University of Sussex

A University of Sussex EdD thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/

State-Non-State relationship within the context of decentralization: Understandings of school-level actors in Gopalpur sub-district, Bangladesh

Zia-Us-Sabur

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

Center for International Education

University of Sussex

2016

Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Name: Zia-Us-Sabur

Signature:

_____

Date:

_____

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB –   Asian Development Bank

AUEO – Assistant Upazila Education Officers

BANBEIS – Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information & Statistics

BEI – Bangladesh Enterprise Institute

BMAB – Befaqul Madrassil Arabia Bangladesh

BRAC – Building Resources Across Communities

CMES – Centre for Mass Education in Science

CPEIMU – Compulsory Primary Education Implementation & Monitoring Unit

DPE – Directorate of Primary Education

DSHE – Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education

DTE – Directorate of Technical Education

EFA – Education for All

GOB – Government of Bangladesh

GPS – Government Primary School

HDI – Human Development Index

HIES – Household Income & Expenditure Survey

MIS – Management Information System

MMC – Madrassa Management Committee

MOE – Ministry of Education

MOPME – Ministry of Primary & Mass Education

NAPE – National Academy for Primary Education

NCTB – National Curriculum & Text-Book Board

NFE – Non-Formal Education

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PEDP – Primary Education Development Project

PISA – Program for International Student Assessment

PSQL – Primary School Quality Indicators

PTA- Parent Teachers Association

PTI – Primary Teachers' Institute

PwC – PricewaterhouseCoopers

RBM – Results Based Management

RNGPS – Registered Non-Governmental Primary Schools

SBM – School-based Management

SLIP – School Level Improvement Plan

SMC- School Management Committee

UCEP – Underprivileged Children's Education Project

UEO – Upazila Education Officer

UNDG – United Nations Development Group

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Survey

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UPEP – Upazila Primary Education Project

URC – Union Resource Centre

Table of Contents

Table of contents

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Zia-Us-Sabur

Doctor of Education

State-Non-State relationship within the context of education decentralization: Understandings of school-level actors in Gopalpur sub-district, Bangladesh.

Thesis Summary

The focus of this study is to understand how policies to decentralize governance have affected the primary education sector in Bangladesh with specific reference to non-state schools. Decentralizing education has emerged as an important strategic tool to reform and enhance education quality globally. The study analyzes the relationship between the state and non-state primary education providers in the context of education reforms delivered via decentralization. The investigation used a qualitative case study approach with respondents residing and working in Gopalpur, a small township 125 km away from the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka. Three categories of school-level actors were interviewed - School Management Committee (SMC) members, head teachers and teachers within two types of schools: Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) and Quomi madrassas.

A primary focus of the study is to explore what the basic comprehension of the respondents regarding concepts and the implications of decentralization. The findings indicate that most of the school-level actors interviewed in the Gopalpur area were in fact familiar with the concepts of decentralization and related to it as an act of transfer of power and participatory education processes.

The study further revealed that most of the RNGPS respondents supported policy guidelines and directives from the state, which is based on deconcentration, while the Quomi madrassas preferred delegated space. The research also explored the operational relationship between state and non-state providers in terms of two specific aspects. The first aspect was the relationship

between state and non-state providers in three specific areas: the SMCs, monitoring activities and the training of education personnel with a focus on teachers. The other aspect involves the extent of trust and respect displayed from the center towards the school-level actors. The SMCs apparently do not feel motivated to be proactive in schools' affairs due to limited scope as dictated by the state and lack of authority to hold the school administrations accountable for their actions. However, Quomi Madrassa Management Committees (MMC) is very involved and act as effective mediators on behalf of the community as well as madrassas. In regards to monitoring and training inputs, the state's centralized system does not produce far-reaching enough results according to the RNGPS respondents.

This study also investigated the mindset of officials belonging to the DPE (Directorate of Primary Education) and MOPME (Ministry of Primary & Mass Education) towards the school-level actors, which are characterized by lack of mutual trust and respect. This study reveals that given the diverse nature of non-state providers, each category of non-state providers has its own historical origins and its own understanding and approaches towards the state. The study also shows that SMCs, monitoring and training sub-systems within the governance play an important role in defining operational relationship between the state and non-state providers.

The findings and analyses included herein contribute to the current policy discourse on decentralizing education in Bangladesh within the context of non-state providers and their relationship in operational terms with the state. It adds to more informed and participatory policy formulation and planning processes. Along this process, it serves to inform policy makers, school-level actors and researchers about the value of collective ownership of the policy discourse through meaningful dialogue.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The discourse on decentralization has been one of the central themes in discussions involving educational policy in the last two decades, encompassing a large number of developing and transition economies in Latin America, Africa and Asia (Bardhan and Mukherjee, 2000) and remains vital to this date. True to this trend, the topic of education decentralization has been keenly debated and contemplated upon in Bangladesh as well. Traditionally, the government in Bangladesh is the major provider in primary education sector and has claimed success in reaching virtually all children in terms of universal access. However, the government's claim to higher percentage of enrolment does not translate into sustainable quality improvement in the lives of millions of school-going children. This phenomenon suggests lack of standards, fundamental gaps and inadequacy in the education provided as well as in the quality of instruction being dispensed.

Historically, primary education governance system has always been centralized and managed by the Ministry of Education and subsequently by the Ministry of Primary & Mass Education in Bangladesh. However, with growing concern over persistent inequities in educational progress, several practitioners, policymakers and social organizations are now advocating for decentralization. With rampant inefficiency in administrative and fiscal functions as well as quality and support, the centralized education system is now in need of an overhaul. The argument for decentralization hinges on the principle of subsidiarity, which suggests that administration of community affairs are best done at the lowest level possible so that solutions are most appropriate and can be more easily adapted to the real interests of individuals from the community (Irina and Zaharia, 2009).

In the recent years, focus has shifted from sheer number of enrolment or schools to that of a tangible outcome education may have brought to the lives of those who received it. An independent think tank-led research recently concluded only 1.6% of those children who completed a total of five years of primary education had scored passing marks in only 27 tests out of 53 qualifying tests as outlined by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (Ahmed, 2005). There is no statistical evidence to date that this percentage of low performance in competency tests has improved at all. The indicators of improvement have been stagnant despite the fact that Bangladeshi government has allocated approximately US $3 billion over five years toward a national program known as the PEDP (Primary Education Development Program). This program has now been functional for over a period of 20+ years. This situation contradicts the government's claim that the current system is successful in providing quality education for all. The general consensus amongst the practitioners and policymakers in education sector is that decentralization offers more transparency, reflects local community priorities and improves overall quality. However, the process of decentralization entails more involved and empowered collective participation at the school and community level.

