were involved with BSSRC at its initial stage had research backgrounds. So they were able to maintain a quality. BSSRC used to publish a compendium in every 2-3 years compiling list of research works done during that time-period. It was helpful for other interested researchers to have a basic idea about the BSSRC supported research works. There is a documentation centre in BSSRC where different issues of compendium are supposed to be archived but recent investigation suggests that these are not properly preserved and not easily accessible.

Over time, particularly soon after the political change over⁹ in 1975, the management people with research background have gone away from this organization and it has long been run by the Administrative people. As a result, BSSRC could not play its expected role in the area of facilitating social science research in Bangladesh.

⁹ In mid August 1975, the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated and the military *junta* came into power.

Alike other countries, once an initiative was taken to establish BSSRC as a national social science research resource hub under a regulatory framework. But finally it was not succeeded as the fund was not utilized due to existing gaps from demand side for funding.

Notably, the BSSRC organized a week long **National Seminar on Social Science Research Methodology** during late December 1982. In this very event, a good number of renowned researchers attended and contributed. As a part of this seminar, an outline of a **National Social Science Research Policy** was shared where the need to make the BSSRC more strengthened and autonomous had been proposed. It was thought that the key function of BSSRC would be to promote social science research in this country and it should support the social scientists of different disciplines belong to both governmental and non-governmental social science institutions. It was thought that the basic approach of this policy should be to generate ideas, opinions and formulate policies and programs for consolidation or political independence through the achievement of economic, social and cultural liberation of the nation as well as of classes and individuals within it. The importance of increasing internal funding to combat the external funds that hinder development of people oriented social science was also felt in this very proposal. But unfortunately this proposed National Policy was not formalized ever due to which the demand for a National Social science Research Policy is still valid.

- *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Social Science Research Methodology*

On the other hand, from its inception, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) has been functioning as a separate entity under Planning Ministry and it was conceived that it would help public policy making and support Planning Commission. So as a think tank, BIDS still supports the Planning Commission. If we look back to the history, BIDS was established back in 1956 (known as Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, in short PIDE) when this Planning Commission was not existing. The researchers from Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) who were working with PIDE actually got involved with the management of BIDS.

Again, the first planning commission of independent Bangladesh was consisted with a group of renowned as well as patriotic economists. So both planning commission and BIDS were being managed with qualified leaderships having almost similar expertise and quality. There has never been any direct linkage between BSSRC and BIDS as BSSRC was running as a project for a long time. The limitations of a project include particular timeframe, fund constraints and specific focus that it could not go beyond. Limited funds were allocated for BSSRC while it was a project. After the political change over in 1975, the concerned economists/experts left the Planning Commission and the vacuum was fulfilled by the Civil Service officials/bureaucrats. As a result, they cannot continue the research tradition and a big gap was created with BIDS, which still prevails. Gradually BIDS started maintaining distance with the Commission and got accustomed with conducting research projects setting agenda on their own.

Systematic investigation under this study suggests that as BIDS is an organization under Planning Ministry, its budget also comes through this Ministry – so it has its accountability to this Line Ministry. The DG of BIDS always attends the monthly coordination meeting held in Planning Commission and discusses. But no discussion takes place in this coordination meeting about how BIDS as a research body will work with the Commission. It is continuing as the problems persisted since long from the both sides. Actually the Commission has to

think how it will utilize the research outputs from BIDS, if we consider demand side but in reality the Commission does not have any strong/systematic demand over them. One limitation is whenever the Commission asks for any research output, BIDS demands a separate fund for that as it (BIDS) does not include any research issue in its research agenda that the Commission asks for. According to the service procurement rule, the Commission can give additional funds to BIDS but perhaps it thinks that in that case the additional funds could be given to the other reputed research firms instead of BIDS. So the commission prefers an open competitive bidding process in this regard.

3.7 Mapping of Actors for Social Science Research in Bangladesh

Since independence, the number of institutional facilities for social science research in Bangladesh has increased substantially. Many of them are wholly meant for research and others undertake research works in addition to their primary responsibility of teaching or training and so on.

Ideally, the Universities under the auspices of University Grants Commission (UGC)¹⁰ carry out research projects. Other than the faculties who usually carry out research projects side by side with their teaching, there are nearly one hundred University based research institutes, a partial list of these is given below:

Box 3.3 *Few University based Research Institutes*

- Bureau of Economic Research (BER) Department of Economics, Dhaka University
- Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR), Dhaka University
- Institute of Statistical Research and Training (ISRT), Dhaka University
- Institute of Nutrition and Food Sciences (INFS) Department of Biochemistry, Dhaka University
- Centre for Population Management and Research (CPMR), Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University
- Institute of Health Economics (IHE), Dhaka University
- Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), Rajshahi University
- Centre for Social Studies (CSS), Department of political Science, Dhaka University
- Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), Department of Geography, Dhaka University
- Rural Study Centre (RSC), Department of Economics, Chittagong University

The above list is by no means exhaustive. There are many other institutional facilities which from time to time undertake research in order to seek answers to different social science research problems and issues.

Diagram 3.2 below gives an idea of the existing institutional facilities for conducting social science research in Bangladesh. Apart from the universities, other organizations/agencies for social science research in Bangladesh include:

¹⁰ The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh is the statutory apex body in the field of higher education in Bangladesh. It was established under the President's Order (P.O.) No. 10 of 1973, which was deemed to have come into force with effect from 16 December 1972.

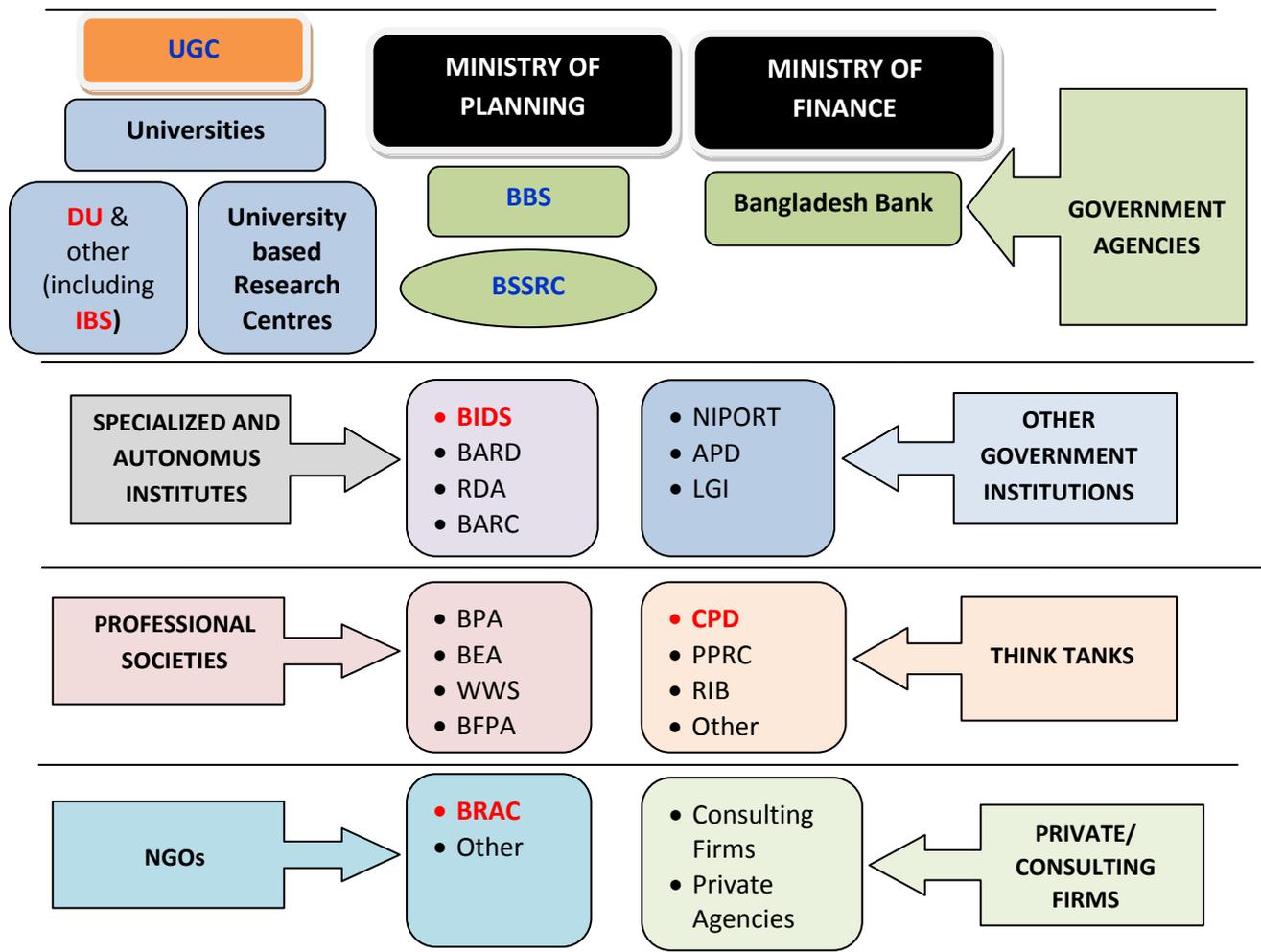
Government Agencies: There are researches which simply generate data periodically for planning and monitoring. This is mainly done by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the Bangladesh Bank. However, to promote research in social sciences, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) under the Ministry of Planning has been created.

Specialized and Autonomous National Institutes: There are some research institutes/agencies where the issues of social and economic development are highlighted. This is mainly done by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), and to some extent by Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Rural Development Academy (RDA) and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC).

Other Government Organizations: Other than Bangladesh Social Science Research Council (BSSRC), there are few other government organizations that used to carry out social science research. These include National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), Academy for Planning and Development, and Local Government Institute.

Professional Societies: Few organizations having the entity of Professional Societies also conduct or commission out social science research. To mention, there are Bangladesh Population Association (BPA), Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA), Women for Women Society (WWS), and Bangladesh Family Planning Association (BFPA).

Diagram 3.2 Institutional Facilities for Social Science Research in Bangladesh: At a Glance



Think Tank Research Institutes/Centers: Over the years, some Think Tank research institutes have been established, some of which have emerged as the foremost institutions of social science research in the country including Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), and Research Initiative Bangladesh (RIB) are the three major Think Tank research centres in Bangladesh.

Private Consulting Firms and NGOs: There are researches of an evaluative nature which deal with the consequences of measures undertaken by intervening agencies, mainly the government/development partners. These are done by different consulting firms/ private agencies and NGOs. Among the NGOs, the most prominent one is Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) that used to carry out social science research.

Box 3.4 *University Grants Commission (UGC)*

In Bangladesh in the area of higher education the University Grants Commission (UGC) is working as a statutory apex body. The primary objectives of the UGC are to supervise, maintain, promote and coordinate university education. It is also responsible for maintaining standard and quality in all the public and private universities in Bangladesh. The UGC assesses the needs of the public universities in terms of funding and advise Government in various issues related to higher education in Bangladesh. The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh was established under the President's Order (P.O.) No. 10 of 1973 which was deemed to have come into force with effect from 16 December 1972. UGC functions for underlying mission and vision (UGC Annual Report, 2013).

Mission and Vision

- To develop the universities as centers of excellence which in turn will produce trained and skilled manpower capable of resolving socio-economic problems and contribute in economic progress and prosperity of the country.
- To organize and motivate the universities to act as change agent so that they can create new frontiers of knowledge through demand-driven and innovative research to cope with the rapidly changing globalized society.
- To assess the financial needs of the universities and formulate and implement plans and programs for proper and appropriate development of the universities.
- To foster national, regional and international linkages and collaboration in the field of teaching, learning and to ensure exchange of knowledge, and research.
- To help the universities in staff development, and student mobility.

3.8 Regulatory Framework

There is no hard and fast regulatory framework as such for social science research in Bangladesh. But any organization under question is to be regulated for its research activities on the basis of its legal status. Besides, each research is carried out under an agreement that contains rules and regulations in terms of expertise of the team members, study launch, fund release, given time frame, ethical aspects (if any), and so on. At the same time, ideally each

organization should have its own governing as well as management body that oversees whether the quality of any research is being maintained.

3.9 Funding Scenario

Usually the allocations for research are seen in the research and development (R&D) fund line item of the governmental budget. But in Bangladesh this very line item is not separately mentioned in the governmental budget; although there are many public academic institutes that work in different sectors having allocations in the budget, which is basically part of R&D. Other than the funds allocated for BSSRC and BIDS, it is very tough to calculate the volume of governmental funding for social science research as in most of the cases other allocations are project based. There are hardly any funds for social science research from regular recurring budget.

Hardly anybody demands the project based R&D expenditure data, which is insignificant compared to other line items in the budget. That is why it is not clearly mentioned in the governmental budget reporting. But as a part of any research, one can make an attempt to calculate this.

For carrying out socio-economic research, Planning Commission allocates funds for Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), the public think tank of the country. The following table (Table 3.4) gives an idea about the medium term expenditure estimates and projection during 2015-16 to 2017-18 for BIDS that Planning Commission allocates/plans to allocate to carry out activities related to socio-economic research.

Table 3.4 Budget for BIDS

(BDT in thousands)

Description	Budget	Revised	Budget	Projection	
	2014-15		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Bangladesh Institutes of Development Studies (BIDS)	72,000	72,000	76,000	78,000	79,950

Source: *Mid Term Budgetary Framework (2015), Ministry of Finance*

Recent achievements of BIDS suggest that during the last three years, 19 credible research/studies on various development issues confronting Bangladesh and other developing countries have been successfully conducted. Apart from this, 50 seminars/workshops on socio-economic issues were organized and 62 research papers were published and distributed. BIDS also provided support to prepare technical framework and background paper of 6th five year plan (MTBF, 2014).

On the other hand, the following table (Table 3.5) shows the patterns of budget (2009/10 – 2015/16) for BSSRC allocated by the Planning Commission.

Table 3.5 Budget for BSSRC

(BDT in thousands)

Fiscal Year	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY13-14	FY14-15	FY15-16
BSSRC Total Budget	12,500	9,354	31,400	31,400	30,000
BSSRC Research Budget	-	-	26,300	27,940	20,530
Source	PB	PB	RB	RB	RB

Note: PB – Program Budget; RB: Revenue Budget

3.10 Policy Stance of Bangladesh Government towards Social Science Research

In the Perspective Plan Document (GED, 2012), the Government of Bangladesh promised to ensure better performances in the area of R&D. The Government asserts that the Universities of science and technology, together with other general universities have to move forward with R&D, training men and women professionals in technology to meet the enormous demand for such expertise in the context of increasing investment and growth stipulated in the industries and services sector by 2021. In simple words, the Government is inclined to allocate higher share of GDP to research and development in the coming days (GED, 2012).

The data for two important indicators namely government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP¹¹ and Government expenditure per student¹² (in PPP\$) for five South Asian countries including Bangladesh are summarized in Table 3.6 and Annex Table 3.1.

The Table 3.6 suggests that the least proportion of GDP had been spent on education in Bangladesh compared to the other four South Asian countries. At the same time, it is noticeable that the database lacks recent data of this indicator for Bangladesh.

Table 3.6: Government Expenditures on Education (as % of GDP) in Five South Asian Countries During 2007 – 2013

Government expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Bangladesh	2.2	2.1	1.9	-	-	-	-
India	-	-	3.2	3.3	3.9	3.9	-
Nepal	3.5	3.8	4.7	4.7	-	-	4.1
Pakistan	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.5
Sri Lanka	-	-	2.1	2	2	1.7	-

Source: UNESCO Database (*UNESCO website*) (compiled by Author)

Notably, for teacher development, the current Government of Bangladesh promised to adopt appropriate policies so that the talented and inspired young people get attracted to teaching

¹¹ Calculated as the current and capital expenditure on education by local, regional and central governments (household contributions are excluded), expressed as a percentage of GDP (UNESCO definition)

¹² As per UNESCO definition, it is the total public expenditure per pupil or student in the specified level of education, expressed in international dollars (current) adjusted in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP)

profession and retain in their services (GED, 2012). For creating a critical mass of talented teachers in the education system, the Government thought to offer appropriate benefit packages for the qualified teachers, establish a Teacher Recruitment and Development Commission for ensuring fair recruitments and support their professional development. In addition to that, Government promised to ensure Teachers' status, special incentives and training (home and abroad). More importantly, the government promised to encourage and give opportunities to do research in their respective fields, in teaching methodology, in curriculum development, and in methods of assessment. The perspective plan document has given special emphasis on research opportunities in the academic institutes as follows (GED, 2013):

Enhanced opportunities for research will be created by establishing centers of excellence in some of the institutions of higher learning. The performance of private as well as public universities will be evaluated and monitored by establishing an Accreditation Council. Attempts will be made to improve the quality of teaching, library facilities, and research.

Although the public expenditure on education in 2012 was 2.24 per cent of GNP, which the government assumes should be at least 6.0 per cent by 2021 to achieve the millennium development goals of universal primary education.

Finally, the Vision 2021 of GoB focuses on the Digital Bangladesh strategy to highlight the tremendous capacity of information and communication technology to help steer the country's development during the Perspective Plan. Bangladesh dreams for innovative people, who will be the backbone of the envisioned society in 2021. The country envisioned that these individuals would acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities through a strong learning system consisting of pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary education; and through the application of research, science, technology, and innovation.

Box 3.5 *Recent Experience of Planning Commission on R&D*

The development budget that the Planning Commission prepares is currently done considering 17 different sectors. Recently, with support from the World Bank - the concerned officials of the Commission have been involved in a revision work of this budget to see, among others, the issues related to international compliances. To classify the government expenditures, this revision work follows an international classification system called Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG), under which governmental budget is analyzed segregating in 10 different sectors. But the Commission proposed World Bank to do the same exercise using COFOG system for 14 sectors at major activity level, which is now on-going. At minor activity level, each sector is split into several sub-sectors on the basis of expenditures of which one represents R&D. So in COFOG system, R&D (as a sub-sector) is visible in all the sectors under consideration with the idea that if the government is serious about continuous development, then there is no alternative other than research. Therefore, governmental allocation for research work in each sector is a must that ensure government's commitment for research. In this exercise, the current Planning Minister also got convinced with this and at one point he also put emphasis of inserting this very line item (R&D) in all the sectors being considered in the development budget.

Now, the share of investment on R&D as a percent of GDP is increased (i.e. increased supply of research fund is ensured) – then the question of fund utilization (demand for research fund)

naturally arises. It is obvious that other than exhaustive demand for research fund – the increased response of research funding from the government side would not be of useful. Social sector covers a very large part of R&D as there are many actors including individuals, Ministries, agencies, and organizations. Usually due to shortage of demand for research funds, the allocations in this regards remained conservative. But as Bangladesh is now stepped into the list of middle income countries, so the government should increase the allocation for social science research. Bangladesh should not consider only income indicator for attaining the upper stage of its country status. Actually there are many other areas where Bangladesh should work hard. Only through research works, the gaps remaining in the different spheres could be known and filled up.

Recently with support from DFID, the Cabinet Division has started a process called ‘evidence based policy formulation’, which invites more research activities in the coming days. Having experiences from the UK government, DFID got interested to build capacity of the Bangladesh Government in effective policy making. So the initiatives of this sort would inspire the Government bodies of the country to allocate more funds for research activities.