The decentralization debate mainly revolves around who will do what or the extent of controls to be shared amongst the Ministry and the local resources. This debate is crucial in determining the success of decentralization since, as a process, decentralization requires that policy makers at the centre adopt a rational and participatory system where all functions will complement each other. Cohesive and seamless transition has to be present between the centre and local providers in functions such as textbook content development, teaching methods, syllabus design, recruitment and other generic administration of the school. Pertinent information and data is necessary to build from and provide a basis for evidence-based policy-making. School-level operators, particularly the non-state providers play very important roles at grassroots levels and determine the quality of educational services rendered. However, there is a lack of research literature available on the extent of the various roles school-level operators play in primary education.

To create an efficient education system, it is imperative to understand how the current arrangement of governance is perceived by school-level non-state providers and what implications this may have for delivery of primary education. This study attempts to understand the roles, perspectives and perceptions of non-state primary education providers in Bangladesh.

1.2. Rationale for the study

The rationale for this study emerges from variances between an apparently successful program for access to primary education in Bangladesh and the failure on part of a large number of children to meet the competency qualifications. My experience of over 25 years in the education sector lent me an insider's view to the complexities of relationship between the state and non-state providers in Bangladesh.

There are eleven types of non-state providers in primary education that can significantly influence matters of governance in the primary education sector. Policies in Bangladesh are centrally driven leaving the opinions of the school-level actors at primary level largely ignored. This investigation makes an organized effort to document perceptions of the grassroots operators in two categories of non-state schools and the consequences imparted by central policies.

This study focuses on factors contributing to the phenomenon of lower quality education- experience despite increased access points. With efforts on the part of the government, non-government and donor agencies as well as a multitude of workers, this continued phenomenon of low rate of success in producing better prepared generations of students over a long period of time, requires serious fact-finding attention. To reach the goals set by Education for All (EFA), the time has come to review policies in place in addition to the options and premises that decentralization can offer in this current context.

The central administration has been inefficient in utilizing whatever limited resources are available in a country like Bangladesh. The possibility of state/non-state teaming up under the frameworks of decentralization

indicates a more pragmatic solution to address issues of limited resources and deficits in managing these resources. Therefore, inclusive policies can result into prudent and pragmatic working relationships between non-state providers and the state. By gaining an understanding of perspectives and roles of the non-state providers, this study is an attempt to step towards that direction.

1.3. Research Questions

The details of research questions are provided in the methodology chapter. However, basic discernment of these questions is a necessary inclusion in this introductory chapter in order to set the direction of this research. The central question pertains to the relationship of the non-state providers with the state; using that as a guideline, three themes are identified: i) a review of overall understanding held by the school-level operators regarding decentralization under implications of current institutional arrangement and policy; ii) conducting interviews with the school-level operators regarding the institutional support provided by central agencies and documenting these responses for further analysis however, this context brought on several other sub-themes, particularly, the respondents' interpretation of the support provided by the central agencies and the roles of SMCs/MMCs in the absence of state support; and finally, iii) an investigation into the mindset or opinions held by the administrators belonging to central agencies towards the school-level actors. All these factors converge in providing a more holistic understanding of the non-state and state relationship; and navigating the outcomes in primary education sector.

1.4. Country background

The People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed as a constitutional, secular, democratic, multi-party and parliamentary republic in 1971 after a bloody war of secession from Pakistan. Since independence, Bangladesh has yet to stabilize its tumultuous political environment and has been plagued with widespread poverty, unemployment and natural calamities like famine, floods and cyclones. The restoration of democracy in 1991 from a military rule that was mired in conflicts and corruption hinders the process of

building a democratically functional country. With all these setbacks, the country still strives toward development and has made some progress in child mortality, literacy and GDP growth.

The Human Development Report (2009) ranked Bangladesh 146 among 177 countries with a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.543, which is consistent with medium human development. Bangladesh, with 164.7 million people, is listed as the 7th largest country in terms of population with 25% of the population considered urban. With higher enrolment at both primary and secondary schools Bangladesh has already reached gender parity at both education levels. The overall rate of girls' participation has gone up since 2005 when it was 51.9%.

According to the Preliminary Report of Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HEIS) 2010 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011) the literacy rate is 57.91% at national level (61.12% for male and 54.8% for female). This is higher in urban areas (70.38%) and lower in rural areas. In HIES 2010, enrolment rate of children aged 6-10 for both sexes at the national level stood at 84.75% as compared to 80.38% in 2005. The rate of enrolment of male children is lower to that of female children; 82.61% for boys against 86.99% girls. The rate of enrolment of children aged 11 to 15 years has increased to 77.82% in 2010 from 69.96% in 2005. Here again we see that the rate of increase is less for boys than for girls. The dropout rate is higher for boys (10.2% for boys and 3.32% for girls).

At the national level school enrolment for children from poor households stands at 78.33% as compared to 88.88% for non-poor households. The gender gap in the enrolment rate has been gradually reducing due to government subsidies provided for female students per school. Also, various donor agencies provide stipends to particularly female students in grades 6 through 10 which motivate the families to participate. The population of the formal primary education of the age group 6-10 years stands at 17.32 million and according to the government claim the enrolment rate is well above 90%.

1.5. Introducing the research

In order to understand the relationship between the state and the non-state providers within the primary education sector, this study focuses on two types of non-state providers - one being the Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) due to its close ties to the state and the other type are the Quomi madrassas, which are faith-based with virtually no ties to the state. The RNGPSs' framework of operation is closely connected to the state in such a way that it is regarded as a quasi-state entity. On the other hand, the Quomi madrassas are institutionally and ideologically independent and separate from the state. The madrassa system is in continuous conflict with the state on various fronts including the type of education it provides to millions of madrassa-going children; most of these conflicts are political in nature. Investigating these two non-state providers, lying at the two extremities of relationship with the state, was expected to provide insights as to why the state does not have equal and equitable approach towards various non-state providers and the implications it bears in making primary education accessible to all.

1.6. Structure of the study

The analyses in this report are organized in six chapters and as follows;

Chapter 2 elaborates on the discourse of decentralization and the debate that ensues from it. Subsequent analysis and interpretation of the research findings are constructed based on the understanding of these very discourses on decentralization.