Chapter 4

INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, RESEARCH CAPACITY AND RESEARCH OUTREACH

4.1 Organizations Being Studied

This study deals with five different organizations of varied typologies that carry out social science research in Bangladesh (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Sample Organizations by Typology (for Bangladesh)

TYPOLOGY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	REMARK
Public Academia		
<i>University</i>	University of Dhaka (DU)	
<i>Research Institute</i>	Institute of Bangladesh (IBS)	Under Rajshahi University
Think Tank		
<i>Public</i>	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)	
<i>Private</i>	Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)	
Non-governmental		
<i>Research Division</i>	Research and Evaluation Division (RED)	Under BRAC, a reputed NGO

The typologies include public university and public research institute, public think tank, private think tank and a research division under a reputed NGO known as BRAC¹³.

The *University of Dhaka* (DU) started its activities long back in 1921 with 877 students under 12 Departments, and at present the University consists of 33,112 students under 71 Departments. The main purpose of the University was to create new areas of knowledge and disseminate this knowledge to the society through its students. Since its inception the University has a distinct character of having distinguished scholars as faculties who have enriched the global pool of knowledge by making notable contributions in the fields of teaching and research¹⁴.

The DU is dedicated to the advancement of learning, and is committed to promoting research in all fields of knowledge. As there are plans for further expansion of facilities, plans for new avenues and opportunities, the course curricula are updated and new research projects are undertaken every year. As the pioneer and the largest seat of learning in the country, the DU has taken the task to foster the transformation processes of the individual students and the country as a whole through its educational and research facilities keeping up with demands of the day.

¹³ In addition to these, an outline of another research house known as *Research Initiative Bangladesh* (RIB) has been given in Annex 4.1. The reason behind selecting RIB was that it has been carrying out social science research projects following a participatory as well as empowering model, which is exceptional in Bangladesh and worth mentioning.

¹⁴ Website of University of Dhaka

The *Institute of Bangladesh Studies* (IBS) was established by the Rajshahi University Act, 1973, as an advanced centre for inter-disciplinary study and research on various aspects of Bangladesh society, life and culture. It is a national centre for teaching and research that undertakes scientific studies in the field of humanities, social sciences, business studies, law, and non-experimental science offering programmes for MPhil and PhD degrees. The academic programmes of IBS are set out to increase the number of creative and competent research personnel through training and education in Bangladesh oriented multi-disciplinary subjects¹⁵.

The *Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies* (BIDS) is an autonomous multi-disciplinary public research organization that conducts policy research on development issues for Bangladesh. Supported by the Government of Bangladesh, the BIDS functions as a think-tank that helps formulating socio-economic policies. The institute conducts research and promotes study and education in development economics, rural development, demographics and social sciences.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has been established as a South Asia Centre of Excellence in 1993 and has created credibility over the years as premier civil society and think tank of the country. It facilitates multi-stakeholder consultations and research on issues of critical national and regional interests. That is why it provides services in response to the growing demand originated from the emerging civil society following a more participatory and accountable process. As a part of its key tasks, CPD disseminates the generated knowledge and collected information on key developmental issues to a wider audience and it works for bridging gaps between research and policy advocacy. Through all these, CPD creates a national environment conducive to open public discussion on important policy issues with a view to ensure domestic ownership over the policy agenda and in that way it attempts to influence the policy making process¹⁶.

In 1975 the *Research and Evaluation Division* (RED) unit of BRAC was formulated within the framework of BRAC. This unit is working as a multi-disciplinary independent research unit from its beginning. RED is mainly carried out programme-driven research in agriculture, applied and reproductive health, communicable and non-communicable diseases, education, environment, extreme poverty, food security and nutrition, microfinance, and social development and human rights. The results of the research has given insights to the BRAC program to fine tune and implement the better program. RED has also collaboration with reputed national and international organizations. RED's research activities are coordinated under the following 8 research units: Development Economics, Agricultural Economics, Educational, Social Development, Impact Assessment, Health, Nutrition and Environment. RED has also expertise to disseminate the research findings through a range of oral and print media. Since inception, it has produced nearly 1,398 research reports, 388 journal articles, 285 book and book chapters, 24 theses, 60 research monographs, 96 working papers, 53 RED

¹⁵ IBS (2011)

¹⁶ From CPD website and SSI with the CPD personnel

newsletter, 25 volumes of Nirjash - a research compendium in lucid Bangla language, 212 popular articles in newspapers¹⁷ (as of August 2015).

4.1.1 Inception, Mission and Legal Status

As per the information summarized in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3, it is clear that in terms of inception year DU is the oldest and CPD is the youngest among the organizations being considered in this study. Each organization has its clearly stated mission statement indicating that it knows its destination. More or less, all mission statements suggest some important but diverse commitments centering around ‘knowledge generation’, creating advanced cadre’, ‘credible research’, ‘innovations’, ‘policy advocacy’ and so on.

Table 4.2 Public Academia

	DU	IBS
Established in	1921	1973
Mission statement	Create new areas of knowledge and disseminate this knowledge to the society through its students.	Cater to the country’s special needs by producing an advanced cadre of broad based specialists to provide leadership in the in the academic and developmental fields.
Regulatory frame	Under the Dacca University Act 1920 of the Indian Legislative Council; 1920 Act replaced by Ordinance 1961 by Gen Ayub Khan depriving DU from enjoying autonomy; this infamous Ordinance annulled and substituted by the Dacca University Order of 1973, restoring autonomy	Under an Act of the Bangladesh Parliament, No. XXVI. of 1973. Known as Rajshahi University Act, 1973

Due to they represent different typologies, their regulatory frames also vary. All these organizations carry out social science research under differing arrangements (for better understanding of these organizations, please see Annex Table 4.1 and Annex Table 4.2).

Table 4.3 Think Tanks (Public and Private) and NGO Research Division

	BIDS	CPD	RED
Established in	1954	1993	1975
Mission statement	Facilitate learning in development solutions by conducting credible research, fostering policy dialogue, disseminating policy options, and developing coalitions to promote informed policy making.	Service the growing demand of the civil society of Bangladesh for a demand-driven and accountable development process by stimulating informed debate, generating knowledge and influencing policy-making through research, dialogue, dissemination and policy advocacy.	To improve the effectiveness of BRAC programmes and support new innovations
Regulatory frame		Registered under NGO Affairs Bureau	Registered under NGO Affairs Bureau

¹⁷ Collected from RED website

4.2 Analysis of performance

Broad Research Areas

For carrying out social science research, each organization being studied used to select the area of their interest but eventually the list of research areas becomes very wide (please see Annex Table 4.3 and Annex Table 4.4).

University of Dhaka (DU)

DU is dedicated to the advancement of learning and is committed to promote research in all fields of knowledge. New research projects are undertaken every year.

Most importantly, the University's research enterprise is devoted to the search for knowledge and truth that upholds the University's commitment to education. This combination of activities strengthens the University's mission of service resulting in the continued improvement of quality of life for the citizens of Bangladesh and the rest of the world.

The University of Dhaka entered into International Collaboration Programmes with 56 renowned Universities and Institutes of different countries of the world¹⁸. A list of research centres housed or affiliated with University of Dhaka that deal with social science researches are given in Box 4.1 below.

Box 4.1: *Name of Research Centre at University of Dhaka*

- Bureau of Economic Research.
- Bureau of Business Research.
- Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences
- Centre for Development and Policy Research
- Centre for Advanced Research in Arts and Social Sciences (CARASS)
- Centre for Education, Research and Training
- Centre for Development and Institutional Studies
- Center for Microfinance and Development
- Centre on Budget and Policy
- Centre for Trade and Investment (CTI)
- Centre for Moral Development.
- Center for Urban Resilience Studies
- Govinda Dev Centre of Philosophical Research.
- Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit.
- The East Asia Study Center (EASC)

Among these centres, Bureau of Economic Research, Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences, and Center for Advanced Research in Arts and Social Sciences more prominent.

¹⁸ Website of University of Dhaka

Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS)

IBS follows July – June academic session each year. At the time of enrollment, it advertises its call to the most widely circulated dailies such as daily star and prothom alo mentioning qualifying criteria for enrolling in the MPhil and PhD programmes. The submitted applications are scrutinized first and then approved applicants are asked to appear to an admission test, followed by a viva voce applicable only for the qualified candidates. IBS can enroll maximum 30 scholars in any particular batch. It prefers those applicants who have some publications or written experiences as per the Ordinance of MPhil and PhD degree.

The duration of the PhD programme in IBS is of 4 (four) years. Course works are offered in the first year where they are taught about research methodologies, basics on the cultural and social aspects of Bangladesh and few other related courses. In the second year, scholars usually go to the field for data collection. They get involved with data processing and report compilation from third year.

A selective number of their research works have been published by Bangla Academy, Asiatic Society and some other publication houses of the country, which implies the key research findings of these studies are being spread all over the country. The Director of IBS considers this as successful contributions in the field of knowledge.

Box 4.2 About scholars at IBS

Basically the government officials as well as teachers belong to public colleges prefer to get enrolled here. Also officials from Bangladesh Army and Police apply here for their degree. They join over here in deputation. Besides, a number of fresh but aspiring students compete and eventually some of them get absorbed.

In addition to that, the teachers (Assistant Professors and above) working exclusively in Rajshahi University can join in IBS under secondment provision at any time and are entitled to carry out their research work under IBS. Secondment implies that during their research at IBS, they get their salary and allowances. They do not need to follow any procedure to get affiliated with IBS for carrying out their research. Probably for this reason, they are not entitled to get any fellowship that other scholars at IBS are usually provided.

All scholars, except RU faculties under secondment, are given accommodation facilities. Among them, the scholars from government services not only get IBS provided accommodation facilities, but also receive house rent allowances from the government as per their salary structures. In that respect, they experience less monetary hardships.

- *SSIs with concerned official and faculty at IBS*

All the studies in **BIDS** are carried out under the head of five research divisions including Agriculture and Rural Development Division (ARDD), General Economics Division (GED), Human Resources Development Division (HRDD), Industry and Physical Infrastructure Division (IPID), and Population Studies Division (PSD).

ARDD deals with issues related to agriculture, natural resources management, and rural development. The research in the GED is concerned with macroeconomic management,

globalization and trade, monetary and fiscal policy regimes, and related development issues. The mandate of the HRDD is to carry out research on issues related to human resources including education, health, nutrition, poverty, and gender and empowerment issues. All research related to manufacturing activities including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), micro enterprises, rural industries, and infrastructure are carried out in the IPID. The PSD carries out demographic studies and other researchers. BIDS does not generate national level data. Usually it deals with a particular sample drawing from a particular place. That is why data generated at BIDS is not always comparable with national level data.

According to the Director General (DG) of BIDS, hardly any pure research is done here. Traditionally three types of studies are carried out in this research house including applied economic research, applied development research and policy research. In addition to that BIDS used to offer advanced level training. Currently the research that are being carried out in BIDS are somewhere in between applied and policy research.

Research Models for BIDS

a) Research Endowment Fund

There is a research fund at BIDS called research endowment fund (REF). From this fund, some of the approved research projects are supported. The approval committee has to follow a guideline. So the researchers of BIDS at first develop the initial proposal and submit that to the concerned committee for their comments. If the committee suggests going ahead with this, the concerned researcher finalizes and submits that proposal to the evaluation committee along with a budget for carrying out that research.

Having required budget from the endowment funds, the researcher implements the research under the light of the approved proposal. The researcher reviews the selective literatures, carries out fieldwork (if any) and finally generates a research output. This output again goes back to the same committee that gives clearance only if it gets convinced over the quality of this output. Then the researcher has to give a presentation on the key research findings at BIDS. Finally, the comments that come in the presentation session are incorporated to the report, which is usually published as a working paper of BIDS.

b) Sponsored research with external fund sources (national and international donors)

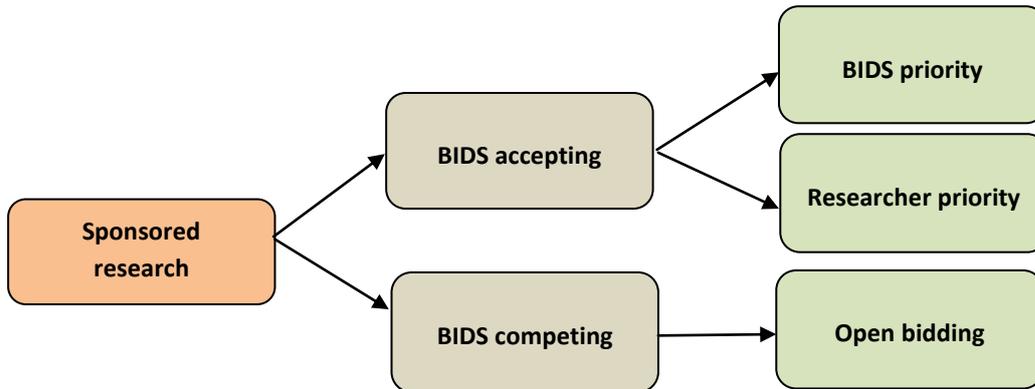
Although it is most expected in doing any research but very rarely it happens in the research organizations in Bangladesh that a researcher develops the research idea on her own and then approaches the donors for financial support. Rather in order to secure funding support, the donor-driven research projects have become very common in the country.

During discussion, the BIDS researchers recalled, "Once IDRC proposed BIDS to develop the research themes under their broad research framework to which it (IDRC) was ready to provide funds". This is the most expected model to the researchers at BIDS as the research idea is developed by a researcher herself and then for her own research idea, the researcher is secure with fund from any external sources.

– FGD with the researchers at BIDS

Broadly, BIDS gets involved with two types of sponsored research – *BIDS accepting* and *BIDS competing* (shown in a schematic diagram 1 below).

Diagram 1 Types of sponsored research BIDS deals with



The details related to sponsored research at BIDS are given below:

- I. *BIDS accepting* sponsored research: They (the funders) approach directly to and make an agreement with BIDS to design the methodology and carryout the study in line with that methodology. Here the main idea of the research comes from the sponsor, and having their research idea in mind, the concerned BIDS team executes the research for them. In other words, BIDS accepts the request of the sponsor to do a research, the idea of which comes from the donor organization. Usually it happens in two different ways on the basis of the priority that the donor devotes either to the research organization itself (*i.e.* BIDS) or the researcher. The former is known as *BIDS priority* sponsored research where the sponsor directly approaches to the higher management of the organization (*i.e.* DG of BIDS) with the request. The government sponsored research projects are basically of this kind as the proposals/requests from the Ministries come directly to the DG, BIDS and s/he selects an individual researcher from the research panel who suits with the research theme. On the other hand, the latter is known as the *researcher priority* sponsored research. In this case, the donor prefers to get their research done by a researcher of their choice from BIDS. So the donor directly approaches him/her and the overall proposal then reaches to DG, BIDS through that researcher of choice.

- II. *BIDS competing* sponsored research: The donor calls for expression of interest (EoI) and along with other organizations, BIDS also competes in the open bidding process. In order to submit the proposal successfully, BIDS appoints an individual researcher to take the lead who is competent to the asking theme of the research. Usually a competent research team is proposed consisting of the researchers from BIDS and outside (selected from its resource pool). They used to develop the EoI and convey that to the DG for his knowledge and agreement.

As a part of the annual research plan, a number of research concepts are submitted but it happens that BIDS approves only those proposals that it is more interested on. In that case, the researchers whose proposals were not approved could be absorbed in the teams of other approved research projects. In that case, although the research idea is not his/her own but the researcher just collaborates to his/her fellow researchers

– FGD with the researchers at BIDS

c) Individual Consultancy

BIDS allows each researcher to get involved with research projects by her individual capacity but in that case the incumbent researcher has to surrender a certain amount from the budget to BIDS. Some leave days will be cut off. Other than some administrative matter, BIDS does not have any role to play in executing the research or controlling the quality. The researcher is solely liable for ensuring quality of the research.

According to the researchers at BIDS, although the government wants to adjust policy issues, wherever applicable, in the research done/being done by this house but still the researchers enjoy more flexibility in case of dealing with the REF at BIDS. In these projects, BIDS monitors time as well. If the researcher could not complete his work within the given timeframe, then s/he has to take permission from the concerned desk. Also time monitoring is in place for sponsored research. The researchers can extend the given timeframe of the sponsored research only if both the body at BIDS and the donor agree. So time monitoring is very strictly followed at BIDS.

– FGD with the researchers at BIDS

Research Procedure at BIDS

Contract is signed with BIDS and it deploys its researcher. Either DG decides or it comes through a certain researcher, who usually becomes the team leader of the project. BIDS monitors whether the output is developed properly. In other words, it looks after if the deliverables are prepared properly and on time.

There is a provision that each researcher has to give a presentation of the final output. For sponsored research, the researcher has to present two times: one is exclusively with BIDS people and the other one with the donor. The project gets completed only when the donor accepts the deliverable.

The researchers have to abide by the financial mechanism that BIDS follows. Also they follow the official rules and regulations for procurement.

Researchers at BIDS, as they reported, follow the ideal research process for carrying out their studies. The steps that they usually adhere to are outlined in the following box.

STEPS FOLLOWED IN A RESEARCH

Concept note and temporary proposal → Conveyed to BIDS → Team Formation (cross-border) → Fund from endowment → Implementation → Output generation → Submitted to BIDS committee → Decided if quality output → Presentation → Publication: Working Paper

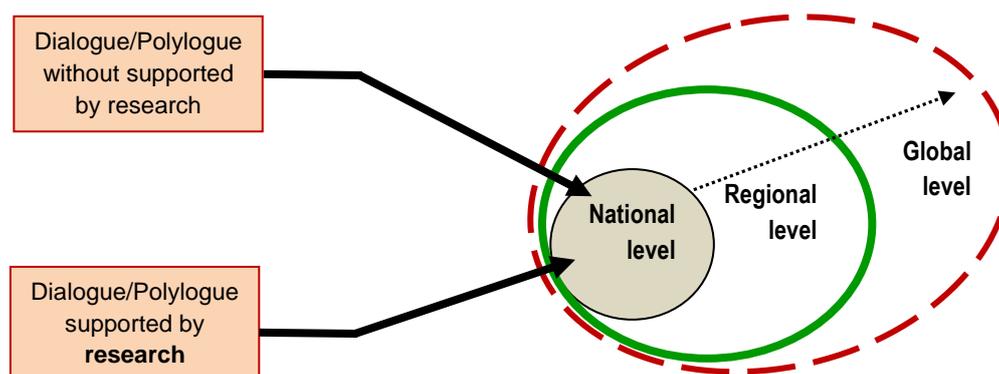
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

As said earlier, CPD was established in 1993 with the aim to bridge the voices of the marginalized people at the policy level. This aim of the program remained the same but the strategies for executing that have been changed over time.

Basically, it is run under a Board of Trustees and registered with NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB). Meeting 3 to 4 times a year, the Board of Trustees give advises and provide guidelines. Other than Board of Trustees, CPD has Board of Director, Research Management Committee and Research Execution Committee. CPD has a written service rule¹⁹ exclusively to be followed by its staff. According to the ED of CPD, this document contains designation-wise responsibilities of the staff. Also it contains the incentive mechanisms and other administrative procedures. CPD has three divisions: research division, dialogue, communication and outreach division, and administration and finance division. CPD also covers a diverse range for its research and advocacy purposes.

At the initial stage, CPD used to organize dialogues (or Polylogue among policy makers, stakeholders and CPD) but over the years it could realize/learn that the dialogues without being backed by research work had not been that fruitful. As a result, CPD put emphasis in knowledge generation. CPD brought these changes after a decade of its inception. So CPD is now performing both research and Policy Dialogue simultaneously on specific issues (with and without backed by research) at 3 levels (national, regional and global). This is shown in the diagram below (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2 Working spheres of CPD



For the last several years, it has been monitoring the development possibilities for Bangladesh and also it sheds lights on globalization and regional cooperation. CPD has enhanced its ICT use so that it remains very much existent in the virtual world through

¹⁹ The CPD management was reluctant to share this document terming that as a 'non-shareable internal document'.

website, twitter and facebook. According to CPD management, all these paved the way for CPD to work in the global arena.

CPD RESEARCH TEAM

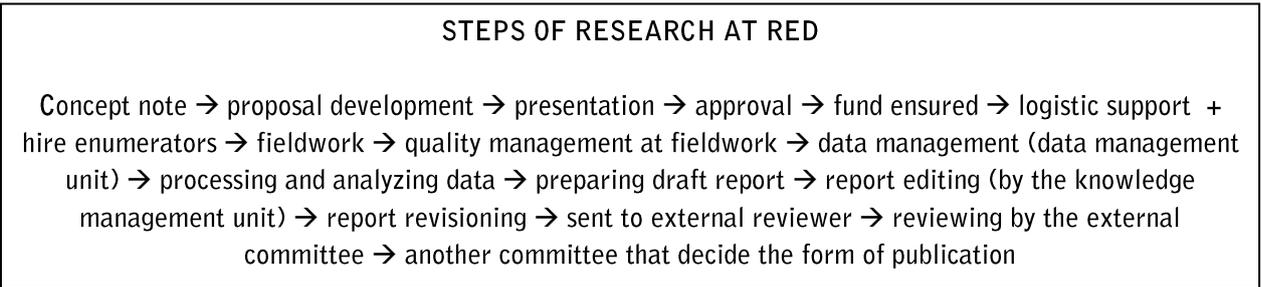


Research and Evaluation Division (RED)

Usually the research needs, identified by the programme people, are brought to RED to carry out evaluations or impact studies etc. on their behalf. In line with the BRAC programmes, RED has nine units including agriculture, development, education, environment, food security and nutrition, health, impact assessment, mother and neo-natal child health, and social development.

On the basis of the research theme, the concerned unit under RED prepares the concept note first and then designs a full proposal, which is presented before a concerned team for approval. If the proposal is approved, the estimated fund support is supposed to be ensured by the programme. The budget is not transferred to RED account; rather RED just receives a budget code. At the time of research execution, all the vouchers are submitted to the accounts section and the dues are adjusted/deducted from the programme through that budget code.

To manage the field, the research team sits with the field management team in RED. And for logistic support, they meet with administrative logistic unit. The research team follows a standard procedure to hire its enumerators.



Data management team extends cooperation in providing training, revising questionnaires, processing and analyzing data, and finally, it provides required assistance in preparing draft report.

4.3 Visibility of Research

Publications

After generating knowledge through a research, it is a prime responsibility of the researcher to publish his/her work so that the achieved knowledge could reach to all who are interested. More or less, all the organizations under this study have their own publications of varied types. These are summarized in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 *Types of publications across the organizations being studied*

DU	IBS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six half-yearly English research journals by six faculties regularly; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IBS Journal (English) • IBS Journal (Bangla) • IBS published books on different relevant titles 	
BIDS	CPD	RED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDS Journal; • Monographs; • Books; • BIDS REF Study; • Major Findings of BIDS Research; • Project Report; • Publications by Researchers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books; • Monographs; • CPD Working Paper Series; • CPD Dialogue Reports; • CPD-CMI Working Paper Series; • CPD-CMI Policy Briefs; • International Publications; • Non-CPD Publications; • CPD Research Monograph Series; • CPD SACEP Monograph Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Report • Working paper • Monograph • Article for a journal • Books • Annual Report

At the time of interacting with the respondent groups, this study could explore the ‘environment of publications’. The respondents belong to different organizations under this study were asked to identify ‘positives’ and ‘negatives’ related to the publications that their respective organization publish. Their responses are given in the table below:

Table 4.5: *Positives and negatives related to publications by type of organizations*

Type of Organization	Publication related	
	Positive	Negative
Public Academia: [DU]	-	Nepotism; no peer-reviewed journal;
Public Degree Institute: [IBS]	-	Less initiative for publishing scholars’ work; no peer reviewed journal;
Public Think Tank: [BIDS]	BDS journal; Findings of the REF supported studies published; Reports uploaded in the website;	50% research reports of the sponsored studies not published;
Civil Society Think Tank: [CPD]	Co-authorship given;	-
NGO run Research Division: [RED]	Editing support; options for publications	Excess workload that restrains coming up with an article/write up; biased towards researchers inclined to quantitative analyses;

Notably, the respondents belong to public academia did not find anything positive to their own publications!

During discussion in an FGD session, all the participating faculty members of **DU** expressed their dissatisfaction in case of publishing any articles in their university journal. According to them, the Editor(s) of any journal(s) is/are the respective Dean(s) of different faculties (such as, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Science etc.). As the very designation 'Dean' is an elected post, so it has been a practice for long time that one has to be in the good book of the editorial board for getting his/her article selected. Due to the same reason, as the faculties feel, sometimes an article that is not up to the mark also gets published. In other words, nepotism works in case of selecting any paper for publishing in the university journal.

Also all these teachers further reported with heavy hearts that no peer reviewed journal got published so far from DU. That is why the faculties hardly give value as well as refer the journals that get published in their university.

They feel very disappointed as same weights are given to all the published articles irrespective of nature of the journals (peer reviewed or non-peer reviewed). But at the same time, they informed that there were some teachers who

Systematic investigation suggests that there is no peer reviewed journal in **IBS** but it publishes two journals namely IBS Journal in English (from 1980) and IBS Journal in Bengali (from 1997). The contents of the journals are different. According to the scholars at IBS, other than these journals, some interested fellows try to submit their articles prepared on the basis of their research work to other journals that are not published from IBS. They do this on their own initiative. Concerned official at IBS reported that although they are supposed to take permission from IBS before submitting their work to any other external journals, but hardly have they followed this. The official further informed that from the funds of HEQEP project, some fellowships were offered to some of the selective scholars so that they could get involved with some selective publications.

On the other hand, one of the researchers²⁰ at **BIDS** emphasized on the importance of publications saying, "Publication should be the only criteria that is to be respected by everybody. A researcher must have the integrity to publish a paper in a peer reviewed journal" The other FGD participants agreed.

In response to the additional probing, the FGD participants (researchers) at **BIDS** informed that for promotion the higher management gave more weights to the peer-reviewed publications of the incumbent researcher. Regarding publications, they added saying, "Around eighty percent of the outputs from research endowment funds get published in the form of articles in the peer-reviewed journals or research monographs or peer reviewed working paper as eventually the researchers need points". For the remaining 20 percent, as

²⁰ During FGD session

they say, the researchers used to make attempts but hardly could they get succeeded. They expressed their satisfaction as all the reports are usually uploaded in the BIDS website.

They further reported that fifty percent of the sponsored work did not get converted into any publications. These remain just as research reports, which are considered as non-peer reviewed publications. Around 35 - 40 percent outputs from the sponsored research are published (usually in book forms) by the donors, and from the remaining 10 - 15 percent, after giving extra efforts a portion that are suitable outputs get published by the researchers.

CPD encourages young researchers to publish their works particularly who have plans for further studies. The institutional policy of CPD is not that reluctant to give authorship if the researcher makes sufficient contributions to the report. To encourage them, it facilitates young scholars' seminar series. For authorship, the CPD management considers, a researcher has to draft a report/a part of the report on the basis of the research results but for qualifying as an author/coauthor, drafting a report/part of the report is the necessary condition, although not sufficient condition. If the team leader feels that the draft has been quite standard to use in the report, only then s/he includes him/her in the report as one of the authors.

The researchers at **RED** shared a mixed scenario in case of publishing their work that used to generate a sense of discomfort among them. According to them, the publication episode at RED is a bit 'biased' as there are 'researchers' who publish their work one after one but the 'other researchers' are not in a position to publish their work of being overloaded²¹ or not getting due attention/encouragement from the top officials. The decisions for publications are basically taken by the Supervisors. From their experiences with RED, the researchers understand mainly those works get published that are considered as important to the eyes of the decision makers (supervisors) and that are seemingly useful for BRAC as a whole. Given the fact that RED has two types of researchers in terms of inclination towards the methods – the first group is more passionate towards quantitative methods and the second group is more inclined towards qualitative methods. The researchers in this house report that at RED the former group dominates the latter, and the supervisors mostly belong to the first group. That is why, as they believe, the decision for publication most of the time goes in favor of the first group. Also the possibility of getting the work published increases if any researcher carries out a research on any attractive/burning issues that BRAC cares for, such as targeting ultra poor (TUP), using a large data set (*i.e.* a piece containing quantitative analyses). The junior researchers get disappointed with this biased decision making by their respective supervisor that is, as they believe, lagging them behind in case of publishing their research work.

These researchers shared another contradictory situation that they used to come across with in case of their attempts to come up with a piece of writing for publications. According to the

²¹ For example, a researcher is given back to back assignments and remains involved with four or five on-going research projects in a fiscal year, and that is why s/he hardly gets time to come up with a good write up/article. On the other hand, the researcher who is carrying out a longitudinal study using a large dataset is developing, say, 5 articles and all are getting published (FGD with researchers at RED)

young researchers, they used to listen to contradictory statements about publications from their senior colleagues. At the time when a young researcher starts writing a piece/stuff for a news paper or national journal, their senior colleagues see this from two different angles. The first group used to verbalize motivational words for this initiative saying “this is how one starts developing a habit for writing, so carry on!” But the second group gives extra importance to this initiative that basically de-motivate the young researchers as they used to say, “What the bullshit have you been writing? Better you should not write these popular pieces. You may take time and try to write a quality piece that would get published in Lanchet or so.” To them, the first view is encouraging and the other view is distressing.

4.4 Funding Opportunities

Funding is one of the vital components for carrying out any research. This study finds the monetary supports for doing social science research vary with the typologies of the research organizations in Bangladesh.

Table 4.6 below shows the funding sources for social science research in Bangladesh by the organizations under question.

Now the question is how would the funding opportunities for (social science) research increase? Ideally, the fund for social science research comes to the universities from the Government. The new education policy (2010) of Bangladesh made that commitment as well. Before 1990s, there were only 7-10 public universities but over the years it has turned to not less than 30. Also private universities came into the scene.

The Table 4.6 below shows organization-wise funding opportunities. The (potential) fund sources for each organization are categorized into two groups on the basis of dominance of the funder(s). Other than government funds, there are money of the donors that are reaching to these organizations through collaborative research or consultancy work.

Table 4.6: *Funding opportunities for social science research by type of organizations*

Type of Organization	Fund Source for Research	
	Primary	Secondary
Public Academia: [DU]	UGC	BSSRC, Collaboration; sponsored research; consultancy work;
Public Degree Institute: [IBS]	UGC through RU	BSSRC
Public Think Tank: [BIDS]	Research endowment fund;	Collaboration; sponsored research; consultancy work
Civil Society Think Tank: [CPD]	Bilateral organizations; network as a partner; international organizations	Private organizations
NGO run Research Division: [RED]	1 – 2% of the program fund	Collaboration; consultancy work

However, this study reveals that although the nature of the problems varies but almost all the research organizations under consideration this or that way suffer from shortage of funding. The social science researchers (faculty, researchers and scholars) interacted in this study

made their statement clear that carrying out a quality research gets hampered a lot if the fund support is not adequate.

Public University: DU

Funding is very important for successful completion of any research. In the previous chapter (Chapter 3), section 3.4 and section 3.5 give a clear idea about how the government puts emphasis on research to be done by the faculties at universities and an outline of the neo-liberal shifts of the tertiary level education sector of the country.

In Bangladesh, fund allocations for research from the government sources are limited. Basically, the universities receive government funds through UGC. Mainly government allocations reach to all deserving universities and a small portion of that fund is channeled to DU through the university-based research centres. Also there are some funding opportunities for both the scholars and faculties that come to the universities through BSSRC. Although BSSRC offers small funds for carrying out social science research but amazingly this very Council is not commonly known to the incumbent faculties and scholars. In general, very limited funding opportunities are there for the universities and that is why fund generation sometimes depends on the capacity or networking skills of the faculties interested in doing research.

Public Degree Institute: IBS

In the overall budget of RU, UGC allocates funds for IBS in a separate line item. The annual allocation for IBS is approved by both UGC and RU. This money does not come to IBS directly; instead it comes to this incumbent institute through RU finance department. IBS pays staff salaries from its own budget.

The annual budget of IBS for the (2010 – 2015) time period and the proportion that IBS spent for supporting the research scholars as fellowship are summarized in Table 4.7. The last column made this clear that the percentages of total IBS budget being offered to the scholars as stipend are really negligible! According to the concerned official at IBS, the budget that is allocated for IBS every year gets spent mainly to provide salary and bonuses of the faculties and staff, and for running the Institute.

Table 4.7: Budget and Fellowship for IBS [million BDT]

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Expenditure (million Taka)	12.85	16.04	16.60	15.20	17.10	18.00
Budget for fellowship research	0.70	1.60	0.82	0.85	0.75	1.02
Research fellowship ²² as % of total expenditure	5.45	9.98	4.92	5.59	4.39	5.68

Source: Sector-wise Budget, IBS

²² Proxy of research expenditure support for the scholars at IBS

The budget sanctioned for IBS during FY2015-16 is 1 crore and 80 lacs BDT, 80 percent of which are for paying salaries and allowances for 43 employees. The remaining 20% funds (40 lacs BDT) are mainly dedicated for publication and fellowships. As per IBS budget for FY2015-16, only 10 lacs 22 thousands BDT are budgeted for fellowships.

Public Think Tank: BIDS

As said earlier, the research endowment fund (REF) is the primary source for financing social science research in BIDS, the public think tank. Basically, REF is the fund of government that the finance ministry sanctions but comes through the planning ministry. This fund has already been given to BIDS, which is kept aside in a bank as fixed deposit. Government has given this fund to BIDS under certain conditions. Although there is no formal monitoring/overseeing system from Government’s end but through its Annual Report and Biennial Reports, BIDS always documents how many research projects are carried out in any specific year with REF.

Although BIDS is mainly funded by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) but at the same time it has been habituated with generating funds from other sources (through approved sponsored research) that made BIDS quite donor dependent over time. Also they are allowed to get involved with individual level consultancy works. The national and international donors for BIDs are listed out in the Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: National and international donors for BIDS

National Donors	International Donors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Ministry • Other Ministries • IMED • BGMEA • FBCCI • NGOs: even small NGOs that are not widely known; • Autonomous Bodies: BRAC/PKSF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank • ADB • EC • DFID • EU • IDRC • ILO • UNDP • UNICEF • WFP • UNESCAPE

Total expenditures and research expenditure as percentage of total expenditures for BIDS during 2010 – 2014 are given in Table 4.9. The table shows the volume of total expenditure has been increasing but the research expenditures as percentage of total expenditure is declining.

Table 4.9: Total and Research Expenditure of BIDS (2010 – 2014) [in million BDT]

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Expenditure	60.36	65.18	75.5	80.55	82.7
Budget exclusively for research (BIDS own)	23.5	24.0	26.0	22.6	19.5
Budget for sponsored research	3.03	3.12	5.21	4.23	4.20
Research expenditure as % of total expenditure	38.9	36.8	34.4	28.0	23.6

Source: Finance Section, BIDS

The concerned top management shared about the environment of funding opportunity in BIDS. Although BIDS has the mandate to carry out research projects on the basis of its own research agenda but they endorsed that gradually it has got deviated from its mandate as the donors also had influences in setting research agenda. The main reason behind this was BIDS had been suffering from adequate amount of core research funding. For the last few years, due to support from the government it has created a research endowment fund. The upper management of BIDS has confirmed that the current Government is very serious about research and has expressed its willingness to provide further resources for research although only a portion of the already existing endowment fund has been spent so far for research. As a result, the climate for funding in BIDS has been changing. With this step, there is a possibility of paradigm shifting in this organization. For the last 4-5 years, BIDS has been given an independent research endowment fund (REF). Already BIDS has developed a quite comprehensive as well as an exhaustive research agenda to utilize this REF given by the government.

The DG and other researchers at BIDS think that such a big change in terms of funding support from the government had never happened in the history of BIDS. Having been blessed with governmental support, BIDS is now at a stage of initiating a process of developing Master degree level academic courses (in Development Studies and Development Economics) in near future. Also it has a plan to start PhD programme.

Due to the new chunk of fund support from the government, BIDS has been crossing a transitional phase. Although it is facing a big change in the funding system but the organization has also been facing challenges to adapt with these changes. To materialize the ambitious programme in the coming days, BIDS is now in an exercise to apprehend if it has enough human resources in-house and in wider communities. Shortage of qualified researchers to utilize the increased fund has been a big challenge for BIDS as most of the senior researchers of BIDS have already retired and many of the researchers in the next layer are on leave for working abroad. The higher management of BIDS is now planning to pool in the qualified people for carrying out research projects and/or teaching.

Civil Society Think Tank: CPD

In order to avoid conflict of interest, CPD remains selective in receiving funds. As per the higher management of CPD, it does not receive funds from GoB so that it can exercise its freedom to criticize the role of government time to time. Also it does not accept funds from World Bank (WB) as well because WB plays role in Bangladesh policy matters.

According to CPD high official, CPD develops different ideas on its own and then go for seeking funds.

The dominant funders for CPD include bilateral organizations (such as CIDA and DFID, UK), international organization (like UNDP, UNESCAP) and different networks of which CPD acts as one of the partners. At the same time, CPD started to explore funds through Private Organizations like Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The funds come to CPD under the rules of NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB). For releasing funds that are coming from other countries, CPD submits the necessary documents at NGOAB, and the Bureau gives the permission.

Through a global competitive process, CPD is currently involved with a think tank initiative for which it is getting fund support as well. Side by side, it has a list funders including DFID, UNESCAPE, UNDP, Bill Gates and Melinda Gates Foundation, CIDA and many others that provide them funding support time to time. The total budget of CPD for the last 5 years and the proportion of which exclusively spent for research projects are given in Table below (Table 4.10). The data given in the table confirms that over time CPD has been giving more emphasis on research projects.

Table 4.10: *Total and Research Expenditure of CPD (2010 – 2014)*

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Expenditure (million Taka)	69.3	109.7	130.7	151.9	201.5
Research expenditure as % of total expenditure	54.6	62.1	62.2	64.3	66.3

Source: *Annual Reports of CPD for Various Years*

For smooth running of the programme, CPD usually avoids those funders who used to impose conditionality over the findings of the study. At the initial stage, CPD used to get big funds but for the last few years, the world has been experiencing resource crunch due to which the funders used to offer inadequate funds to CPD as well for carrying out research projects. It is true for both governmental and bi-lateral levels. To avoid conflict of interest, CPD is selective in receiving funds; that is why it does not accept funds from Government of Bangladesh, or organizations like World Bank or IMF.