Chapter 3 describes the efforts to contextualize this research per the governance traditions of Bangladesh as far as primary education is concerned. This chapter also attempts to provide a broader understanding of non-state providers and how they are connected to the state.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed understanding of the methodology by outlaying the epistemological and ontological stance. This provides the argument for the rationale for a case study approach. Other important relevant factors like the type of tools considered for appropriate data

collection, matters of trustworthiness and position are also taken into account. The chapter concludes by highlighting ethical issues and limitations thereof.

Chapter 5 elaborates on three topics. Firstly, it attempts to narrate the perspectives of the respondents regarding the concept of decentralization. Secondly, it studies the respondents' preferences towards a particular type of decentralization. Thirdly, this chapter also describes key decentralization issues that the respondents are in agreement of. Together they form the basis for developing the subsequent narratives of the study.

Chapter 6 is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the perspectives of key administrators from central agencies towards the school-level operators. It reflects on the level of mutual trust and respect shared by these two groups within the context of decentralization. The second part considers the respondents' views about specific inputs provided by the central agencies. It describes how inputs are provided to SMCs and other primary education delivery sub-systems by the central agencies. It also describes the perception of the school-level actors towards the central agencies.

Chapter 7 draws conclusions on the observations, findings and analyses regarding decentralization in primary education as this study has documented. In doing so, it provides evidence based argument that the comprehension of the school-level actors has real time influence in the delivery of primary education. Therefore, they cannot be isolated from mainstream policy dialogue. Finally, it tries to show that such a shift in perspective will enable the policymakers to redefine state-non-state relationship in a meaningful manner.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introductory remarks

Understanding the implications of decentralization in primary education is critical to this study. Educational decentralization, therefore, often comes as part of overall structural reform of a government, and not as an independent sector policy (Govinda, 1998; Patrinos and Ariasingham, 1997; Sayed, 1997). Both these aspects of decentralization, with respect to governance of general and primary education in particular, is studied and analyzed in this chapter.

2.2 Neoliberal agenda and decentralization

The current global interest in decentralization of governance has been influenced by strong trend in favor of neoliberalism. Harvey describes neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade" (Harvey, 2005, pp. 2). There are two ways to interpret neoliberalism: as a utopian (theoretical) project and as a political project. The former refers to the promotion of individual freedom and human dignity. The latter refers to the restoration of elite class power by means of new processes of class formation (Papadogonas, 2013, pp. 2). The evidence suggests neoliberalism has been transformed into a strong political project for the rich and powerful. This is characterized by monopolies, power and information asymmetries, promotion of individualism as opposed to meaningful life, and externalization of market failure consequences to lenders (ibid). From the political economy standpoint, the prime purpose of promoting decentralization under neoliberalism is to benefit capital rather than to improve government by making it more efficient and tailored to citizens' needs (Razin 2000). Above all, Harvey (2005) believes that neoliberal

authoritarianism constitutes the most obvious violation of neoliberal claims about freedom. Decentralization of governance under neoliberalism is often seen as a tool to further the promotion of a capitalistic agenda rather than the promotion of equity and empowerment. As Harvey (2005) argues, under neoliberal governance, a substantial effort is mobilized towards efforts for business recruitment, as a consequence cut the social safety net, and in addition allow public jobs and resources to be cannibalized by the private sector.

The study was mainly conducted at the micro-level and focused mainly on the administrative dimensions of decentralization. As a result, it did not frame the significant overarching implications of global neo-liberal trends, and its influence on educational decentralization as an important aspect of governance. As it is observed, education policies and programs (under neo-liberal agenda); such as child-centered pedagogies, school-based management, teachers' accountability, and public private partnership have become so widespread worldwide that they have acquired the status of GEP (Global Education Policy) (Verger, Novelli & Alteniyeken, 2012). As a signatory to all the major education conventions like Jomtien EFA, Dakar Framework for Action, and Child Rights Convention, Bangladesh's national education policy is highly influenced by global education agenda; therefore, educational changes (including decentralization) should be understood as being embedded within interdependent local, national and global political economy complexes (Novelli and Cardozo, 2008). For the purposes of the study, due to its micro-nature, this important but complex dimension was kept beyond the scope of the study.

While Bangladesh's macro-economic policies tend to favor a neo-liberal agenda, it is, however, not a straightforward proposition. None of the two school-types under study apparently follow a neo-liberal agenda. The constitution and policy makes the state responsible for basic education. The prime policy focus is on access, equity and quality. RNGPS remains firmly under the grip of government as a quasi-state entity. The Quomi madrassas are operating squarely against the neo-liberalist agenda functioning on the principles of volunteerism and non-profit based on strong religious ideology.

2.3. Context of decentralization in the study

Decentralization is widely lauded as a key component of good governance and development practice. However, it is also broadly recognized as a process fraught with complexity and potential failure. The process of decentralization was initiated by the colonial powers with the understanding that decentralization is a viable transition strategy leading to political independence (Conyers 1983). Although Bangladesh was under colonial rule from 1700s to 1947, decentralization in this country is more or less a product of recent developments.

Many developing countries have been experimenting with decentralization in public administration, the global trend shows higher rate of participation in fields of education. Yet the assessment of decentralization has shifted from marked optimism to one of caution. Since the 1990s, except for in some donor reports, the 'decentralization-is-problematic' argument predominated in the academic literature (Fritzen and Lim, 2006). Decentralization is one of those concepts where its efficacy or failure is not often backed by in-depth or detailed studies. While there are many studies emerging about the policy of educational decentralization, public debates tend only to operate at the level of rhetoric (Sayed, 2008).

According to Sayed, the success and efficacy of decentralization is measured differently based on various perspectives. For those with a background in public administration, success of decentralization is measured by efficiency in distribution of educational goods and services as direct result of delegation and dispersal of authority. However, people of active political background measure the success of decentralization by the number of participating constituents. A person of pedagogical perspectives will seek results by enhancing quality in teaching and learning. From an economic perspective, decentralization is viable if it generates additional resources and results in improvement of its allocation (Sayed, 2008). Yet at another level, given the uncertain nature of decentralization in terms of its efficacy, it is often seen as more of a mechanism for serving dominant ideology of the state (Davies, Harber and Dzimadzi, 2003). For instance, in South Africa in

the 1990s decentralization was used to institutionalize the apartheid system in schools; while in the post-apartheid era it has been used for developing an accountable and democratically governed school system (Harber, 2001). These perspectives are not mutually exclusive; rather, together they create a broad framework within which the process of decentralization takes shape. Therefore, decentralization is not merely a theoretical concept; it is also an alternative institutional proposition, which, in this case, holds the potentials for facilitating the process of achieving universal access to primary education.