The Executive Director of CPD informed that it has never experienced any harassment from Government's end for receiving funds or accomplishing its activities. CPD is registered under NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB), so for receiving funds from outside of the country, as per rule, it has to submit the proposal of any project to the concerned authority at NGOAB, and the fund arrives to CPD only after having approval from NGOAB.

Only one move that CPD management feels made the fund receiving process slightly lengthy is the introduction of a stringent step in the regulatory mechanism by the Government of Bangladesh three years ago. As per this action, in addition to get approval from NGOAB, the clearance report from the District Commissioner about the incumbent organization has been mandatory. It is understandable that due to the emerging trend of religious fundamentalism within the territory, the government has introduced this provision.

Although the concerned approval authority for releasing funds is NGOAB, but for the last three years, the GoB has introduced a provision of 'no objection' report to be issued by the concerned official of the District Commissioner Office. As reported, this additional tier has been added to scrutinize the funds coming from other countries due to the emerging threats of the extremist groups all over the world. As a result, the fund releasing process has been lengthier. CPD management feels this physical investigation is a botheration for the fair-playing organizations in the sector and with this, the space for regulatory mechanism has been tightened as the fund is released only when the concerned official issues a satisfactory letter once the investigation is over. But for the greater interest, CPD agrees that the government should take measures like this.

NGO-run Research Division: RED

From the very beginning, BRAC has made a provision that in order to generate funds for research – every programme will keep aside 1 to 2% of its intervention cost. In this manner BRAC can generate adequate funds for doing research. As told earlier, each programme identifies their research needs and then request RED to design the study as well as submit the estimated budget. After fulfilling all the procedure, when the budget is approved – RED will be given a code number. All the costs to be incurred for the very research will be deducted from the program fund.

4.5 Enabling Atmosphere and Capacity Development

A researcher requires an enabling atmosphere to concentrate and contribute to a research because “conducting good research requires first retraining [one's] brain to think like a researcher” (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Otherwise, a researcher could not visualize the abstract from actual observations, and to “connecting the dots” cannot identify hidden concepts and patterns. This is a skill of a researcher that takes time to develop. That is why a social scientist is to be given an enabling environment and due opportunities for developing her capacity over time. At the same time, an enabling atmosphere should refer to the facilities or incentives that are favorable for carrying out research.

In this study, at the time of interacting with the faculties/researchers/scholars we could list out several arrangements/facilities/incentives that help them get an environment to remain sound and think like a researcher but at the same time, a number of issues are identified that basically distract their research-like thought process. Both aspects are shared below.

First we start with those experiences/endeavors that are favorable for enabling atmosphere. Broadly four areas were identified during FGD sessions that are conducive to the expected research environment. These include:

- Working place surrounds with competent people (rigorous recruitment process in place)
- Well equipped work station
- Culture of appreciation and culture of constructive criticism exists
- Existence of thought provoking discussions/other events

The faculties at **DU** enjoy freedom but lack resources! There are a number of research centres but all these lack funds. As a result, the research atmosphere at DU is not always enabling for the competent faculty cum researchers. Still the faculties at DU who participated in the FGD agreed that working under the structure of DU campus is an advantage for them that works as an enabling atmosphere.

Similar voice is heard from the participating scholars at **IBS**. According to them, the surroundings where this very institute is located itself is enabling for concentrating in a research work. It has cordial faculties and staff who used to give motivational boost to their scholars. Living cost at Rajshahi is less compared to the living cost at Dhaka city. At the time of their study programs, the scholars are offered accommodation facilities. For the scholars, a library was founded at IBS back in 1974. Although it is not very resourceful with books and journals but recently IBS received a grant from World Bank with which it is now in a process to make the library automated and get this connected with the libraries elsewhere of the world. So this institution will gradually subscribe to the reputed journals so that the scholars can get access to.

Initially there was a MoU with Ford Foundation, which brought several reputed Professors at IBS from Universities abroad. Those faculties helped designing the syllabus of and developing a system for the MPhil and PhD programmes. IBS still follows that syllabus as well as the system. Also it was possible for IBS to develop some infra-structure with the fund support from Ford Foundation. After the agreement with the Ford Foundation gets over, IBS did not get support of this sort for long time.

Under a UGC funded project known as Enhancement Research Capabilities of Values and Research of IBS (ERC-IBS), IBS was able to provide fellowships to 36 selective fellows to contribute to the publication series called Bangladesh Studies: Home and Abroad. Under this fellowship, the scholars received 6000 taka per month, which worked as an incentive to accomplish their respective guided tasks. Also their works were published.

With this grant, IBS also introduced laboratory facilities for the scholars housed in the main building. Due to this facility, the researchers of IBS can browse required information of their choice sitting in the educational atmosphere. In addition to that the scholars are given internet connections in their rooms at the dormitory but they are to pay small amount of money (200 taka per month) for availing unlimited access to internet services. IBS management has a plan to bring the whole premise under wi fi zone in near future.

Again, with World Bank supported HEQEP project, IBS provides a grant (known as Thesis Subsidy) of BDT 5,000 to the scholars for incurring the expenses related to PhD thesis and BDT 4,000 for MPhil dissertation.

In case of sponsored research, the donor approaches directly to the researcher, and the researcher used to share that with the top management for their approval that leads to an *institutional contract* under which the researcher extends his/her professional services. Or sometimes the donors approach **BIDS** management directly. It also happens that with approval from BIDS any researcher can offer consultancy services under a contract with him/her and the donor. In that case, the incumbent researcher has to surrender 10% of the budget to the Accounts Section of BIDS.

At the time of consultation in the FGD session, it was made clear that surrendering a small portion of the total research budget, the researchers at BIDS used to carry out sponsored research projects. As a result, it seems this very research house fails to get their expected contributions in case of knowledge generation. In order to de-motivate these researchers from their consultancy work, BIDS management is planning to give financial incentives by offering them honorarium almost equivalent to the market rate. At the same time, with the in-house funding support – the researchers are planned to be assigned to carry out those research works that go in line with their professional as well as educational expertise, and which in turn will work as a ‘professional’ incentive for them²³.

For career progression in the research field, BIDS gives emphasis to have publications in the peer reviewed journals. Criteria for promotion in BIDS are rigorous and merit based. It considers publications in the peer-reviewed journals/monographs as the key criteria for promotion. Therefore, the outputs generated through the research with BIDS fund are mandatory to publish for acquiring points for career progression but it is the researcher who decides if the output of the sponsored research will be published or not. BIDS only can suggest him to submit his/her work to any particular peer-reviewed journal(s).

In case of recruitment, **CPD** considers if the applicants have interest or passion on research work. To retain the staff, CPD tries to revise salary structure in line with private sector/corporate sector/private universities. As CPD cannot compete with private sector or corporate sector for revising its salary structure, so it compensates by providing some incentives to its staff as mentioned below.

²³ KII with the DG, BIDS

CPD management gives importance to the willingness of its staff in developing their career in a challenging profession like research. The management considers this aspect seriously as it is a demanding profession but without having due passion and support to this profession, one cannot sustain. CPD offers mainly non-monetary incentives. These include:

- Mentoring supports that are provided to the newly recruited;
- Different training programs and seminars (at home and abroad) where the young/mid level researchers are sent
- Help exploring financial support for obtaining their study degree abroad subject to they would serve the organization once their degree program is over
- Help in writing the proposal of its staff aspiring for getting enrolled in a PhD program abroad
- Opportunity of co-authorship

Currently there are 10 -12 staff who completed their master degree abroad, and 4 – 5 PhD holders who completed that with non-monetary support from CPD.

CPD management believes that the mid level officials are the most important part of the workforce. At junior level suffers from heavy turnover as many staff at this level leave their job all on a sudden most of the time for higher studies; mid level staff should be given priority.

Consultancy or sponsored research is not allowed at CPD as from the beginning it wanted to flourish this organization as a think tank, not as a consultancy firm. CPD aspires to be a demand driven organization from the very beginning; it is a big challenge for CPD to survive; there is a strict policy in the Board; CPD thinks that in that way it can retain its focus, it can grow its expertise and can retain the independence aspect of the organization

Researchers at **RED** shared their working culture that is quite enabling. It has been said earlier, instead of hierarchical working culture, *bhai* culture is practiced (also true for BIDS) all over BRAC. So the researchers at RED enjoys the same working culture and do work in a multi-disciplinary environment. This working environment of RED is believed to help make the researchers more accountable to their work as well as help expediting the research process that saves their time.

During discussion, the researchers of this house found happy with this *bhai* culture. The following statement of one of the discussants reflects how they conceive this working environment.

“As the working culture here is not very hierarchical, the bosses are easily accessible. Once the supervisor is convinced, our life becomes very easy as we can then carry on our work smoothly with complete freedom.”

In addition to this conducive working environment, a favorable support system prevails in RED, which is outlined below.

- Researchers here can use a modern library facility of BRAC, and access to information facilities at RED/BRAC is quite updated.
- The researchers in this research division receive required supports of field management unit at field level. Actually, as a part of BRAC, it is an added advantage for RED to receive these supports at field level and utilize the BRAC structure. Hence, they can easily plan and conduct any experimental research that requires formation of treatment and control groups. All these make the research project relatively cost effective and time saving.
- There is a separate unit ready to provide data management support including data entry, data screening, data analyses and so on.
- For carrying out the research projects, the researchers of RED can avail official transport support, official accommodation facilities and other related supports from the logistics management unit.
- More importantly, there is a cell known as the knowledge management and editing unit that provides required supports for editing all selective publications.
- A strong monitoring system is in place that helps overseeing whether any research project is being carried out the way it was expected;
- Above all, researchers at RED can avail the existing facilities for capacity building: there are different scopes in place (such as, training at home and abroad) for enhancing capability of the young researchers (although the opportunities are, as reported, not equitably accessible to all). Through these training, they learn about different quantitative as well as qualitative techniques, and other relevant issues.

The faculties at DU consider that academic incentive is more important than monetary incentives. But it is very unexpected and unfortunate to them as at the time of their promotion same weight is given for a published Article irrespective of the nature (peer reviewed versus non peer reviewed) of the journals whereas the standard practice is to consider publications in the peer reviewed journals for promotion of a faculty/researcher. Although it generates sense of disincentive among them for publishing their articles in any peer reviewed journal(s) but still there are serious faculties who do not give up their willingness to publish their work in those journals.

On the other hand, the researchers at BIDS consider the points of the publications for promotion as one kind of performance-based incentive for them. They informed that no monetary incentives like specific cola or bonus are offered them but provision of getting involved with a sponsored research project/consultancy work itself is a kind of incentive as they get both recognition and monetary benefits.

There are several types of incentives available in BRAC. If anyone abides by BRAC principles (effectiveness, integrity, inclusiveness and innovation), s/he is awarded with

100,000 BDT. For evaluating staff performance, BRAC follows electronic performance monitoring system (EPMS). In this system, the supervisor gives scores to the respective staff. In addition to that, from each program the concerned Director nominates one or two staff to compete for the aforementioned award. If any staff consistently does better in BRAC principles, then s/he is nominated for the award.

For carrying out a research, UGC provides a lump sum fund (100,000 BDT per research) under its Higher Education Enhancement Programme, which must have a survey component and is to be completed within 6 months. The teachers feel that the fund support is not adequate if one has to include a survey in one's research. So they reacted, "How come we maintain quality of the research if the fund support and the given time is so small?"

"Within DU, BER provides very nominal funding to conduct a research with which it is hardly possible to maintain quality".

Library facilities: According to the faculties of DU, the standard library system is not being maintained in their reputed institution. First of all, the library is not open for 24x7, and access to literature is limited. At the same time, the faculties reported that the existing library facilities also remain underused.

Research allowances: A faculty at DU is given a ridiculous amount (500 BDT only!) as research allowance. It is added with the monthly salary of any faculty. "This is nothing," says a faculty, "but insulting us! With this research allowance, how will a researcher even dare to think about a research?"

Allowance for purchasing books/journals: Similarly, the allowance for purchasing books is also 500 BDT per month.

No support for higher studies: Institutionally no fund support is offered to the faculty at DU for higher studies, but there are several fellowship opportunities that the faculties can apply for. Unfortunately hardly the interested faculties get succeeded availing these fellowships as the decision making process is allegedly biased. That is why in most of the cases, the faculties who earn their Master degree or PhD degree from abroad, mobilize the funds on their own initiative.

4.6 Institutional Ability and Tendency to Disseminate

Dissemination is an important part of a research. Concerned top managements as well as the researchers belong to all the organizations being studied agreed to this truth and each institution has its respective ability and tendency to disseminate its research work. Most of the times it happens that the small updates or studies could not directly feed into the policy but it can generate debates. Media is also playing a vital role here. A senior teacher of DU said, 'A researcher is a dead person if s/he cannot create a controversy'. But in order to stir a debate, two issues are to be taken into consideration: knowledge generation and role of a public intellectual.

Here media is supposed to play a public intellectual role when it joins hands with the researchers. But due to the media monger researchers these days, the environment of the research sector is getting polluted (see the box MEDIA MONGER below).

To understand the current tendency of generating debate through media, one has to consider the trajectory of research in Bangladesh (summarized in Table 4.11 Below).

Table 4.11: Trajectory of research in Bangladesh

Time period	Characteristics of research
1950s – 1960s	Fundamental research undertaken
1960s – 1970s	Trouble shooting research undertaken
1980s – 1990s	Market not distorted; research houses not mushroomed; researchers proved their capability through their work
1990s – 2000s	Market distorted; research houses mushroomed; neo-liberalist regime on; consultancy services exploded;
2000s – Onwards	Consultancy work on; unhealthy competition flourished (competition with negative attitude); trouble averse research undertaken; packaging and branding of research; dominance of media;

It is clear from the table that research has been more commercial over time. Since 1990s, consultancy service has captured the research market and currently media are playing dominant role to marketize those research that are prone to branding and packaging.

“I do not know to what extent a research can influence to the policy but from my experience I know that only it is possible to influence the policy through a research only if you are in power or if one can subscribe the hegemonic ideas of power. But indirectly one can generate debate at people’s sphere.” – Faculty, DU

STRENGTH OF DELIVERABLES

CPD used to contest the claims of the government on any economic indicator, for example, growth rate or so. But at the same time, it likes to remain rigorous in their research work. According to the CPD management, the major objective of doing research is not merely to generate data or conduct field surveys; rather to carry out more analytical as well as qualitative research. Notably, the researches that CPD carries out are not primary research in nature²⁴. The ED of CPD expressed about the seriousness of maintaining quality in their research saying, “We are very attentive in ensuring quality of the research because if we do not maintain the quality, our competitors in the market would capture the research field.” The higher management of this think tank considers undertaking research is a continuous process but at the same time they give priority to another task: bringing any burning issue to the public domain through dialogue so that the different opinions of the stakeholders could be gathered.

²⁴ Although recently CPD has conducted a research on women’s contribution to GDP where it has included a large sample survey

Box 4.3 Media Monger

The researchers as well as the faculties did shed light to a very important aspect that has been polluting the research environment. According to them, there are some researchers these days who are so much driven by popularity that they give emphasis to what the media want to cover or what the people want to hear. Instead of writing a quality research paper – they are more interested to talk in the electronic media or publishing popular write ups in the print or on-line papers. This mentality plays the key role in compromising with the research quality.

One of the researchers narrates, “For example, if I get the sense that it would be a big news if I say import subsidy does not work in Bangladesh – in that case even if my research tells the opposite (i.e. import subsidy is working), then I will manufacture my results to grab the media coverage through manipulations highlighting ineffectiveness of import subsidy in Bangladesh. So I will tell that a portion of the researchers in Bangladesh loves to thrive in negativity. For an individual researcher, the drive that works here is if s/he does this – s/he will get the mileage or media coverage”.

So in different FGDs, almost all the discussants agreed that the research environment had been getting polluted due to all these unwanted practices. It is alarming that the researchers with this rotten mentality have captured a substantial portion of the research domain in Bangladesh.

SLIDE DEPENDENT RESEARCH

Another trend is observed these days that may be a researcher does not carry out any proper research but prepares slides and shares some popular ‘key findings’ (say, women contribution in GDP is 70 percent or so). More importantly, the slide is not backed by any research paper. “Being a researcher cum economist,” said a senior researcher, “If I challenge the finding – then the relationship between us would be deteriorated. Earlier, scholars/people came to know an economist through his/her writings but nowadays the writing is absent; rather the tendency of some researchers is to create noise so that they come to the limelight”. The researchers term this as a kind of professional compromise. These people have chosen this short cut method to be recognized as ‘reputed’ researchers/economists of the society.

DISSEMINATION

RED mostly conducts action research projects, but under the umbrella of BRAC, the researchers of this house also get involved with the research that deals with different national issues. The research findings of some of the selective research are usually processed to generate articles for publishing in the international journals. In that way, the researchers at RED have been contributing at the global arena.

To say about the importance of dissemination of the need based research, the researchers at RED outlines a wider audience. To them, key research findings are to be shared first with the beneficiary groups at field level, but these are to be disseminated at national level as well, even to be shared before the international audience.

INDICATORS OF RECOGNITION

One of the criteria for rigorous studies is to publish the key findings in a reputed journal; to publish in a journal is not the main purpose of conducting a research but any good research should be published. This gives international recognition of the works done through any research. Indicators for a quality research could be if the work is getting published in any journal.

Not only publishing the work, CPD feels there is another way of getting international recognition: collaboration with international groups such as International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD). Again, CPD management feels that the invitation that its staff used to receive from different global conferences and get offers to be parts of any committees or panels is another indicator of collaboration (say, in WTO, or conference on climate change, or conference in Addis Ababa on Sustainable Development Goals). It is true for the events inside the country as well. Besides, CPD gives priority to keep its audience up to date on different burning/current issues as it considers that through this CPD is serving the country. So even not backed by any rigorous research, still CPD produces some popular pieces that contribute to the society.

Few issues that usually hamper dissemination process were identified during FGDs or KIIs performed in different organizations. These are shared below:

Registration fee for publishing in a journal: It is well known that contributing an article to a reputed journal is not always free. There are some journals that demand fees to publish any article. DU does not provide any fees like this, which demotivates all interested contributors to publish their work in those journals.

Dissemination support: Once the research is over, the key findings and recommendations are to disseminate to a wider audience but the faculties at DU do not get due financial support from the authority.

Travel allowance: DU provides travel allowance once in a year to attend any conference abroad: for traveling any country within Asia, it gives 30,000 BDT and for any non-Asian country, it gives 50,000 BDT. But the faculties of DU expressed their dissatisfaction saying that the amount offered as travel allowance was not sufficient as attending a conference, say in USA, used to require around 100,000 BDT.

It also happened that the main author of an article (a faculty of DU) could not attend a conference in USA to present his paper as the University did not provide him required fund for travelling. As a result, the second author from another public university attended the event as his varsity gave him full travel allowances. This indicates the provision related to travel allowance varies from one public university to another.

PhD scholars hardly have any scope to contribute or do contribute in terms of publications; only the faculties who come here for the degree may change their way of delivery in the class

Though CPD does not take funds from the government but it is involved with several committees formed by the government. Government does not have to pay any money to the concerned resource persons of CPD but they receive suggestions/recommendations from them. CPD provides policy brief with recommendations. The ED of CPD is a member of the Panel, Economics for Seventh FY Plan. Other colleagues are with other committees. Even CPD representation is there in the World Trade Organization (WTO). CPD situates its stake wherever it has influences. The higher management considers this representations in different committees as a very distinct feature of CPD. This is an advantage for this organization as well.

Another feature is, as they believe, it can conduct rigorous research maintaining quality. As CPD avoids those funders who it thinks may play very interfering roles – so it does not need to fulfill any requests of the donors. Hence, they claim, “So we do not compromise with the quality of research”.

Box 4.4 *Relative Importance of CPD as an Entity*

It conducts rigorous research and brings the findings to the public domain and facilitates a debate that may help the policy makers to rethink. CPD management strikes a chord saying, “It may happen that CPD performed many activities but the policy makers showed no interest at all to that. It does not mean that the efforts made by CPD have gone in vain. It would be misleading to assess a think tank so linearly.” That is why the CPD management thinks the success of this think tank should not be assessed on the basis of whether the policy makers are responding to the suggestions by CPD.

Currently the Bangladesh – India economy corridor is underway but CPD claims that initiated this idea organizing 16 dialogues back in 1999. It was basically on the possibility of India-Bangladesh transport connectivity. Of the 16 meetings, 8 meetings were held in Delhi and the others held at Dhaka. The motivation behind this initiative was to develop congenial as well as suitable strategies with India, which would be benefitting for Bangladesh. Over time, a policy has currently been developed and activities are being executed. So CPD considers this as a winning outcome of their efforts performed back in late 1990s.

Coordinating a number of activities, CPD always tries how the voices of the marginalized people would be reflected at the policy level. For this reason, it does research and facilitates dialogue process. It has communication base and outreach. Also to reach the common mass, its management used to contribute op eds in the dailies. Notably, CPD believes that combined efforts make the appeal stronger. That is why to influence policy, CPD does research, organizes dialogues, publish documents, and communicates in a coordinated way.

- *Discussion with Top Management of CPD*

4.7 Comparative Analysis of Institutional Performance

For comparative analysis of institutional performance with respect to typology of institutions studied, it is to be taken for granted that each of the organizations under this study has its own uniqueness under which these are carrying out social science research in Bangladesh. The crude uniqueness of each of the institutions studied is summarized the in the following table (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Uniqueness by type of organizations studied

Type of Organization	Uniqueness
Public Academia: [DU]	More freedom but resources poor
Public Research Degree Institute: [IBS]	Scholars from diverse field; resource poor
Public Think Tank: [BIDS]	Resource endowment funds (REF)
Civil Society Think Tank: [CPD]	Strong network and diverse resource pool; resource abundant:
Research Division under an NGO: [RED]	Multi-disciplinary team; work under the umbrella of mother organization (BRAC); resource abundant: own fund

Having these uniqueness, each of these organizations facilitate/conduct research in the social science discipline. Given this fact, some reflections of their competence and importance are discussed below:

(1) Typology varies for each organization but still the first three public but autonomous institutions (DU, IBS and BIDS) are mostly dependent on the governmental funds, and the remaining two (CPD and RED) are non-governmental in nature that are hardly dependent on governmental funds; rather these either generate funds from its strong network [CPD] or generate a substantial portion of the funds through its own interventions [BRAC:RED].

(2) Faculty and scholars belong to public academia (DU) and public research degree institute (IBS) enjoy more freedom in terms of working hours but these are relatively resources poor; on the other hand, the public think tank (BIDS) also enjoys freedom, and is centrally supported by the resource endowment fund (REF) that made them relatively relaxed (in terms of funding opportunities).

(3) Both non-governmental organizations – CPD (civil society think tank) and RED (research division under BRAC) are resource abundant compared to the first three organizations that are solely dependent on government funds.

(4) The working culture is more formal in the public academia and public research degree institute where as in the think tanks (both public and private) and research division under an NGO, *Bhai* (informal) culture is practiced.

(5) From the financial data shown in Table 4.13 below, it is possible to comment that compared to the other two organizations, the civil society think tank mobilizes huge amount of funds through its strong networking and collaborations. Not only that, the proportion of total expenditures being exclusively spent for research also has been increasing for this organization.

Table 4.13*: *Expenditure for research compared*

Description	Organization	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Trend
Total Expenditure (million Taka)	Public Degree Inst.	12.85	16.04	16.6	15.2	17.1	Slightly increasing
	Public Think Tank	60.36	65.18	75.5	80.55	82.7	Moderately increasing
	Civil Society Think Tank	69.3	109.7	130.7	151.9	201.5	Highly increasing
Research expenditure as % of total expenditure	Public Degree Inst.	5.45	9.98	4.92	5.59	4.39	Volatile
	Public Think Tank	38.9	36.8	34.4	28.0	23.6	Decreasing
	Civil Society Think Tank	54.6	62.1	62.2	64.3	66.3	Increasing

* This table is developed incorporating data from Table 4.8, Table 4.9, and Table 4.10

On the other hand, we see just the opposite scenario, particularly in terms of percentage of total expenditure spent for research only. Although the volume of total expenditure for public think tank has been increasing over the years but the proportion of the total expenditure being spent exclusively for research has been decreasing. Unfortunately, the public research degree institution is being supported very marginally. In addition to that, a very negligible portion of their total expenditure is provided to the scholars at IBS to carry out their degree research.

6) The civil society think tank is seemingly doing better than others in case of disseminating and policy influencing as it has ‘policy dialogue’ component embedded in its program design. The coverage of dissemination of this civil society think tank is not limited within this territory.

(7) In terms of quality research and peer reviewed publications, the public think tank has been leading.

(8) There are competent faculties cum researchers in the public academia, but due to lack of any clear policy and fund constraints they are being linked with the think tanks (both public and private/civil society) for any research projects. Otherwise, they are carrying out sponsored research/consultancy works.

Nowhere, some organization-specific issues are discussed for a better understanding about institutional the performances.

Basically, in **IBS** the scholars from diverse fields form a cohesive team being organically bound in inter-disciplinary program of research and instruction. Other than obtaining research degree from IBS, the scholars get opportunities to familiarize themselves with the history, culture and society of Bangladesh (IBS, 2011). It is further committed to be highly selective in the recruitment of its staff for making this institution a centre of excellence and maintain an efficient system of instruction, research, publication, documentation, and administration, for which innovative practices are to be adopted.

In addition to the national scholars, IBS tries to build up an exchange programme with international academic community. Also it is interested to build up exchange program for the scholars.

To get a project, IBS has to design a proposal and then submit that to RU. The concerned body of RU first selects few proposals from all the submissions by interested departments including IBS. The short listed proposals are then sent to UGC for final approval. In recent past, IBS submitted two proposals in two different times and were successful. It implies UGC gives importance to IBS and endorse its competence.

Although no updated information found available but the history of IBS suggests that a number of faculties from foreign Universities visited this place time to time who helped designing the curriculum, carried out their research or delivered lectures in their respective fields of speciality.

The Director of IBS criticized the amount offered as fellowship to the research scholars. The monetary supports that IBS offered to the scholars under MPhil and PhD programmes have remained the same for the last three decades. It was 1500 taka and 2000 taka for the scholars belonged to MPhil programme and PhD programme, respectively. To him, it is very distressing that the fellowship package remained unchanged years after years. The Director recalls, “At the time I got enrolled as a PhD researcher at IBS back in late 1980s, I was given the same amount (2000 taka per month). I joined here leaving my teaching profession in a College as a Lecturer through which I got a salary of 1650 taka per month. It’s a shame that after so many years we have been offering exactly the same package to the scholars when a teacher of the same rank now earns 11000 taka per month!”

The IBS management expressed their dissatisfaction saying, “UGC does not sanction the budget that IBS proposes each year. Even UGC did not adjust the fellowship package for the scholars in last 30 years!” While asked why UGC remained reluctant in offering better stipend package, in reply the IBS people indicated about huge fund implications for UGC if it decided to increase the fellowship package as the changed decision would be applicable to the scholars belonging to academic institutions all over the country.

But still the IBS management strongly supports a prestigious as well as realistic offer to the scholars entitled for fellowship under MPhil and PhD programmes. They informed that UGC has taken a decision to provide better stipend: 4000 taka and 5000 taka for scholars at MPhil and PhD levels, respectively but it is still in the paper. As a result, IBS still cannot provide the scholars the increased amounts as stipend. As most of the scholars here belong to government services – so they do not face acute fund problem at the time they carry out their research.

According to the in-house researchers and top management of **BIDS**, due to their research endowment fund they remain relatively relaxed and can do quality research. For carrying out research, BIDS also hires experts from outside when and while needed. Actually BIDS hires researchers from other universities or research houses going beyond its existing capacities only when more research fund is given to BIDS. But for involving experts from other

organizations, BIDS first looks into its in-house capacity and assess if it really lacks the expertise.

For ensuring success in the bidding process, the proposed lead researcher has to develop a diverse team. BIDS gives importance to the demonstrated ability of the researchers in case of hiring them from outside. BIDS forms team involving faculties from DU many a time.

The advantage for **CPD** is it has a strong network and a diverse resource pool. The resources of the network are also used for CPD work. And the resource pool consists of researchers both at national level (faculty cum researchers from DU and other universities; researchers belong to other research organizations etc.) and international level (researchers belong to ODI London, GD Washington). As a result, CPD not only carries out research but also do policy influencing through this network.

As a part of recognition, CPD has received the **Think Tank Initiative** reward recently from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The researchers at **RED** feel that all of them have a unique working experience as they do research as well as evaluate development interventions under the umbrella of BRAC. “Being a part of BRAC, we do evaluate different development interventions that give us the opportunity to understand a development program better than other researchers who are not based under any program organizations like ours. Due to this opportunity, in addition to doing research, we are getting capable to work at policy level/program level. And we believe an academician usually lacks this opportunity”.

The faculty members at DU showed their dissatisfaction with the existing low salary package²⁵. Even they do not have their health insured. Faculties used to face hard reality in their day to day life.

According to them, it was never possible to lead their lives with dignity with this pay structure. At the same time, they are not duly supported with funds for doing research. This reality led them to raise their voices in favor of better salary package as well as funding support for carrying out research.

“University teachers get salary on the basis of the government pay scale but there is a gross difference in the salary structure if we compare ours with the salary structure of the faculties in India” – Director, IBS

For the same reason, side by side with teaching, most of the faculty members used to get involved with other available income earning options. One of the best alternatives is to offer courses in the private universities. Therefore, the faculties at both DU and IBS prefer to get devoted in teaching student in the private universities. In case of IBS, a portion of the

²⁵ At the time of fieldwork, the salary package of the faculties was quite low but very recently a new pay scale has been officially announced where the package would be almost double.

faculties prefer to teach not only at Rajshahi, but also they travel to Dhaka or other district towns for teaching in the private universities. As a result, the scholars do not get quality times from their supervisors that cause negatively over the quality of each research work.

IBS management is aware of all these but could not improve the situation as per the provision the supervisors are all in all in case of guiding research of their scholars. Although IBS management sometimes conveyed these issues to their knowledge but the faculties who supervise used to ignore that. So the IBS officials regret, “We only can suggest them but could not force them. There is no mechanism in-built that will motivate the supervisors to give quality time to their scholars”.

On the other hand, CPD does not allow its staff to get involved with any consultancy work. From the very beginning, the management of CPD had a dream to develop this organization as a think tank, not as a consultancy firm. Although it is challenging for a think tank like CPD that does not accept government fund, but still it is trying to pay its staff keeping in mind the salary structure in the private sector. According to the Chief of this platform, it is not easy to compete with the corporate sector and private universities but still CPD revises its salary structure time to time.

According to the RED researchers, the pay scale at their house is quite reasonable but still drop out has been almost a common phenomenon all over BRAC these days and RED is not an exception. The researchers at RED identified three reasons behind drop outs: due to higher study, due to better opportunity and family related problems. The researchers/staff at RED used to remain in fear of losing their jobs at any time [no job guarantee]. “This affects the smooth working environment” – they said.

On the other hand, shortage of human resources has been a big problem at BIDS as well. “We have been facing huge problem of senior researchers as most of them have either retired or working elsewhere” – said the DG, BIDS.

Box 4.5 *IBS Faces Shortage of Human Resources*

Although there are 16 positions for the faculties at IBS but currently only 6 faculties are serving. It means more than 60% posts are still vacant! There is no budget for recruiting more faculties. As per the Director at IBS, almost all the budget is utilized for giving salary and allowances to the existing IBS staff.

Usually faculties are recruited for the position of Assistant Professor but IBS has been planning to recruit a Professor of English Literature who would take care the language skills of the scholars. It has been advertised but no one is selected yet. One limitation is IBS could not provide accommodation facility to a faculty where s/he can bring his/her whole family, but it expects that the faculty would stay in the campus as inter-personal relationship between a faculty/supervisor and the scholar is very important. “Also we find that the potential teachers remain unwilling to apply for the position. Budget constraint is another reason for not recruiting new teachers”.

Sometimes due to procedural complicacies, IBS could not advertise for the vacant positions. There is no specific plan about the discipline of the faculties. IBS management feels there should be new faculties of different disciplines including English, Psychology, Geography and Business Study. Currently there is a History teacher but IBS is interested to recruit another History teacher. IBS has many plans like this but due to fund constraints it hardly can execute anything.

There are *scholarships* for higher studies but hardly any teacher has any clear knowledge about that as these remain in-transparent from the concerned desks. Recently a scholarship known as Bangabandhu Fellowship has been introduced in Dhaka University. Only few faculties could avail this opportunity. During group discussion with the academicians, the selection process of this scholarship has been criticized. According to some of the faculties, the applicants of this scholarship were politically selected. In other words, although there are scholarships for higher studies or research but most of the time, as they did guess, the close relations of a secretary or a minister manage to get those.

Other than fellowship, the scholars these days at IBS do not have any other grant support. The scholars at IBS said, “We do not have any fund support for their fieldwork or purchasing reading materials/books. So for data collection or purchasing books, we are to incur costs from our own pockets.”

The faculties at DU shared with disappointment that a modern *library system* in this university has not been developed yet. As they reported, the library shelves are full with old books and the faculties used to collect updated publications on their own initiatives. Whenever the faculties are asked to share an updated booklist of their choice – only a portion of them (say, 5 out of 35 faculties) get back to that request. So some new books are added in the library on the basis of the partial demand.

There is hardly any budget for the library purpose. IBS keeps aside a small amount of money (say, 5000 taka or 10000 taka) from its budget in a year and purchase some books. It is understandable that with this nominal amount of money, only few books are possible to purchase. Researchers from BIDS and CPD are satisfied with their institutional library facilities. RED researchers have access to BRAC resource centre as well, so they are quite happy with that.

Box 4.6 *Bureaucratic Complicacies*

If anything goes out of order, the IBS management could not repair it or renew quickly. The overall procedure for purchasing anything is very cumbersome and bureaucratic. In order to purchase anything the approval is to be taken first from the Syndicate, then it goes to the tender committee. Usually it takes around 6 months for processing any matter. The following example that the concerned official of IBS shared will help us understanding the situation better:

“For purchasing a computer – after we got the configuration, it took around 6 - 7 months to get the final approval but by that time it was difficult to get the machine in the market with approved configuration as new models already wiped out the model with approved configuration. So it creates another type of complicacy. To solve this mere problem, we were to bring this issue to the knowledge of the higher authority (the Vice Chancellor) for their further permission to purchase advanced model, which required flexible decision to adjust the price.”

For *fund shortage*, sometimes it happens that IBS could not reimburse the dues. Once it happened that a faculty of Chittagong University came to IBS for taking a PhD viva and he submitted a bill of certain amount including his air fare but unfortunately IBS could pay him back only 50% of his claim as there was no funds to pay him in full. The teacher tried to get

back his money but finally he had to give up the claim considering the poor fund condition of IBS.

It is a shame that IBS lacks enough funds to provide a respectful honorarium to any special guest for organizing even any lecture! It can give only a negligible amount (BDT 1000 only!) to the guest as an honorarium. That is why IBS feels embarrassed to invite any guests. “Nowadays, a person gets BDT 2000 if s/he participates in a TV talk show. Even IBS does not have any fund to provide travel costs of the guest” – says the IBS manager. To manage this part, usually IBS requests/invites the faculties/guests who are already at Rajshahi due other reasons.

Infra-structural inconveniences have been an issue only to the eyes of the scholars and personnel at IBS. In RU, only IBS is housed in a separate building, whereas all other institutes under this university have been accommodated inside the University buildings. That is why the maintenance costs for other institutes are nearly zero as it is taken care of by the mother department whereas IBS has to incur all sorts of costs. The physical structure for IBS is in place but the due financial support to run this institute is absent.

Nevertheless, the design of the IBS building is not free of flaws. The library is located just beside the office room and class rooms. That is why it is not possible to construct any other class rooms in this building to accommodate more students. Also IBS is to open a computer laboratory for the students, but there is no room in this building. Also separate common rooms for the faculties and the scholars are to be there. Due to fund constraint, the building of IBS has not been painted for the last 15 years.

MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT TIME REQUIRED FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSES

Among the social science research houses in Bangladesh, RED is a privileged one under the umbrella of BRAC that offers many facilities for the researchers to work with quality. The researchers at RED expressed their satisfaction to the quality of research being conducted in their house but at the same time they shared some issues that deserve importance to understand the overall environment they are in.

Qualitative analyses take time, which the upper management/Supervisor does not want to accept. That is why they (supervisors) used to ask them (the researchers) why the process get delayed, and at the same time they take this as the weakness of the researchers. They used to experience further problems with research methods (*see in the box below*).

Box 4.7 *Domination of Quantitative Group at RED*

Although the researchers at RED work forming a multi-disciplinary team but the team is dominated by economists/researchers prone to quantitative methods. The management sometimes do not get convinced with the notion that our studies require both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The researchers passionate with quantitative methods hardly endorse qualitative methods and they believe that the researchers ‘manufacture’ a research while use qualitative methods. In other words, the supervisor in each unit is more inclined to talk in favor of quantitative methods and remain very reluctant in funding qualitative studies. They rely more on numbers!

“Usually, we use ‘few’ ‘many’ etc. in our qualitative analyses but the top management asks us for percentages; so we get afraid of presenting our findings. In a qualitative study, we investigate in-depth so that we understand the magnitude of any problem. That is why in order to get the picture of a particular set of respondents (say, daughter in laws), we prefer to interact with other set of people (say, mother in laws) as well in the study as well but our supervisors hardly get convinced with this idea. So finally we give up.”

The working hours are not very rigid for public/autonomous organizations (DU, IBS and BIDS) but both RED and CPD maintain NGO office hours. The following feelings shared by the researchers at RED may give a better understanding in this regard.

“The office starts at 8.30 AM and ends at 5.15 PM but maintaining flexible timing is allowed. We can come to the office anytime within 10 AM but s/he has to inform this to her supervisor beforehand. Although the expected duty is for eight and half an hour per working day but on an average each researcher at RED work more than 60 hours a week (i.e. more than 12 hours a working day). The fact is the researchers cannot maintain any particular time table. They are to work not only in the office, but also at their residences. Although to avail the office transport, one has to leave the office on time (5 PM) but s/he has to carry her work along with him/her.

4.8 Key Challenges

CHALLENGES/WEAKNESSES FOR A THINK TANK

While asked, the **CPD** management identified three challenging areas for them including human resource sustainability, financial sustainability and general eco-system.