The decentralization process and its success are assessed by variations in the degree of delegation of authority. A number of concepts play an important role in clarifying the meaning of decentralization. Faguet and Sanchez (2008) define decentralization as the devolution by central government of specific functions, with all of the administrative, political and economic characteristics of democratic local governments, which are independent of the center within a legally delimited geographic and functional domain. Nellis and Cheema (1984) define decentralization as the process of delegation of responsibility in planning, decision making, or administrative authority of central government to its field-level organization.

By taking into account the degree of autonomy in decision-making relinquished to the local authority by the central government, the following four forms of decentralization are identified:

i) Deconcentration is the transfer of responsibilities to lower levels with limited decision-making power within ministries or organs of central government (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983). Deconcentration concerns transfer of power to local branches of the central administration, i.e. prefects, administrators, or technically local ministry agents. These upwardly-accountable offices are appointed as local administrative extensions of the central state. They may have some downward accountability built into their functions too; however, their primary responsibility lies with the central government (Oyugi 2000; Manor 1999; Agrawal and Ribot 1999). The RNGPS is the category of schools with close

ties to the state's primary education system and are governed within this deconcentrated space.

ii) Delegation is the transfer of decision-making and management authority for specific functions to organizations not under the direct control of the central government (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983). Delegation is when public functions are transferred to lower levels of government, public corporations, or any other authorities outside the regular political-administrative structure in order to implement programs on behalf of government agencies (Alex et al. 2000; Ostrom et al. 1993). Thus, the Quomi madrassas can be categorized to be operating in a delegated space while being protective of their political and religious autonomy by not accepting state assistance.

iii) Devolution is the strengthening or creating of autonomous, independent units as separate levels of government outside the central government's direct control (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983).

iv) Privatization is the permanent transfer of power to any non-state entity, including individuals, corporations, NGOs, etc. (Oyugi, 2000; Agrawal and Ribot, 1999). Turner and Hulme (1997) further append territorial and functional dimensions to the above categories of decentralization. They adopt Smith's (1985) 'territorial hierarchy' of decentralization and define political decentralization, or deconcentration, as territory-based delegation. Again, according to Turner and Hulme, 'vertical communications, technical expertise, specialization and uniformity of service provision' falls under functional decentralization.

2.4. Perspectives on decentralization

Globally, educational decentralization remains a debated topic due to its multidimensional and complex layers of engagement needed by various stakeholders. Decentralization conjures up different sentiments on the same facts and can often be interpreted in opposing views from different perspectives. For instance, a number of reasons are identified as hindrance to decentralization, such as central governments often resist the

decentralization of power to peripheries and do not maintain consistent decentralization policies (Smith 1985, Crook & Sverrisson 2001, Shah & Thomson, 2004); developing countries typically lack administrative and financial capacities at the local level (Rondinelli, Middleton & Verspoor, 1990); and civil society does not necessarily have the capacity and/or willingness to actively participate in the roles allocated to them by decentralization policies (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983).

Those in favor of decentralization perceive these constraints as challenges to be overcome in order to gain higher good of the society. On the other hand, the opponents of decentralization perceive such constraints as given along with a tendency to highlight inefficiency at the lower tiers of administration. They further argue centralization has more advantages than decentralization because it enhances equity by reducing or eliminating existing disparities across the country, and it increases effectiveness (Weiler, 1990).

A few important and relevant aspects of this discourse are discussed below;

i) Decentralization and democratic norms and values: Bangladeshi government ascribes to operating on democratic principles including its school systems. Since the 1990s, while economic and political arguments in favor of decentralization have emerged from a political/governance perspective, the policymakers view the decentralization process as an end in itself and associate decentralization with democratization and popular participation with a concern for ensuring political legitimacy (McGinn and Welsh, 1999). Proponents believe that process of decentralization plays an important role in democratizing a society, thereby serving wider social purposes by diffusing social and political tensions and ensuring local cultural and political autonomy (Bardhan, 2000). It embodies a number of democratic norms and values and facilitates the process of participation. Through decentralization, the collective goals of the people at local level are better addressed in terms of how resources are allocated and managed.

An essential outcome of such a process is an increase in the level of accountability at the local level (Rondinelli, 1981). In this connection, Sayed (1999) suggests that participatory process of exchanging preference better describes decentralization and are easily comprehended, ensuring those excluded are also being heard. He cites an example of a study in rural India demonstrating the need to allow flexible school hours so household chores can be completed and such measures are necessary to ensure higher participation. In this case, apparently, the role of the grass-roots-oriented non-state providers can be important in representing some context-specific concerns of the communities.

ii) Decentralization and service delivery efficiency: It is often argued that decentralization improves the quality of services by bringing services closer to the beneficiaries, thereby increasing the level of accountability (Rondeinelli, 1981). Increasingly, school systems around the world are moving away from the centralized model of governance. This process happens in the form of shifting centralized functions to sub-national offices within an education ministry (deconcentration) or dispersing some control from the ministry to the local bodies (decentralization or devolution). The more decision-making authority is transferred to the community, the more empowered the community becomes (World Bank, 2003). The central assumption behind this concept is that narrowing down the distance between the locations of decision-making and where the decision is affecting actions and reality, will improve education management and learning outcomes.

In order to make such a proposition to work, according to Robinson (2007), three factors need to be addressed. First, power and responsibility should be adequately delegated from central governments to local elected groups of officers who, in turn, are accountable to constituents who voted them into power. Second, financial resources should be available to support the provision of services. Third, the local governance system must have adequate capacity to deliver local services. The lack of qualified staff in local bureaucracies is especially acute in developing countries. Even the more professional and technically-sufficient people suffer from isolation, poor training and low interaction with other professionals (Bardhan, 2000).

Bird (1995) argues that information asymmetry works both ways: the central government may not know what to do, while the local government may not know how to do it. For instance, in Pakistan, an elaborate restructuring took place under the Education Sector Reforms toward decentralization. Under this framework the district, rather than the province, has become the operational tier for governance, supported by Tehsil (sub-district), union council tiers and village or neighborhood councils; additionally, citizen community groups are being organized to enable citizens to participate (UNESCO, 2005).