1) *Human resource sustainability*: For recruiting qualified candidates, as CPD management views, it is competing with private universities and corporate houses; even the researchers who are recruited in the house also search for better opportunities soon after gathering certain amount of experiences. So the experiences work as a positive quality to switch over to other organizations like WB. It (WB) used to campaign for capacity building but keeps on hiring capable officials from different organizations including CPD. WB used to offer very high salary packages that attract the incumbent officials to move from the current organizations. Again, the staff who go abroad for their studies at Masters or PhD level – most of the time they get absorbed over there; particularly the junior level officials hardly come back to CPD.

But the mid-level officials usually continue their service with CPD. The researchers who enrolled at PhD level consider CPD as a place for their career development. They are serious and committed, and have plans to contribute to the sector through CPD.

2) *Financial sustainability*: As CPD is selective in accepting funds, so it has to earn a single penny for running its operations. It generates its funds mainly through research activities. Always CPD remains in a process of developing proposals and submitting them as a part of exploring further fund opportunities.

3) *General eco-system*: How the state considers a think tank is another challenging area for CPD. If it sees a think tank as a foe, in that case a think tank will either apply self-censorship or it would experience such an unfavorable environment that it could not work as it plans. That is why CPD management thinks the environment under which a think tank works is very important.

Box 4. 9 *Roles played by the civil society think tank questioned*

Some faculties/researchers criticized the roles being played by think tanks in Bangladesh. First of all, they showed their reservations to the very word ‘think tank’. “We need to decide the minimum areas that a platform/institution has to cover to be called as a think tank”. On the basis of the focus areas, as they thought, the think tanks may be categorized into different types. Indicating CPD, they said that the common practice of the so called think tanks in Bangladesh as if is to calculate percentages of different indicators¹ and figure out their trends. So an acceptable definition for think tank is to be agreed upon first. No doubt, since 1993, CPD has been contributing to this society but to some serious researchers these contributions are not enough. They would like to see a more dynamic CPD. Hardly any think tanks in Bangladesh conduct fundamental research, which they are supposed to. A think tank is supposed to give direction to a society but CPD does not have that influence over the society. Mainly CPD deals with the immediate economic or socio-economic issues (such as dissatisfaction of the garment workers over their existing salary structure). The focus of the work gets shifted from one issue to another (say, if inflation becomes a burning issue, then CPD starts working on this issue).

PUBLICATION RELATED

Adequate time as well as due concentration is needed for publication but the researchers at RED usually belong to non-Economics discipline hardly get free time due to getting overburdened with back to back assignments. “Although we receive encouragements from our higher management but after output generation, hardly we get time for publication”.

Producing a research report for the concerned program is the priority. That is why the management is happy with the research reports. So publishing an article in some reputed journal is not given priority.

RESEARCHERS AT RED: BUDGET RELATED:

Most of the time, the budget that is estimated at the beginning of any research is not given in full amount. Usually one third of the estimated budget is sanctioned for carrying out any

research. The program used to convey the message to the researchers that the fund is constrained.

So the researchers somehow adjust their assigned tasks – most of the time by reducing the number of sample size or the number of FGDs affecting the quality of the research. Also the supervisor herself then play the role of an enumerator to keep the expenditure in the fieldwork within reach.

TIGHT TIMEFRAME FOR ACCOMPLISHING A RESEARCH

Usually the management gives a tight timeframe for any research, which is hampering for quality work

INCLINATION TOWARDS CONSULTANCY WORK

Although the Chief of BIDS gave a clear picture of how this research house have been contributing positively in knowledge generation since its inception but at the same time he shared one vital challenge that BIDS has to confront with. According to him, most of the researchers at BIDS have got habituated with consultancy works as they used to receive consultancy offers for different sponsored research. Terming this as a ‘big problem’, the higher management indicates that it is now a challenge for BIDS to get rid of this inclination.

NON-RESEARCH AGENDA AFFECTS SERIOUS RESEARCH

On the other hand, IBS faculty as well as concerned IBS staff flagged the issue of under utilization of its resources. According to them, compared to the investment made and facilities offered, the scholars make negligible contributions. They also shared an observation that among the scholars, not everybody comes to IBS to be a researcher, rather most of them have different (non-research) interest/agenda including promotion in the existing job, or getting better job opportunities and so on. So it is a challenge for IBS to ensure serious research works to be done.

CONSTRAINTS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Finally, in this study, the respondents groups (faculties, researchers and scholars) identified broadly three constraints that affect the quality of a social science research. These are:

- Fund support
- Opportunities
- Mindset

Chapter 5

RESEARCHER BEHAVIOR AND CHARACTERISTICS

5.1 About the survey

As a part of this research, a formal survey was conducted in Dhaka and Rajshahi, two districts of Bangladesh, using almost similar three questionnaires for faculties, researchers and research scholars. Usually, a research with quantitative method (*i.e.* questionnaire survey) makes conversion of observations into data for the purpose of analysis from a neutral “objective” perspective. To get this neutral objective perspective, the sample size for any survey should meet the standard criteria so that the study could draw generalizations. But this very study piloted both in Bangladesh and India deals with quite a small sample size that limits this investigation from generalizing the results. But still given the low response rate, the findings of this research cannot be undermined as these even if not possible to generalize, but can be suggestive as well as indicative.

In the research design, the Bangladesh team was supposed to deal, as already said, with a very small sample size (60 respondents covering aforesaid respondent groups) but this study attempted to cover more number of respondents. As a result, total number of respondents interacted under this survey has been 88. The broad distribution of the sample respondents is given in Table 5.1. The following Table suggests that about 39 percent of the respondents were research scholars, followed by faculties (36%) and researchers (25%).

Table 5.1: *Distribution of Sample Respondents*

Type of respondents	Number of respondents	Percent
Faculty	32	36.4
Researcher	22	25.0
Research Scholar	34	38.6
TOTAL	88	100.0

5.2 Background information of respondents

The background information of all the sample respondents is summarized in Annex Table 5.2.

Respondents by Location

The study is focused on faculty members, researchers, and scholars. Faculty members and scholars were selected from Dhaka and Rajshahi districts. However, researchers were selected only from Dhaka district. Among all respondents (n=88) nearly two-third (62.5%) of the respondent were from Dhaka District and remaining 37.5 percent were from Rajshahi district.

Sex of the respondents

The respondents of the survey, though randomly selected, show greater representation of male respondents (77.3%) compared to females (22.7%). The greater representation of male was also found for each of the independent category. The greatest dispersion between male and female was identified among Faculty members (84.4% male compared to 15.6% female). Among researchers the male-female ratio is close to 4:1 (79.4% male compared to 20.6% female). Finally, among researchers this ratio comes down to nearly 3:1 (63.6% male compared to 36.4% female). Hence, it may be concluded that females are less involved in such activities compared to men although the sex ratio²⁶ in Bangladesh is almost equal.

Age of the respondents

The average age of surveyed respondents for this survey is 37.7 years. However, average age of surveyed Faculty Members, Researchers, and Scholars is 42.4 years, 37.9 years, and 33.1 years respectively. Among Faculty Members, average age of Professors is 49.3 years (range: 41-65 years), average age of Associate professors is 41.4 years (range: 34-51 years), and average age of Assistant professors is 39.2 years (range: 35-46 years).

Among Scholars, PhD complete respondents are on average 41.3 years old age (range: 35-46 years) and PhD pursuers are on average 37.1 years old (range: 30-44 years). Moreover, the average age of MPhil complete and MPhil pursuing respondents is 34.9 years (range: 24-47 years) and 26.7 years (range: 22-33 years) respectively.

The average age of surveyed Researchers is 37.9 years. The average age of researchers decreased as their designation of ranks decreased. There was only one executive director included in the survey who was aged 59. The average age of Senior research fellow (45.7 years; range: 43-49) and Research fellow (44 years; range: 34-57) is very close to each other though there has been a dispersion in the age range. The average age of other Researchers are far behind compared to the fellows. The average age of Senior Research Associates is 34 years (range: 29-39) and Research Associates (Research Officers are included in this category) is 30.2 years (range: 24-39).

Religion

It comes with no surprise that 89.7 percent of the respondents are Muslim as more than 90 percent people in Bangladesh are Muslim²⁷. Survey also found 6.8 percent Hindu, 1.1 percent Christian respondents. Another 2.3 percent respondents were found who believe in some religion other than the mentioned three.

Years of Experience of the Respondents

²⁶ Defined as the number of males per 100 females in the population. According to census preliminary report sex ratio of Bangladesh is 100.3.

²⁷ Estimated using 2011 Census Community Series Data

It is of no surprise that the average years of experience of respondents coincides with the age of the respondents. It has been noticed that the higher the age of the respondent, the higher their years of experience. Among respondents, Faculty members reported an average of 17.3 year experience while researchers reported 12.1 years of experience on average. Data also reveals that on average, the respondents started their research works at 26 years. Such estimate for different respondent categories included in this survey is very close to each other. On average, the Faculties began their research works at age 25.1 years, closely followed by Researchers (25.8 years), and Scholars (27 years).

Current position of respondents

Among surveyed faculty members, most are Associate professors (43.8%), followed by Professors (34.4%) and Assistant professors (21.9%). Among researchers, 32 percent are Research Associates (usually are more interested to conduct complex research), 27 percent are Research Fellow (are conducting different research works), 9.1 Percent Research Officers. Research Scholars included in this study are either perusing a Post Masters degree or have achieved one. Among them 35.8 percent have completed their MPhil and 41.2 percent have completed their PhD (Please see Annex Table 5.3).

Discipline of respondents

Among scholars most are from the discipline Anthropology (17.6%), jointly followed by Economics and sociology (14.7%). However, among faculty members, Economics (31.3%) and Sociology (21.9%) constitute more than half of the respondents. Moreover, Researchers with backgrounds in Economics (45.5%) and Sociology (22.7%) outnumber researchers from other discipline by a formidable margin. So, among all the respondents, 55.9 percent are from either Economics (32.5%) and Sociology (23.4%) discipline. Hence, it can be concluded that this study findings may present greater presentation towards these two disciplines. (Please see Annex Table 5.4)

5.3 Training and Capability

Academic Degree Achieved

The first indicator that has been used to assess the capability of respondents is their academic achievement of MPhil or PhD degree. Data reveals that achieving PhD degree is more popular among Faculty Members. Among them 87.5 percent achieved PhD degree while only 25 percent achieved Mphil degree. It is noteworthy that 21.9 percent of the Faculty Members achieved both the degrees while 9.4 percent did not achieve either of them during the survey. Most Faculty Members achieved their PhD from European countries (highest 8 members achieved PhD from UK).

Among researchers interviewed for the survey, only half achieved MPhil or PhD degree. A 40.9 percent researcher achieved PhD degree while 13.6 percent achieved MPhil degree and only 4.5 percent achieved both degrees.

More than two-third (67.6%) of scholars are awaiting/working on achieving MPhil or PhD degree. Among scholars in the survey, 23.5 percent achieved MPhil and 11.8 percent achieved PhD degree. Only 2.9 percent scholar achieved both degrees. (Please see Annex Table 5.5)

Duration of MPhil and PhD Programme

Data combined from earlier section reveal that among all respondents 46.6 percent achieved PhD degree while 21.6 percent achieved Mphil degree. Moreover, only 10.2 percent achieved both the degrees while 42.0 percent did not achieve either.

On average MPhil degree holders had to spend 2.6 years to achieve the degree. The surveyed Researchers and Faculty Members who achieved this degree, spent 2.0 years on average to achieve the degree. However, the scholars spent 3.4 years on average for the degree. The PhDs on average spent 4.0 years for their achievement. The average duration to achieve PhD among Faculty Members, Researchers, and Scholars is 4.1 years, 4.3 years, and 3.0 years respectively. (Please see Annex Table 5.6)

Relevant abilities

Abilities were assessed through four skill sets namely writing, critical understanding, research methodology, and presentation. More than half of the faculty members and researchers reported that the skill sets are above than moderate level in the Universities and of their supervisors and mentors. In addition, some of the faculty members and researchers did not respond to such question too. So, the proportion of reporting the level of skill sets being moderate and below moderate combined is less than one-third of the respondents in most of cases. Many faculty members (less than one-fourth) and researchers (more than one-third) did not respond about 'on the job training' and 'learning by doing'. However, in these two cases the proportion of respondents reporting skill sets being above moderate level is a little higher than one-third in most of the cases. Please see Annex Table 5.7 and Annex Table 5.8 for details.

The scholars assessed themselves to be highly competent in different issues. 85.3 percent of the scholars rank themselves to be above average (including very good) in research writing followed by 82.4 percent in formulating research proposal. However, among research scholars many do not consider themselves to be experts in quantitative techniques since only 58.5 percent consider themselves to be above average in using this technique. Please see Annex Table 5.9 for details.

Assessment about universities

Only half (50.0%) of the faculty members rate the university curriculum as above moderate and this is the highest among all assessing characteristics. Among others, one-third faculty members believe that teaching and learning, research methodology, and reading materials are of above moderate quality while only-fourth of faculty members think the same about academic culture and research guidance. Please see Annex Table 5.10 for details.

Classification of Research Works

The Faculty Members and Researchers were asked about their familiarity with different type of research works. Data reveals that both Faculty Members and Researchers are very familiar with Empirical research and Case-studies. Among surveyed Researchers, 86.4 percent are familiar with Empirical research methods and 77.3 percent are familiar with Case-Studies while such rates are 81.3 percent and 71.9 percent respectively among Faculty Members. A 72.7 percent Researcher have experience of Archive-based research while only 34.4 percent Faculty Member have such experience. The survey Faculty Members are less familiar with Action Research while Researchers are less familiar with Theoretical Research. The Researchers reported to have been involved in Research methods beyond the listed ones for the survey. Altogether, among surveyed respondents, researchers are familiar with more research methods than the Faculty Members. (Please see Annex Table 5.11)

Tools Used for Data Collection

The Faculty Members have greater expertise in using different data collection tools for research works. 'Interview' is the universally highest reported tool used for data collection by the surveyed respondents (78.1% by Faculty Members, 81.1% by Researchers, and 73.5% by Scholars). It seems the Faculty Members prefer Focus Group Discussion equally to Interview followed by Structured Questionnaire (75%) and Archive/Documents (71.9%). Though the Researchers equally use Focus Group Discussion (77.3%) and Structured Questionnaire (77.3%), they are more into Semi-structured questionnaire (68.2%) than Archive/Documents (50.2%).

Scholars are consistently behind in using different type of data collection tools compared to Faculty Members and Researchers. 'Interview' being the most applied data collection tool for Scholars, observation (55.9%) is the next most reported data collection method followed by Focus Group Discussion (44.1%) and Semi-structured questionnaire (32.4%). However, earlier data reveals that scholars are the least experienced among the three categories of respondents, such finding is not very surprising. (Please see Annex Table 5.12)

Techniques Used for Data Analysis

There is great dispersion in the data analysis techniques used by different respondents. It seems Researchers use data to higher extent compared to other respondents. A very high proportion (95.5%) of Researchers applies Regression Analysis. Researchers also apply Content Analysis (59.1%), Discourse Analysis (45.5%), and Principal Component Analysis

(45.5%) frequently. Content Analysis is the most applied analysis tool among Faculty Members which is followed by Regression Analysis (56.3%) and Discourse Analysis (40.6). Scholars heavily rely on Content analysis (70.6%). Applying other analysis techniques among scholars is much less (Discourse Analysis 32.4%, Regression Analysis 32.4, and Principal Component Analysis (29.4%) compared to Content analysis. (Please see Annex Table 5.13)

Influencing factors of selecting research tools

Both faculty members and researchers consider ‘objectives and research questions’ to be the key factor in choosing the research tools which is not surprising since they are actually supposed to describe ‘what is supposed to be found from a research’ and ‘what are the key focuses’ of the research. So, it is logical to choose this as the key factor. However, between them, researchers (92.5%) are more focused on ‘objectives and research questions’ compared to faculty members (81.3%). ‘Prior knowledge to research tools’ and ‘prevailing trend in the discipline/area of research’ are given second and third place consecutively by both faculty members and researchers with no significant difference between them. To researchers (31.8%), desirability of journals carry less importance compared to faculty members (50.0%). (For details, please see Annex Table 5.14)

Rating on efforts

The faculty members are more focused on upgrading research skills (78.1%) and knowledge on the discipline (78.1%) while the researchers are more focused on improving/updating knowledge on the discipline (81.8%) and research methodology (72.7%). It is possible that the researchers are more focused on specializing/mastering in their own discipline that they are less interested to work on new research skills. This is also supported by the fact that only 40.9 percent of them are interested to learn from other discipline. However, the faculty members are wise and are more interested in learning from other disciplines. Among many common characteristics found among faculty members and researchers, this is one notable change between them. Please see Annex Table 6 for details. (Please see Annex Table 5.15)

Usefulness of attending workshops, seminars, and conferences

Attending workshops is a good way of learning, improving, and updating research knowledge and abilities. The faculty members and researchers suggest scholars and new research professionals to attend seminars and workshops for learning. 78.3 percent faculty members and 72.7 percent researchers believe that workshop has some usefulness in development of research works (Please see Annex Table 5.16 for details). However, among research scholars, more than one-third did not attend any workshops by the time of interviewing which is surprising considering their average years of experience is a little higher than 6 years. It is to note that most (nearly two-thirds) scholars who attended seminars believe attending workshop is useful for learning and updating abilities. Please see Annex Table 5.17 for details.

Reasons behind attending any course

The key factors reported by the research scholars in attending a workshop in descending order are: the quality of resource persons (64.7%), international workshop (55.8%), resource persons who are known (55.8%), acquaintance with the organizer (50%), workshops attended by professional bodies (41.3%), and in at last the distance (24.4%). It is notable that nearly one-third of the respondents choose not to respond to such question. Though it is a good sign, that the more scholars are interested to attend workshops for worthy reasons (i.e., quality of resource person, quality of organizers etc.) despite the distance to be covered to attend the workshop. Please see Annex Table 5.18 for details.

Research training

The status of importance of seminars and conference has been assessed for 4 specific platforms by the research scholars. The research scholars believe that seminars and conferences are the most useful platform to learn from others on their discipline or topic compared to other platforms. In next is the opportunity to disseminate research findings followed by gathering feedback and socialization. Please see Annex Table 5.19 for details.

The high rate of awareness reported from research scholars may be attributed to research trainings provided by institutions/organizations. According to faculty members and researchers, research methodology is the most important aspect of research training. However, faculty members then prioritize writing skills and English language while among researchers those are tools and techniques and writing skills. However, the interesting fact is researchers are less focused on computer and software(s) compared to faculty members. One possible reason may be the researchers usually train on computer and software(s) prior to beginning research. Please see Annex Table 5.20 for details.

Whether these taught at PG level

Training activities seem to be more popular among faculty members for writing skills and learning tools and techniques while researchers are more interested to be trained on presentation skills and computers and software(s). However, their interest in training for methodologies remain similar. Please see Annex Table 5.21 for details.

Comfort in English and communication with mentors

The research scholars were asked about the comfort level with English at different medium of communication. At least half of the research scholars consistently reported that they are comfortable (including very comfortable) in English communication. Among them, 76.5 percent are comfortable in class room communication followed by 64.7 percent in presentation and 61.7 percent in literature review. It is to note that almost every class room communication and interaction with teachers, mentors, or supervisors in Bangladesh takes place in Bengali. Use of English language is usually limited to literature reviewing and exam writing. However, the percentages coincide with the ability of presentation skills by Researchers and faculty members. Please see Annex Table 5.22 for details.

The research scholars expressed their positive attitude towards their relationship with their mentors. It has been found that 91.2 percent of the scholars have good (including very good) personal rapport with mentor, 88.3 percent received academic help from mentor, and 79.4 percent achieved professional compatibility from mentors. Please see Annex Table 5.23 for details.

Plagiarism

One of the factors covered in the study is plagiarism in research publication. Researchers are more aware in actions towards prohibiting plagiarism. 72.7 percent researchers reported that they take above average efforts towards awareness of plagiarism. Such rate among faculty members is 50 percent. However, the occurrences of plagiarism are also low among faculty members compared to researchers. Please see Annex Table 5.24 for details.

Characteristics of Current Program [SCHOLARS: B06]

The scholars reported about the characteristics about their current program. Most of the scholars are currently involved with Qualitative methods (82.4%) followed by quantitative methods (61.8%). However, most of them reported to have been involved in both qualitative and quantitative methods. Only 29.4 percent scholars reported that their current program involves latest research techniques which is not very impressive since scholars should be updated with latest research techniques and be able to apply them in practice. Also only 26.5 scholars reported that their current program involved skills software. (Please see Annex Table 5.25)

5.4 Facilities

Support Received from Institutional Library

All respondents reported on receiving number of supports from their institutional library. Institutional library, as reported by the respondents, seems to be one of the most frequently accessed sources for support. Though it is unclear how many of the respondents actually sought those supports from their institutional library (the survey did not seek answer to that question which may be considered as a limitation of the survey). Moreover, attempt has been made to assess the quality of support received from institutional library through satisfaction level of the respondents. (Please see Annex Table 5.26)

Quantitative data collected through interviewing suggest that the Faculty Members are more into purchasing new books/journals (87.5%) on request. Since they are the most suitable person whose recommendation to purchase a new book/journal will be most appreciated by the institutional library. After all they are the foremost experts. Faculty Members are unable to request a purchase unless they are aware that the book/journal is not available. So it is of no surprise that 84.4 percent of them actually searched for physical copies of a book/journal in the institutional library. The Faculty Members are also into electronic knowledge resource. The proportion is highest among the three categories (68.8%) of respondents. It could have been much higher if had been popular among elderly Faculty Members. The faculty members are not into subscribing for different online data-bases (28.1%) available. Also 53.1 percent

Faculty Members 'sorted references' and 'subscribed for new journals' each. A 46.9 percent of them received support on plagiarism check.

The researchers, 90.9 percent of them, are also into searching physical copies of books/journals which ranks highest in support receiving by them. Also a high percentage (72.7%) of them was able to purchase book/journal on request. Involvement of researchers to e-resources is more frequent compared to others as 59.1 percent of them access e-resources (books/journals) and 50 percent has subscription to online data-bases. Though 59.1 percent Researcher sorted reference from libraries, very few (9.1%) checked for plagiarism. A 45.5 percent 'subscribed for new journals' through institutional library.

Like Researchers, most scholars (85.3%) searched for physical copies in institutional library. However, scholars were less privileged with the opportunity of purchasing new books/journals (35.3%) compared to Faculties and Researchers. However, many of them sort reference much more often (79.4%) from institutional library. It seems Scholars are the least users of e-resource (books/journals: 61.8% and subscription to online data-base: 17.6%) which is surprising compared to their lowest average age among three groups. Younger individuals intend to depend more on e-resources now a days. However, it is possible they are less informed about available online data-bases.

Extent of Accessing Internet

In this era of electronic development internet accessibility in an institution/organization is essential. All surveyed facilities were equipped with internet access during the survey. Departments more commonly have desktops with internet connection through cable. These desktops are used to access internet. However, availability of internet access at residence depends on many factors those are not the focus of this study.

Collected data suggest that more than half of the respondents accessed internet through Wi-Fi in campus/department or centre. A 54.5 percent Researchers accessed Wi-Fi in Campus; such ratio is 50 percent among Faculty Members and Scholars. Also 71.9 percent Faculty Members accessed Wi-Fi from their department/centre; such ratio is 52.9 percent among Scholars and 50 percent among researchers. It is a positive sign that most of the Faculty Members have Wi-Fi facility at their residence while 35.3 percent scholar has such facility in their dormitories. Researchers are behind in terms of Wi-Fi facility at residence as only 13.6 percent of them have such facility.

While Researchers are behind in residential Wi-Fi facility they are way ahead in using Local Area Network (LAN). Among Researchers, 86.4 percent use this facility while such facility is used by 68.8 percent Faculty Members. The Scholars were not asked about LAN access. Access to library and computer centres is less popular among Researchers (library: 27.3% and computer centre: 18.2%) compared to Faculty Members (library: 59.4% and computer centre: 56.3%) and Scholars (library: 44.1% and computer centre: 38.2%). (Please see Annex Table 5.27)

Rating of satisfaction from services

Status of satisfaction while conducting research studies in respective organization (department, faculty, centre etc.) have been assessed using a total of 9 indicators. Among these 9 indicators, 2 are associated with library facility (availability of books and processing requests), 2 are associated with electronic resource facilities (availability of e-resources and subscription to online data-bases), and 2 are associated with internet and information management (internet services and ICT maintenance services). The remaining 3 indicators are associated with journal access, computer availability, and work space allotment. A five point Likert scale has been used to assess the satisfaction level from the randomly selected respondents where score 1 represented very low level satisfaction and score 5 represented very high level of satisfaction. It is to note that, Researchers were not asked about 'work space allotment' and Scholars were not asked about 'internet services' and 'work space allotment'. (Please see Annex Table 5.28)

The Faculty Members are much less satisfied with library facilities compared to Researchers and Scholars. Only 31.2 percent Faculty Members are more or less satisfied (score above 3) with availability of books while such rate is 66.6 percent among Scholars and 59.2 percent among Researchers. The rate of satisfaction regarding processing of request is even lower among Faculty Members (only 15.6%) although they place request for purchase and processing most frequently among the respondent categories. Among Researchers, 52.3 percent and among Scholars, 57.6 percent expressed their satisfaction with processing requests from library.

The Researchers seems to be satisfied with electronic resource facilities as 72.8 percent and 68.3 percent of them are satisfied with availability of e-resources and subscription to online database. This high rate of satisfaction may be attributed to the fact that they are the most frequent users of online data-bases and they also access e-resources frequently. The Faculty members are again least satisfied among the three categories of respondents as only 15.5 percent and 31.2 percent of them are satisfied with subscription to online database and availability of e-resources respectively. The satisfaction of surveyed scholars is high for availability of e-resources (63.5%). However, their satisfaction with subscription to online database is not impressive (only 34.3%). It is noteworthy that few scholars (only 17.6) actually access online database for their research works.

While the dissatisfaction rate among researchers and scholars stand at only 9.1 percent, such rate is 46.9% percent among Faculty Members regarding ICT maintenance. So it is of no surprise that the satisfaction rates for Faculty Members, researchers, and scholars regarding ICT maintenance is 22.8 percent, 77.3 percent and 72.7 percent respectively. The researchers (68.4%) are also more satisfied with internet services compared to the Faculty Members (46.9%).

More scholars (60.7%) are satisfied with availability of subscribed journals compared to others. A 47.6 percent Researchers and only 22.8 percent Faculty Members expressed their satisfaction with availability of subscribed journals. The low satisfaction of Faculty Members with availability of subscribed journals may be attributed to their longer experience in research works. It is possible, with higher number of research works they became familiar with higher number of good quality journals and they are more aware of the non-subscription to important journals compared to other two respondent groups.

Only faculty members were asked about satisfaction with work space allotment. In response, 37.6 percent reported dissatisfaction, 28.1 percent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 34.3 percent express their satisfaction. Only half (50%) of the Faculty Members and Researchers expressed their satisfaction with availability of computers at institution. Among scholars satisfaction is expressed by only 18.2 percent. This definitely call for a certain urge to improve the computer facilitates at surveyed institutions. In this era of computer and internet, institutions inability to provide adequate computer support to their faculty members, researchers, or scholars certainly indicates inefficiency and inadequacy. This may be one of the barriers toward advancement.

Experiences with financial assistance (own institute)

Most of the faculty members availed financial assistance for own research or institutional project (40.6%) followed by travel grants (37.5%) and organizing academic events (31.3%). Also there are 21.9 percent and 18.8 percent faculty members availed financial assistance for publication and conducting field works consecutively. However, very few of them expressed satisfaction on receiving the financial assistance while nearly half of them did not respond to such question. Please see Annex Table 5.29 for details.

Most of researchers availed financial assistance for attending seminars (59.1%) followed by own research or institutional project (54.5%) and organizing academic events (40.9%) and publication (40.9%). Also 31.8 percent faculty members availed financial assistance for conducting field works and library visit each. However, like faculty members, many of them did not respond on adequacy. The satisfaction level of researchers however is higher compared to faculty members. Please see Annex Table 5.30 for details.

The incidence of availing financial assistance among research scholars is much less compared to others. Only 41.2 percent research scholars availed financial assistance for carrying out own research (M.Phil/PhD). Number of reported grants availed for other purposes by them are very low. Even the overall satisfaction level of adequacy is below 10 percentage point. Again more than half of the respondents decided not to respond on adequacy of the financial assistance. Please see Annex Table 5.31 for details.

Sources of information for financial assistance

The Faculty Members and Researchers were asked about their sources of information on financial assistance and scholarships. Faculty members reported Websites (59.4%) as the largest source of information on Financial Assistance and scholarships; followed by Public Notices/Advertisements (53.1%) and Notice/Circulars to Institution/Organization (37.5%). However, most Researchers learned such information through Notice/Circulars to Institution/Organization (77.3%), followed by Public Notices/Advertisements (63.3%). Also 40.9 percent Researchers learned of these information from Peer Groups and Websites each. (Please see Annex Table 5.32)

Work-culture of organization

Data suggest that researchers enjoy much better working environment compared to the faculty members. Most researchers 81.9 percent reported above average extent in expressing opinion which is significantly lower in case of faculty members (37.6% only). Not only in expressing opinion, researchers enjoy significantly better working environment for each and every comparable work culture. Involvement of political influence in public university work culture may be one of the key reasons for the poor work-culture among faculty members (in public universities). Please see Annex Table 5.33 for details.

Availability of Computers and Software

Computer is an essential tool in research studies in these days. Scholars reported on their availability of computers during this survey. Most scholars reported accessing computers in their department/centre (67.6%), followed by library (47.1%), and university (centralized). However, it is noteworthy that 20.6 percent scholars reported that their centre has no computer for students which is very unusual in this era of internet and computer. (Please see Annex Table 5.34)

Among scholars 58.8 percent was able access their necessary software for work through institutional computers. Also 23.5 percent accessed software through institutional server. It is good to learn that 35.3 percent scholars were able to use latest version of their required software; on the contrary 26.5 percent scholars did not receive any software support from department/centre which is most unfortunate. (Please see Annex Table 5.35)

Places for discussions and debates

Keeping aside the different reading materials, discussion and debate is one of the best medium of learning, thinking, and understanding. Scholars often encounter discussions and debates focusing interesting topics and issues. As reported by the scholars, they encounter discussions and debates most frequently in classrooms/presentation halls (73.5%), followed by hostel (50%). They also reported to have witnessed discussions and debates in campus grounds (38.2%), department/centre corridors (35.3%), and eateries in campus (32.4%). (Please see Annex Table 5.36)

5.5 Sponsored research

Perceptions regarding variations in financial assistance

More researchers believe that there is variation in funding across discipline and area of research. Half of the researchers believe so while only one-fifth of the faculty members believe in variation of available research funding. Only a handful researcher or faculty members believe their discipline or area has advantage over other areas in terms of research funding. Please see Annex Table 5.37 for details.

How gained from SRP

Despite the fact that the financial assistances availed by the respondents are not adequate or sufficient. More than four-fifth of the researchers and faculty members gained from sponsored research with moderate or higher satisfaction. Among faculty members, 50 percent had gain with above average satisfaction for academic pursuit and publication and 45.6 percent had the same for career progression. Among researchers, 68.8 percent had gain on academic pursuit followed by 62.5 percent on publication and only 31.2 percent on career progression. Please see Annex Table 5.38 for details.

Difficulties experienced due to SR

The gains from sponsored research did not come without any difficulties. 40.9 percent of the researchers and 21.9 percent of the faculty members had to compromise at high level with their research interest. Also nearly one-third of researchers and one-fourth of the faculty members had to sacrifice time at above average level from their desired/assigned research works. Finally, one-third of them (separately) had to sacrifice on their administrative procedures they are in pursuit. Please see Annex Table 5.39 for details.

5.6 Collaboration

Rating issues related to collaboration

The most important factor (factors those are reported to be of above average importance by most respondents) for research collaboration among faculty members is social capital (78.1%) followed by publication (71.9%) and funding/resource for organization and policy communication (62.5%). Though there is dispersion in selecting most important factors among faculty members, the researchers consider all factors to be nearly equally important. The researchers reported recognition (68.1%) to be the most important factor but 4 of the factors are reported equally important (63.6%) as the second most important factor and complimentary exercise is reported as the least important (54.5%). Please see Annex Table 5.40 for details.

Factors playing important roles in research collaboration

Less dispersion can also be discovered for role playing issues among researchers compared to faculty members. Most researchers reported their organization plays the most helpful (including very helpful) role in conducting research works. Which is not surprising considering the fact that the researchers are employed in that organization to do research

works exclusively. Foreign stays/visits and academic background together hold the second spot (59.1%) and location of workplace and publications hold the third place (50.0%) together. Among faculty members, publication (68.8%) plays the leading role followed by membership networks (65.6%) and academic background (62.6%). Please see Annex Table 5.41 for details.

Rating opportunities for collaboration

The researchers showed more interest/opportunity (high and very high interest) within their discipline and area compared to faculty members (63.7% among researchers and 53.1% among faculty members). However, the faculty members (46.9%) see greater opportunities compared to researchers (40.9%) across discipline which complements the findings on factors of research works. Please see Annex Table 5.42 for details.

5.7 Publications

Perceptions on the Lead Author for Publication

The respondents shared their perceptions on the lead authorship for journal article, book, and technical report separately. Most of the respondents are in favor of the person ‘who does most of the research’ as lead author for publications which shows the appreciation of the respondents towards hard work and dedication. On the contrary only a handful respondent is in favor of Alphabetic order for authorship and it is universal among the respondents. However there have been variations among publication type and other listed criteria for lead author selection. Please note that the findings only represent the perception of the respondents; this does not necessarily reflect the real scenario of the publications in Bangladesh. (Please see Annex Table 5.43)

Faculty members are in favor of ‘who does most of the research’ as lead author for journal articles (81.3%) and books (50%). Their idea of lead author for technical report is closely divided between ‘who supervises the report’ (37.5%) and ‘who does most of the research’ (34.4%). Only few are in favor of the ‘senior most’ person as lead author (journal article: 12.5%, book: 15.6%, technical report: 12.5%).

More researchers are consistently in favor of the person ‘who does most of the research’ (journal article: 59.1%, book: 68.2%, technical report: 50%) to be the lead author irrespective of publication type. A number of researchers are also in favor of the ‘supervisor of the research’ to be the lead author of technical reports (36.4%) and books (22.7%). Researchers not at all interested in making the ‘senior most person’ as the lead author for books or technical reports. Though a handful are in favor of the person ‘who initiates’ the idea (journal article: 13.6%, book: 9.1%, technical report: 9.1%).

Scholars show similar characteristics to Faculty Members. They also are in favor of ‘who does most of the research’ as lead author for journal articles (67.6%) and books (55.9%). Their idea of lead author for technical report is also closely divided between ‘who supervises the report’ (38.2%) and ‘who does most of the research’ (35.3%).

Factors Responsible for Selecting a Journal

The Faculty Members also identified the key factors for selecting a journal. According to their responses, the most reported factor in selecting a journal is Peer-reviewing (84.4%), followed by time required to get a writing published (65.6%), and timely publication of volume (62.5%). Academic rigor finds the next spot at fourth position (59.4%).

The least important factor reported by the Faculty Members are invitation from the editor (28.1%) and acquaintance with the editor/board (28.1%). This suggests that the Faculty Members are interested to prepare good quality works that can be published in renowned journals since most of them are selective in choosing an invitation and not interested to publish in a journal where s/he already has acquaintance. (Please see Annex Table 5.44)

Research scholars were asked about the factors they keep in mind before publishing a research. Most of them keep in mind the blind peer review (63.7%) as an important factor. This is followed by the fact that good national journals favor senior faculty members (57.6%) in publication. However, the scholars bypass this obstacle by attaching themselves with senior faculty members for their publications. Many scholars consider publication as means to progress to higher (i.e., recruitment as assistant professor) professional levels. Time required for journals to publish article is also considered as a factor by 43.8 percent scholars. Please see Annex Table 5.45 for details.

Quality of National and International Journals

The faculty members and researchers were asked about certain aspects to assess the quality of national journals. Only one-third of them (separately) believe the standards of national journals are similar to international journals. Half of them think there is much disparity between national and international journals. Most researchers took neutral standpoint when asked about peer reviews by international journals (68.2%) and discrimination on scholar's nationality (59.1%). However, faculty members are in favor to good quality peer reviews (43.8%) by international journals while they disagree to the fact that there is discrimination on scholar's nationality (43.8%). Moreover, half of them believe that national journals favor senior faculties. 71.3 percent of the faculty members and 63.6 percent of the researchers believe that blind peer review is the best way to maintain standard quality. Please see Annex Table 5.46 for details.

Whether follow citation index

However, 40.6 percent of the faculty members reported that they followed citation index while that is 54.5 percent among researchers. Please see Annex Table 5.47 for details.

Mode of Publication and Language Used

Only the Faculty Members were asked about their mode of publication language of Publication. Data reveals that all Faculty Members (100%) published at least one of their works through journals, books, and news papers. A 96.9 percent of the Faculty Members

published at least one of their works in English while 81.3 percent of them published at least one of their works in Bengali.

Publishing books (93.8%) and journals (93.8%) in English is more popular among Faculty Members. Bengali books or journal articles is written by only 37.5 percent Faculty Members each. Bengali (75%) is a little more preferred compared to English (71.9%) when publishing works in Newspapers. Since the number of English newspapers in Bangladesh not many this may be attributed to inadequate opportunity to publish. Also 54.2 percent wrote for popular magazines in Bengali while 75 percent did the same in English. (Please see Annex Table 5.48)

Desire to reach coverage through publications

The scholars are most interested to reach policy makers through their publications which means they want their works to matter at national development. Next they want to reach the national, regional, and international community of scholars to enhance their knowledge and understanding. Finally, they intend to reach the general population. Please see Annex Table 5.49 for details.