To ensure that participation is effective, capacity building of the relevant stakeholders; including Parent Teacher Association (PTA), School Management Committee (SMC), community members, teachers, learners and NGOs; is essential (Naidoo and Khan, 2006). In India decentralization initiatives have been undertaken to delegate decision-making authority to the district through a project known as DPEP (District Primary Education Project). Right from its inception the project faced funding problems. On the other hand, the decentralization of school governance to local authority, known as the panchayati raj bodies, has been identified as a positive step. Yet there is a lack of empirical evidence substantiating whether this process of decentralization is yielding the expected outcomes or not (Govinda and Bandyopadhyoy, 2008). From the analysis, it is apparent that there is a gap between the policy and the practice of decentralization regarding service delivery efficiency; due to this policymakers are often unable to create a viable connection between policy and practice.

Centralization can utilize the economies of scale better than it does in a decentralized setting; however, economies of scale are less important in local management and maintenance. For example during a canal irrigation system in South Korea, as described by Wade (1997), construction was in the hands of central authority, but maintenance was devolved to local communities. Similarly, in primary education, while the local government may run the day-to-day function of schools, the upper-tier of government controls the curriculum, prescribing and enforcing quality requirements and standards. Therefore, it reiterates that the idea that decentralization cannot be applied

across the board but on an as-needed basis depending on which functions respond better to decentralization and which do not.

iii) Elite Capture and Inequities: When authority and responsibility, along with resources, are transferred at the local level, the local elite often abuse their personal end, depriving the very people these services were intended for in the first place. In the case of Bangladesh, it is a recurrence. For instance, such elite capture is highlighted by the "blanket incident of 1971". Soon after the liberation war, blankets were donated for distribution amongst the affected population; local elites or government officials took possession of the blanket supplies and later sold them in local shops for personal monetary gain. This incident of corruption was so widespread that it became a popular mockery for describing government dealings; and this issue reached such a height that then Prime Minister sarcastically pointed that his share of blankets went missing as well.

The coercion of powerful elite over the less powerful members of a community raises questions about the assumption that the more people share in authority, the less likely it is that power and authority will be abused (Murphy, 2005). In Nepal, the rich farmers captured benefits from various development projects, excluding the poor farmers (Bienen, et al., 1990). Decentralization also might increase regional corruption (Werlin, 1992). Evidence from Tanzania shows at the local level elites consisting of politicians, bureaucrats, teachers and prominent businessmen have a greater influence over decision-making and implementation of primary education reforms than local governments, NGOs, or school committees. This issue often turns into a power struggle between people who are reluctant to relinquish power and community members (Tanzania Governance Report, 2007).

Decentralization might lead to various forms of inequities. In the absence of intervention from the center, regions that are better resourced might enjoy greater growth and prosperity than those areas less endowed with resources. Decentralization, if not adequately planned and implemented, can aggravate inequities rather than mitigate. For example, in Argentina, educational

decentralization led to improved scores among children from advantaged schools, while scores faltered in disadvantaged schools (Galiani et al, 2005). Sayed (1999) argues that decentralization in the South African context has resulted in greater educational inequities along the lines of social class differentiation rather than race.

This might not always be the case, according to Galasso and Ravallion (2001), who carried out a study of the decentralized food-for-education program in Bangladesh. Two million children participated in this program during the years 1995-1996. The indicators of beneficiary families were developed by the School Management Committees (SMCs) (consisting of parents, teachers, educationists and local donors). Galasso and Ravallion found that the program was mildly pro-poor. Initially, they also found some evidence of elite capture. However, audience selection processes improved as the program expanded and, towards the end, worked in favor of the poor. It is also clear target groups selected within the communities achieved superior results than those selected by the central government administration, which signifies the role of local communities superseding the government in identifying areas or groups in need of attention in their locality. This reinforces the belief that decentralization may not be an end in itself but a means only and that its success is contingent upon how it is managed.

2.5. Actors

One of the important aspects of this investigation is that of a goal to inform policy makers and practitioners about the mind-set of the school-level operators. Therefore, for investigative purposes, this study deems three main groups in charge of schools to be important, which are;

i) Head teachers

ii) Teachers and

iii) School Management Committees (SMCs)

For the purposes of the study, it is necessary to investigate these three groups' perspectives regarding decentralization on the basis of their roles.

This necessitated exploring the meaning and implications of aspects including 'relationship' and the role of the school-level stakeholders under question. For the purposes of the study, the operational definition of 'relationship' entails the mutual interdependence of schools and state agencies within the regulatory framework, which is enforced via institutional mechanisms with focus in areas of financial and technical support. In this regard the extent to which the state has positioned its regulatory framework and resource allocation towards strengthening the perceived capability and empowerment of the school-level actors in a manner accepted across the board was investigated. Thus, the perceptions of the stakeholders are recognized as important catalysts in determining school performance.

2.5.1. Role of head teachers

The head teachers in a centralized system occupy an important place since their role makes them intermediaries between the central administration and school-level actors in defining the nature of activities in the school. Therefore, a narrative on the roles of head teachers, teachers and SMCs in the context of relationship to the state is critical for a complete investigation. The role of head teachers could be categorized into administrative, pedagogic or strategic (from a high—administrative—to medium level of presence—pedagogic/strategic) (Anja Balanskat & Gerhard, 2005). Consequently, head teachers assume multiple tasks that require multiple skills and competency; nevertheless, global experience suggests the role of head teachers, especially in the developing countries, is yet to achieve this aspect of multi-dimensionality. As a result, it is apparently transfixed within the administrative domain. A further elaboration on the role of head teachers will provide a description of the current scenario and how it is involving in order to keep pace with socio-economic as well as technological changes.

It is also important to note the role of head teachers is contingent upon under what circumstances they are hired and under what institutional arrangement they operate. Hiring of teachers is one of the important aspects where the role of head teachers varies based on circumstances. In countries such as UK, Sweden and Norway, head teachers take an active role in hiring staff.

This implies that to a degree they are able to choose their 'team' and hire personnel according to specific needs or pedagogic options (School Leadership Survey Report, 2012). Yet in cases where teachers are placed in employment from the central education ministries, the proper match making does not take place and head teachers are left in a situation whereby recruited teachers may not serve the purpose of their schools.

The role of head teachers has a critical influence in improving teacher management and teacher motivation that ultimately decides the learning outcomes for girls and boys (Mpkosa, 2008). Given the nature of their role during the past thirty years, research findings have increasingly shown the positive link between effective leadership and successful schools (Leithwood and Riehl, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2006; PwC, 2007; West-Burnham, 2009). The role of head teachers is very much linked with providing leadership. Since school management is being increasingly linked to participatory processes and facilitation, the role of head teachers is becoming more dynamic and complex. Recent studies and research have resulted in a greater focus on various models of leadership and the characteristics of leaders (PwC, 2007) as well as the influence of leadership on pupil learning (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins, 2006). Consequently, the role of head teachers goes much beyond administrative domain and requires the head teachers to acquire qualities that lead to better learning outcomes for children. Leithwood and Seashore-Louis summarizes the consistency of these findings in their argument that; "To date, we have not found a single documented case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership" (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012:3).