Co-authorship

The Scholars were asked about co-authored in publication. It is found that 41.2 percent of the scholars have at least one co-authored publication. Among scholars, 26.5 percent was lead author of at least one publication. Guide/mentor (46.7%) and Fellow researchers from same centre/department (46.7%) are the most reported co-authors with the Scholars. Scholars also co-authored with Faculty from other institutions (33.3%), Ex-colleagues (20%), and Fellow researcher from other centre/department (13.3%). (Please see Annex Table 5.50)

Chapter 6

POLICY CONNECTS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

It is quite expected that social science research will contribute to the wider audiences (including policy makers) but it is also true that all social science research are not designed to contribute in policies. A researcher should not be interested in doing any research that simply has no influence on anyone else in academia or outside. Only a small minority group could be found who like to produce ‘shelf-bending’ work (included in a published journal or book) that lands into a library with negligible impact. The motivation in general that works in doing social science research is to achieve academic impact by advancing one’s discipline, and (where possible) by having some positive influence also on external audiences - in business, government, the media, civil society or public debate (LSE Public Policy Group, Undated)

To discuss about policy connects to social science research in Bangladesh, it is better to talk first about the perceived roles of the researchers who do research.

6.1 Perceived roles of a faculty/researcher

The faculties at the public academia perceive that their role is not confined only in the class room lectures; rather their role is also to take part in generating knowledge through research work. But unfortunately the way public universities are run in Bangladesh, the role of a faculty in conducting research is not given proper importance. Moreover, all the public universities in Bangladesh are teaching university.

The social science research must have an applied value, and should be pro-people so that the findings of the research could help reforming the current policies or formulating new policies. And the research should be for the people, by the people and of the people but the research of this type does not exist now in Bangladesh. “It existed at the time of our liberation movements” – says a senior faculty, DU

Unfortunately, the partisan campus politics in the academic institutions made the environment research-unfriendly. That is why the serious faculty who wants to conduct some academic research does not prefer to spare his valuable time to some particular desks for acquiring fund support. The teachers at DU perceived that there are huge funds for research that planning commission distributes but those who get these funds produce almost zero outputs. Also some faculties opined against public funds as they thought due to the presence of public funds, the integrity of a researcher would be driven away! So many faculties do sponsored research/consultancy work. If university could assure required fund support then the faculties indicated that would not require getting involved with consultancy work.

But there is more radical view among the varsity teachers. According to them, fund should not be considered as the main component; rather intellect is the main capital in social science

research. Using secondary data and managing low cost data collection as well as management procedure, the social science researchers can carry out a quality research.

But during discussions the faculties gave a caution that the real urge for research among the researchers does not exist these days. As a result, the quality of a research suffers.

“The scholars these days are more interested to get a degree; rather than carrying out a serious research with full concentration. That is why faculties are not very confident about the quality of research and if these are making any contributions to the country”. – Director, IBS

In fact, not only the researchers are less serious in their work, but also their supervisors are less attentive to ensure quality of the research. Getting engaged otherwise, the mentors hardly get time to give proper attention to their scholars. Earlier, as reported, the supervisors were very serious and used to give quality time to their scholars. But nowadays, the supervisors hardly go deeper to the work; rather used to flip through the thesis and ask the scholars to submit.

Perceptions of the researchers about ‘what a quality research is’ should be the next important area to shed lights.

6.2 Quality research

To the eyes of some researchers/faculties – a research should be called a ‘quality research’ if the following aspects are properly maintained:

- First, a quality research should be backed by with some theory that will help specifying the research questions
- Second, subject to these research questions – a consistent body of literature should be there
- Third, the research should follow a methodology that will be able to search answers of the research questions
- Fourth, the researcher has to follow all the rules and procedures for applying any tools/techniques selected for the research
- Fifth, the compilation of the research findings is also to follow the rules/guidelines
- Sixth, the research must add value in the arena of knowledge, even to the policies

While asked what a quality research is, the other group quickly identified following three points:

- Quality is maintained in all steps of a research
- Quality (*i.e.* appropriate) methodology is followed
- the research findings are compiled and shared through publications in any reputed journal(s)

According to them, to follow the existing terms of reference (ToR) is also a part of quality research. “For any academic research”, they say, “The research has to be accepted by the academicians”.

Researchers shared how their freedom got curtailed in a donor-driven research. In fact, the researchers have to go rush in case of sponsored research projects as these projects usually follow very tight timeline, which affects the quality of the research.

Again, the donor used to convey this explicitly that they do not need any output with academic value, so this leads the researcher to compromise with the quality as they are to generate manufactured/tailor-made outputs. This is a painful experience for the researchers as their hearts tell them that the quality of the research is not up to the mark but due to the expectation of the donors, sometimes they are to hatch a sub-standard research output.

Even the donor used to dominate over the methods, analytical tools and techniques. For example, it happens that even if the researcher thinks to apply econometric model but the donor suggests them to avoid that and then researcher has to follow what they advise her even compromising the quality.

More importantly, the donors want the researchers should produce outputs as per their needs. That is, the researchers should manufacture those findings that they are in need. They want to see that the interpretations of findings should be in line with what they have in mind.

So due to the donor, the researchers have to compromise even at the time of interpreting the results. It happens not only with donors and NGOs but also with the government. “Sometimes we have to digest all these against our will” – say the researchers.

Another problem is, say, a researcher can carry out two or three research projects but s/he shoulders 10 -12 research projects surpassing her time availability and capacity that grossly hampers the quality of the work.

6.3 Research and education

Research and education are complements to each other. The aim of education is to disseminate knowledge whereas the aim of research is to create (new) knowledge. A faculty will be more qualified if s/he gives importance to research and remains updated to the new knowledge.

To a senior faculty at DU, a University is the heart of creating new knowledge. According to him, the more the research works are done in a University, the more the importance it carries. In other words, a University is given more value if it carries out more research (side by side with teaching).

Sometimes, it is suggested that carrying out research is cost-worthy and should not be a priority over other important issues like poverty or food security etc. But the discussants during FGD agreed that it should be taken as granted that research work must be given priority in a country that contains a relatively weaker economy.

Khuda *et al* (1974)²⁸ suggested that 5% of the GDP is to be invested for education. Also he emphasized research along with education. According to UNESCO, a country should invest at least 6 percent of its GDP but currently it is only 1.8 % in Bangladesh. The new education policy of Bangladesh (2010) also put emphasis on research at the tertiary level education.

Unfortunately, the education system in Bangladesh is fragmented. Side by side with the mainstream education system (Bengali medium), there exists English and Arabic educational institutions that are hatching learner groups with conflicting ideologies and life styles.

Government has been trying its best to motivate children to get enrolled and continue their education. Some mentionable initiatives by Government in this regard include free distribution of text books, full free education for the girls, stipends for the learners, pilot distribution of nutritious cookies to a portion of the primary level students, measures being taken to eradicate adopting unfair means at the time of examinations and so on. But even though all these efforts are in place but still the quality of education in Bangladesh remains questionable (For quality give these references. (Ashrafee, 2015; Chowdhury, Choudhury and Ahmed, 2001; Govinda and Varghese, 1993; UNESCO, 2000; UNESCO, 2005; Ackers et al, 2001; Boyle et al, 2002; Brock and Cammish, 1997).

6.4 Reviewing research publications

Regarding any research publication(s), for known reasons peer reviewed journals are given more importance. In case of a peer reviewed journal, only a small number of copies of each issue are published. That is why it basically reflects the opinions of the peers, not the wider audiences. But senior faculties at DU are more interested to include general audience, side by side with the formal (expert) reviewers, to take part in reviewing process of any research publication. They like to bring the research out from the control of the *elite readers* and *elite consumers*. Their worth considering multi-stage review process for research publications is given below:

1. *Formal review by the experts*: the research reports are to be shared with the experts for their comments/review;
2. *Review by the Audience/Public*: the research publications/findings could be shared through internet for free access and there could be feedback options (in rating or reaction form), which may give signal of whether the audiences accept the work/results;
3. *Multistage evaluation process*: The evaluation results may be of four kinds:

Evaluation type	Expert	Audience/Public	Remark
1	Positive comments	Accept	Okay
2	Positive comments	Do not accept	Problematic
3	Negative comments	Accept	Problematic
4	Negative comments	Do not accept	Okay

²⁸ “...we recommend that our expenditure on education should be immediately raised to at least 5% of our total national income and that we must try as a national objective” (Khuda *et al*. 1974. pp 295-296)

He justifies his thoughts on multi-stage evaluation process saying, “The social science research should serve the people and touch their hearts.

Talking about the types of social science research, senior faculties of DU mentioned about ‘trouble shooting’ research versus ‘trouble avoiding’ research. According to them, during 1960s (just before the independence), the social scientists in this land used to get involved with trouble shooting research that gave them the spirit to fight back the then societal problems so that they could bring positive changes. In other words, to fix the problems, they used to deal with research that were risky in nature. But at present, the social scientists are seemingly risk averse. That is why they are not inclined to confront troubles through their research; rather they are willing to focus on ‘household satisfaction’ aspect, which is a phenomenon of current time.

To support social science research in Bangladesh, BSSRC was created but unfortunately this potential platform could not grow due to many reasons. One of them is bureaucratic leadership. BCSSRC has long been controlled by the bureaucrats but earlier it was guided by the academicians/experts like Dr Rehman Sobhan, Dr Shamsul and others.

In the arena of social science research, Bangladesh experiences few setbacks as follows:

1. There is no formal database for financial data of social science research being taken place in Bangladesh.
2. There is a documentation cell in BSSRC known as Social Science Documentation Centre but hardly documents are submitted here.
3. There is no coordination between the social scientists.
4. Furthermore, the university atmosphere is politicized; basically the whole country has been politicized and university is not an exception!
5. Due to technological advancement, although the horizon of information accessibility has been increasing, the experts feel the social scientists, particularly the young researchers, lack proper technical knowledge
6. The education system in Bangladesh is fragmented

People of this soil experienced long democratic struggles including language movement, six-point movement, struggle for autonomy, liberation war, movements against military *junta* in different phases, and non-violent movements against the perpetrators who committed crimes against humanity in 1971. But Bangladesh lacks remarkable research work on these struggles that were led to bring positive changes in this society. Even the extent of producing outputs of creative arts including novels, films etc. on the basis of these movements is limited. – *Director, BER, DU*

Chapter 7

RECOMMENDATIONS, FUTURE OF RESEARCH AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1 Recommendations

ADEQUATE FUND SUPPORT NEEDED FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH: Given the fact that the external funders have their own agenda, the time has come when the government should realize the importance of funding research. The expected amount for supporting research is not that huge. So the government of a developing country like Bangladesh just needs to calculate and allocate that amount for creating a knowledge-based society through pro-people research. Side by side with fund support for conducting research, it is to be looked at whether every researcher has capacity to use the funds that are allocated.

APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH: To ensure appropriate environment for social science research, the faculty members of the public university recommended that the initiatives are to be taken in both ways: not only the research should be acknowledged by the society as a whole, but also appropriate supports (both monetary and non-monetary) are to be ensured to the researchers so that the inquisitive minds can dig out something new.

SPONSORING TRAVEL FOR ATTENDING AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: Senior Faculty should be supported to attend conferences to disseminate their research findings.

BOTTOM UP RESEARCH: A bottom up approach is to be followed all through the research sector so that the young as well as promising researchers can enter to this field. Usually, the researchers who come from the bottom remain in close touch with the common people and hardly they carry out any esoteric research; rather they are expected to be more curious to conduct those studies that will be of useful for the society.

SUPPORT FOR THE NEEDIEST RESEARCHERS: Government should provide support to the researchers at the bottom level who hardly could carry out their research due to fund constraints. The quality of the research has to be ensured as methodologically they are not very sound. As a research is basically to acquire knowledge, so programs are to be designed for their capacity building. Potential researchers based in both public and private universities are to be given research-friendly environment and support. In that case, some good researchers will come out.

FACULTIES TO BE GIVEN ADEQUATE SALARY PACKAGE: For ensuring a conducive environment to the faculties so that quality research could be carried out, the faculty members are to be provided with adequate salary packages above all to lead a life with dignity. The faculties are to be motivated and allowed to do research projects side by side with their teaching. The policy should encourage research work for their promotion and salary increase.

ATTENDING TRAINING: Attending in a training program helps to get further exposures and also helps in building networks. Faculties who are yet to start their PhD should be offered training courses on research methodology or other important issues at home and abroad.

INCENTIVE: There should be a difference of incentives between faculties doing research versus faculties not doing research. Incentives may be material and non-material including promotion, salary, and dignity. It is to be made clear that if one does research, s/he should enjoy more benefits.

POLICY FOR FACULTIES TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH TO BE INTRODUCED: Even if the faculties are not given sufficient financial incentives, but a teacher should not be involved only in teaching. A faculty should give priority in carrying out academic research. In that case, to make his/her efforts cost effective – s/he can form a team with the other faculty members comprised of both senior and junior faculties. In order to gather more research experiences and exposures, the junior faculties are assumingly remaining ready to carry out the work with minimum honorarium. At the same time, the running students/scholars also could be included in the research that will help enhance their research capacity and their research skills could be hired with less price.

CONDUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND SUPPORT TEAM: For carrying out a research smoothly, the researchers and the concerned support groups should have a conducive relationship; otherwise, the researchers may feel discouraged.

TURNING PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES TO RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES: For getting the faculties involved in proper research, the required fund has to be ensured; that is why some of the public universities in Bangladesh should be graduated into Research University. Consequently, it will create social pressure to the other research houses to compete, which in turn helps generating quality research.

Having the fund shortage for research, the academia and the research organizations should enjoy some freedom to generate funds. In that case quality research would be possible with some embedded mechanism of monitoring and evaluation.

A big constraint in the research field is that the country lacks nationally generated statistical data of all respects, and even if, there are some data, those are not easily accessible. On the other hand, there are international data but those are very costly for accessing. So a useful database is to be developed that would be accessible to the researchers at LDCs and the international data should be available to them with discount rate.

FUNDS FOR TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE/ANALYTICAL SOFTWARE: Might be the researcher(s) can get access to data but they do not have proper knowledge/training to handle them. It claims organizing workshops/training for enhancing data management skills of the researchers. Also funds are to be made available for analytical software to be used institutionally. Or the

Government of Bangladesh can purchase software and make those available to the researchers

TRAVEL FUNDS FOR DISSEMINATION: From research point of view, disseminating research findings before a wider audience is very important. But unfortunately fund supports for attending a conference is hardly available. If any research paper is accepted in any conference, then it is really challenging for the researchers irrespective of the typology of social science research organizations to secure travel funds. So funds for attending a conference abroad should be available.

CONDUCTIVE ECO-SYSTEM: The researchers and faculty members agreed that for knowledge based as well as evidence based policy making, a society requires a conducive ecosystem in place.

STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING LEADERSHIP QUALITY OF FACULTIES: To the eyes of the non-DU researchers, the faculties at DU are not that dynamic to secure funds for their research. So they feel the concerned authority should chalk out a strategic plan to develop leadership quality of the faculties.

STRING-FREE GOVERNMENT FUND FOR CIVIL SOCIETY THINK TANK: A think tank like CPD does not accept funds from the government as the support usually comes to the think tank with some strings. To keep the think tank functional, the government should provide funds without strings.

PROVIDE FUND SUPPORT TO THINK TANKS: In India, there are some large think tanks that receive governmental fund support, but it is hardly practiced in Bangladesh. Secondly, government could make a list from the already established organizations and then could promote them.

PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCE FOR RESEARCH: To reduce pressure of the government for securing research funds, commercial industries could be an emerging source. So there should be collaboration between the academic institutions and industries.

UGC TO DEVELOP CLEAR FUNDING POLICY: As UGC is authorized to fund and regulate all the universities, so there should be clear guidelines for the MPhil and PhD scholars that will tell them what to do and what not to do. The amount of fellowship varies from one university to another. UGC should develop a clear funding policy.

ADEQUATE FUND SUPPORT FOR PURCHASING BOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS: Books, journals and reports are the most vital part for carrying out any research work. UGC does not allocate adequate fund in this regard. But UGC should provide adequate fund support for purchasing books and other secondary documents. Also it can help subscribing to the reputed journals.

POLICY TO RESIST REPETITION OF RESEARCH: UGC should develop a policy to resist repetition of research. It is essential that UGC should have a full list of all the research done so far and the research that are in the pipeline. UGC should upload the year-wise list of research in their UGC website, which is to be easily accessible to any interested person(s).

COMMON PLATFORM FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCHERS: A common platform as like as Krishibid Institute, a platform of social scientists is to be formed; may be called Institute Social Scientists.

7.2 Future of research in bangladesh

At the time of interactions, all respective respondent groups has given due importance to future research. According to the senior faculties and researchers, the research is to be carried out addressing people's problems, the results of which will be tested by the people's judgment. They feel that a research becomes positive and pro-people when the key findings of the research motivate the whole nation fight back against any adverse force that tries to control the knowledge domain as well as their lives.

Without carrying out research work, a portion of the researchers these days are becoming more interested to get coverage through the media. So some monitoring system is to be developed to check and balance what is really happening in the name of research. At the same time, the media should promote serious thinking about they would cover – that may be distressful – may be unpopular – it should not do populism in negative sense.

Current government has some attention in the area of agricultural research; due to shortage of manpower, government could not facilitate research work in the other areas. So it is better to consider the areas like garment sector, migration, food security, climatic hazards, international trade, energy, infra-structure etc.

7.3 Concluding remarks

Bangladesh's position in HDI and to achieve MDG goal is commendable, and this set an example for so many countries. But if we consider social science research environment we see a very complicated scenario does exist all over the sector. This study confirms that the environment at all levels (macro, meso and micro) gets affected with a number of factors that curb the researchers to undertake a social science research with quality.

Basically, the strength of this study lies here that it interacted with the researchers/other concerned who belong to the organizations with differing typologies and gathered their experiences at different layers (external, organizational and individual) in carrying out their research.

Although shortage of adequate fund has been identified as one of the key problems for ensuring quality of a research but there are several other factors that are constraining delivery of quality outputs. Mindset of the researchers is among one of them.

Trajectory of social science research in Bangladesh suggests how the nature of the research sector as a whole has been changed from fundamental research to donor driven research

It is vital that the country lacks a national level framework for social science research. It is understandable that each and every research will not contribute to the policies but they are to be done systematically following a scientific methodology and the value that these add must be published/disseminated in a manner so that the research outputs are utilized properly. This study reminds that the sector requires a conducive environment, and the researchers are to be capable to deal with the research problems.

For overcoming these situations a national framework for social science research is highly needed.

This study is a part of piloting a research both in India and Bangladesh together that was funded by GDN. This endeavor has got appreciation from the researchers' community. So upscaling of this study may be of more useful to get a better picture of the environment of social science research in Bangladesh and in other developing countries as well. These future research projects surely will help deriving a systematic framework to compare the research environment across countries and across time. But for executing upscaling plan, the future research team(s) needs to have an idea beforehand about the core difficulties/limitations that the research team in Bangladesh encountered in carrying out this pilot study. These included very small sample size, lengthy questionnaire that made the respondents reluctant in responding, more time needed for probing them, time of the fieldwork enveloped summer vacation in the universities due to which reaching scholars as well as faculties was challenging, the country did lack database containing information on social science research, ambitious research design that attempted to capture a number of interconnected but diverse issues within the given timeframe! It is expected that all these difficulties are to be tackled during the future research of this nature. So the future researchers who will plan for doing research of this kind should carry out a survey having standard number of sample respondents, have more precise as well as fine-tuned questionnaire, select a time for fieldwork when the universities are open (free of vacations), and avoid ambitious research design to carry out the research within the given timeframe.

Finally, the panel of External Advisors that GDN engaged to support the selected research teams throughout the research program had been very useful and this sort of support mechanism (might be in different form) may be thought about also for the future research of this kind!

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