Having mentioned the above, the study is not about the leadership quality of the head teachers or that of the teachers per se; rather, it is about creating appropriate conditions for head teachers and teachers so that they are in a better position to exert their leadership skills within the context of state-non-state relationship associated with decentralization. One of the central assumptions regarding this was that the head teachers and teachers' ability to make independent decisions would be enhanced through decentralization processes. In this regard it was seen to what extent the respondents felt the

current institutional arrangement allows them the freedom of decision-making. By doing this, it was expected it would provide a number of insights which would facilitate the process of meaningful decentralization.

This was thought to be an important human dimension within the governance process, since Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggest personal characteristics such as commitment, resilience, passion and understanding can affect the abilities and capacities of heads to apply leadership practices successfully. In this connection it was assumed that creating a conducive environment for teachers and head teachers according to their own understanding will facilitate spontaneous commitment, resilience, passion and other relevant qualities for enhanced school performance. To this end, it was investigated the degree to which, according to the understanding of the school-level actors, the governance environment helps or hinders inculcating such leadership dynamism.

2.5.2 Role of teachers

The role of teachers is now being reevaluated and reorganized within constructivist discourse that focuses on the change in teachers' cognition and thought processes with teachers creating their own socially constructed teaching (Buchamann, 1986; Buchman & Floden 1990; Cochran, De Ruiter, & King; Condon, Clyde, Kyle, Hovda, 1993; Schon, 1987, Zeichner & Gore, 1990). While the significance of teacher training and continued education is being realized by both government and non-government providers, the lack of resources and competent personnel make it rather difficult to support training programs for teachers. For the purposes of the study it is necessary to explore the extent to which the state has been able to create conducive conditions to train and educate teachers.

This study also explores the perspectives of school-level actors in regards to the provision of training and continuing education for teachers. This was narrated mainly through three conceptual models, which are widely practiced in managing personnel in academia; these are; i) Administrative model, ii) Grassroots model, and iii) Alternative model. The administrative model of teacher management is popular in large countries that have several levels of

government, but it has also been applied to small countries. The agency that hires and employs teachers varies in this model; although most central governments opt to retain responsibility for hiring teachers, usually giving them the status of civil servants. Thus a central ministry of education holds responsibility for such administrative functions such as setting standards for teachers, setting salary and staffing and allocating budget resources to lower levels of administration (Cathy, 1998). The category of RNGPS discussed in this research falls in this group.

In the grassroots model, the approach to employing teachers varies depending on the nature of the community. The opposite poles of this model can be quite different in motivation and in form. Parents are treated as consumers to whom the teachers are accountable, and school boards are given significant power, as is the case in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom's approach represents the "free market" end of the spectrum. New Zealand also adopted this model as a result of decentralization initiatives. When equal emphasis is given to parents, teachers, and community leaders, it is known as the "democratic" end of the spectrum. The free-market approach tends to diminish the role of elected local bodies, such as the local education authorities in the United Kingdom. The democratic approach, while still at school-level, retains a role for local authorities, as noted in recent decentralization initiative in Sweden (Kogan, 1992).

The alternative or small-scale model is utilized mostly by local community initiatives rather than national programs. It mobilizes support from communities and nongovernmental organizations, including funding for teachers and general administration for schools. The support is provided directly by an NGO or through the local education authorities. Frequently, those who are employed to teach in these programs lack formal teaching qualifications. Although the programs are rarely considered permanent, some of the best ones can yield useful examples for the formal public education system. In this model, the school or the community is given responsibility for hiring, disciplining, and paying teachers in addition to supervising their attendance (Kogan, 1992). Madrassas in Bangladesh could be considered the product of the alternative model. At the grassroots level, the madrassas

operate within the framework of the alternative model, but it has historically evolved with larger social and political dynamics and, with time, has evolved into a sector of its own.

Specifically in the case of RNGPS, there has been rapid expansion in the number of schools, which has implications on how schools are run. Expansion has brought both an aggregation of old problems and a series of new ones. As stated (MOE-UNICEF, 1990), the cost of going for scale has included inevitable sacrifices in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. There has been growing consensus and emerging action towards decentralization as evidenced in education policy and PEDP. In Bangladesh, similar to many other developing countries, decentralization is a mechanism to deliver centralized "expert driven educational reform". The expert driven education system leads to a robotic approach to teacher development that fails to produce teaching skills or attitudes required for improving classroom approaches and student learning (Leu, 2005).

Global experience also demonstrates the significance of dialogue at national, district, school and community levels (ibid). Therefore, for the purposes of the study it has become necessary to investigate under what conditions teachers operate and what kind of understanding and responses accountability brings forth. In this discourse the role of teachers becomes pivotal since the kind of learning outcomes the system is designed to deliver manifests through teachers' interaction with their students. Human factors like commitment and motivation become very significant in shaping the teaching learning process (Heargreave and Fink, 2008). Particularly at a time when policy preference for a constructivist approach is high. The nature of the constructivist approach dictates allowing teachers to spontaneously engage with children with commitment and enthusiasm. This perspective has become significant, as an adequate policy environment is deemed essential to creating a supportive environment for producing and sustaining teacher quality (Fredricksson 2003; Mulkeen et al).

2.5.3. Role of School Management Committees (SMC)

During the pre-independence period, parents and communities partnered in operation of schools. Therefore, state intervention was not crucial; as local schools were managed through individual demands, pressures and collective participation (Zanten, 2006) via SMCs or occasionally, by direct intervention from communities. However, that role has been compromised due to nationalization of education under a highly centralized structure. As the management and delivery of education comes under increasing public scrutiny, the question of how best to manage teachers is garnering much attention. For management, the goal is to have qualified and motivated teachers assigned where they are most needed; with low levels of turnover and attrition, and an incentive system that encourages teachers' commitment and professionalism (Gaynor, 1998). Now the question is, to what extent the state is perceived to be providing such managerial inputs or creating necessary regulatory conditions to achieve a set of goals that ensures quality education. Particularly, in case of diverse non-state provision, it needs to be seen whether the state's management authority discriminates the school-level stakeholders and if so, with what implications.

2.6 Key management issues related to the process of decentralization

Institutional input or absence of strongly influences how the school-level actors define their relationship with the state. A number of specific themes related to the institutional inputs have been investigated. The various conceptual and theoretical dimensions of these themes are discussed below;

2.6.1 Institutional dimensions related to decentralization

Varied institutional dimensions have been considered in designing this investigation and providing interpretations of its outcomes. The global context is set on two principal arguments; firstly, the complexity of organization, and secondly, state's inability to effectively supervise the quality of education rendered (Volansky and Friedman, 2003). Particularly in the case of RNGPS, the first argument of complexity fits well since RNGPS are governed by a large, multi-layered and multi-agency

arrangement. This leads to organizational complexity that creates challenges for the state to supervise schools in a manner which would be facilitative for quality enhancement. On the contrary, Quomi madrassas lack institutional support to ensure technical competencies.

The RNGPS governance system is mostly centralized and externally funded leading to a "project-oriented mentality". This can make the educational system a victim of its own method (ibid). In this type of organizational structure the pupil is not at the center; rather, the instructions from higher up are at the center, and teachers are expected to respond and carry them out (Hallak; 1990; Hill and Bonan, 1991; OECD, 1989; Volansky, 1999 p.13). Based on my professional experience the statement summarizes the problem of primary education governance in Bangladesh rather well. The World Bank has carried out extensive investigation on School Based Management methods to better define the concepts, review the evidence, support impact assessments and provide feedback to project teams (Osario and Patrinos, 2009). Their findings suggest that despite the clear commitment on parts of government and international donor agencies, efficient and equitable access remains elusive for a large number of populations. Even though a vast number of children do have access to education facilities, the quality of education provided is often sub-standard.

A World Bank led large scale cross-country investigation derived conclusions from panel dataset of four waves of international PISA tests spanning over 2000-2009 and comprising of one million children over 42 countries, show developed and developing countries produced different results after introducing School Based Management (SBM). The results show autonomy affects student achievement negatively in developing and low performing countries but brings positive outcomes in developed and high performing countries. In many, if not most developing countries, the trend towards SBM and general decentralization of other public services including education has not been due to the countries' own internal initiative. Public interest in SBM as a tool to enhance quality in education is mainly due to current global trends and has not yet been favored by the administrators in Bangladesh. The local authorities or communities have

been demanding a participatory decision-making process, which has been unsuccessful in garnering attention from the administrators. This has resulted in an absence of any meaningful process that can be construed as initiatives towards School Based Management (SBM).

However, policy makers worldwide appear to be largely convinced that merely resource allocation without necessary institutional reform will not serve the purpose of equity and quality of education (Hanushek, Link and Woessman, 2011). It appears that knowledge of the school-level operators within the context of institutional inputs also can be a departure point for the investigation. This specific angle of interpretation will provide a better insights into the operational reality of the schools and thereby adoption of effective policies. In this regard, three specific aspects of institutional inputs were explored, which included monitoring sub-system, teachers management sub-system (this has been addressed in the teachers' section stated above) and general state of accountability within the context of mutual trust and respect.

2.6.2. Accountability

Accountability has professional and ethical connotation in which people and organizations are made liable to the relevant stakeholders. Accountability maintains organizational efficiency and ensures transparency. In specific terms, accountability could be defined as a social relation in which an actor is obliged to justify his or her conduct to some significant others (Boven, 2005). Achieving accountability in practice requires clear identification of responsibilities and engagement by the actors who are held accountable for their actions and performance. These actors may report to and are assessed by specific person/s or an agency. That element of justification involves appropriate reporting mechanisms to adequately monitor and evaluate the performance processes (Levitt, 1997). The term is often used synonymously with transparency, liability, answerability and other ideas associated with the expectations of account-giving (ibid). As a consequence, various actors involved in discussions on accountability often have different perceptions of this concept. Discussion tends to focus on one or other elements of

accountability, and this has influenced the course of the debate on accountability (Ahearn, 2000). The term is extensively used in discussions of educational reform among education policymakers, but evidently remains somewhat unclear and incoherent (Kuchapski, 1998).

The academic research and professional literature provides several typologies of accountability. They include administrative, professional, moral, political, market, legal and managerial (Ferlie, 2005).

Table 1: Types of accountability

Actors	Mechanism and method
Superior and subordinate	Hierarchical/supervisory relationship; rules standards and targets
Political Elected politician	Democratic
Individuals and organizations	Integrity, "keep them honest" exercised through courts
Professionals	Conformity to standards and codes of conduct checked by professional peers, through their institutions
Civil Society	Ethical obligation and moral responsibilities, internalized values.

As shown in the table in the previous page, organizational accountability has to do with effective communication where bureaucratic explanation and justification of actions and decisions take place. Accountability involves actors within and outside the system. For instance, in this specific study organizational accountability refers mainly to communication between the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and the school level actors. This type of accountability is characterized by a superior-subordinate relationship and essentially is top-down in nature.

In a parliamentary form of government such as Bangladesh, the parliament holds executive political accountability. Local governments are the decentralized extension of the parliamentary form of government. To date, local government institutions have been found wanting. In the case of political accountability, the system is effectively accountable to the elected members of parliament. Strong democratic institutions and processes that are necessary for ensuring meaningful political accountability are missing.

In a democratic society the judiciary holds the executive legally accountable. A fair and accessible justice system is a key guarantor of the rule of law. The rule of law is an essential guarantor of democratic politics (DFID, 2008). In Bangladesh the legal system has seemingly failed in its responsibility due to political interference and corruption.

Autonomy and control in addition to accountability are especially relevant to mass public services that rely on expertise and experience of trained professional workers—in this case, the education professionals. Professional accountability is often dependent on the degree of trust among professionals at higher and lower levels of the systems. The higher the level of trust, lesser is the demand for accountability or some stringent form of surveillance. In Bangladesh there is no central professional body of education professionals to ensure or facilitate conformity to standards and codes of conduct.

There is no universally agreed definition of the term "ethics" (Ayee, 1998). Chapman (1993) defines ethics as the basic principles of the right action and rules of conduct. In the case of Quomi madrassa education, ethical obligation

and moral responsibilities are based on religious principles and are driven by religious civil society.

2.6.3. Monitoring

Developing a feasible and pragmatic monitoring system requires clearly defined purposes and roles understood by educators and policy makers at all levels of schooling system (Williams, 1993). Global experience suggests the efficacy of the monitoring system in contributing to the improvement of quality requires mutual dialogue (Unicef, 2005). The highly centralized setup, such as the primary education governance system in Bangladesh, does not have provisions for dialogue. Therefore, this investigation attempts to find bottlenecks created due to the absence of dialogue per the opinions of school-level operators.

If program intervention, resources and structures are strategically well-placed then a monitoring system can effectively address issues on hand. An effective monitoring system is a necessary but certainly not the only means to ensure meaningful improvements in school performance. This investigation is also a step towards discovering how the existing monitoring system helps or hinders operational efficacy. This understanding provides policy and decision-makers insights as to how to set goals, identify appropriate interventions, and determine roles and responsibilities for schools, parents, community and other stakeholders (Unicef, 2009).

In the 2009 ADB funded strategy paper on primary school performance project in Bangladesh, a number of areas were found to be weak and lacking in viable monitoring systems, internal reporting mechanisms, collaboration and coordination between various components. A comprehensive system approach was undertaken to improve the institutional capacity by using monitoring as an entry-point. The ADB initiative, under the flagship national program known as PEDP 11, appears unable to bring desired improvements in the system. However, over the years it appears that the stated and many other similar institutional development interventions have not been able to bring about the desired improvements in the system. This provided the opportunity to find out to what extent authority has been transferred to the

lower tiers of administration, what the capacity building measures undertaken were and what kind of resources were allocated for the monitoring system. It was felt that this could potentially lead to some insights into the way school-level operators perceive central regulations and the consequences of these regulations. Since the significance of the monitoring system is, to an extent, an institutional tool, it can promote modern management practices, innovations and reform in addition to better accountability (Kayani et al, 2011). Again, at another level, based on the analytical frame of the investigation, it was inquired to what extent the actors both at the center and periphery have the authority to comply, create, modify or adjudicate rules and regulations (Agrawal and Ribot, 2007).

In Bangladesh, the monitoring system within primary education governance system under the remit of the state is centralized and produces reports with various statistics but no mechanism for meaningful feedback. This suggests that efforts are being made to monitor but with no plans in sight as to how to use this data to improve school performance. On the other hand, non-state providers, like the madrassa system, have informal monitoring by the community, and the Madrassa Management Committees (MMC) do not specialize in installing and operating an effective monitoring system.

The monitoring process in Bangladesh has bureaucratic power elements built into it. An inflexible top-down administrative monitoring system might deter educators from questioning methods and purposes in schooling or from critically examining what and how to teach. An argument for monitoring claims it helps to institutionalize organizational structures and practices aimed towards goals that have not been yet justified or accepted by educational communities (ibid). Those in favor of monitoring argue both administrators and educators need objective information to make sound educational decisions. They see the potentials in using systematically collected data to address the critical issues of access and equity. Global experience also suggests that well designed and executed monitoring system can effectively contribute to job-related knowledge for both teachers and administrators. It can induce constructive debates about school policies and practices and facilitates accountability in areas like school closures,

dismissal of teachers or staff promotion thereby creating conditions for enhanced school performance.

2.7 Analytical framework

A centralized structure of governance system falls short in providing quality education in Bangladesh and has the focus to facilitating partnership between the state and non-state providers, with the assumption that it will enable better pooling of national resources. With this in mind, this study discusses the non-state providers using three typologies of decentralization: i) deconcentration, ii) delegation and iii) devolution. The prime focus of the research lies in finding the weaknesses and strengths of the relationship between state and non-state providers, which can influence policy, transfer of authority and administration.

The second aspect of the research is to determine the relationship between state and non-state providers in the context of three specific institutional inputs – i) SMCs, ii) monitoring and iii) training. In order to interpret responses made by the school-level operators and elaborate on its link to policy and strategy, Robinson's (2007) proposition was utilized, which has to do with i) measures taken in the domains of capacity building, ii) financial allocation and iii) transfer of power. To this end, Agrawal and Ribot (2007) proposed that there are three elements, namely actors, power and accountability, which provide the analytical framework that shape the value of decentralization within given context.

The authors also identify the following four types of powers in the spectrum of decision-making related to school governance:

i) The power to create rules or modify old ones is usually the outcome of governments seeking to decentralize control in relation to some kind of resources and certain groups of people. This set of powers allow decentralized actors to legislate principles that lay out decisions and actions concerning who can benefit from given resources or opportunities, how, and to what extent.

ii) Implementation and ensuring compliance implies the power by whom to execute and to monitor whether actors are carrying out the roles they are supposed to perform. It also includes the power to impose and enforce sanctions on those who do not subscribe to the tasks they are supposed to perform.

iii) The power of adjudication is significant whenever new rules are created or there is a change in the type of decisions made by particular actors. Such changes also signify a modification in the authority of these actors. In these regards two normative aspects of adjudication are identified - a) accessibility and b) independence. Local populations influenced by devolved powers should be allowed the right to appeal to accessible channels of adjudication. Further, these channels of adjudication should be institutionalized in a manner that bears no influence by special group interests. Constituents should be able to challenge the rules and decisions imposed upon as well as question policies of implementation and rules of enforcement.

iv) Accountability in Decentralization refers to the leaders' vows to be responsible for the constituents and vice versa. Decentralization is only effective when both parties, the government and the governed, hold rights to demand transparency. Accountability is thus the measure of responsibility. If powers are bestowed to actors who do not have any designed accountability or feel the need to be accountable to the constituents or even to superior authorities within the structure of the government by design, then decentralization efforts will not likely to accomplish its stated goals. It is only when constituents come to exercise accountability as a countervailing power that decentralization is likely to be effective.

Within the above framework, the role of three categories of actors (head teachers, teachers and SMCs) were investigated and compared particularly in line with the various inputs provided by the state to the school-level operators. The frameworks proposed by Agrawal, Ribot and Robinson complement each other rather well since Robinson mentions the appropriate transfer of authority, while Agrawal and Ribot address the aspect of such transfer in greater detail. However, Agrawal and Ribots' prescribed

framework does not deal with capacity development, whereas Robinson includes this important dimension to developing a framework for meaningful process of decentralization. However, Robinson leaves out the critical factor of accountability as crucial to the success of decentralization, which is addressed by Agrawal and Ribot.

It also needs to be stated that since the investigation dealt with institutional support components such as SMCs, monitoring and training systems, the basic theoretical underpinning related to the stated institutional aspects had to be articulated. In the case of SMC, the empirical and theoretical underpinnings that relate to participation were used (i.e. Goldring, 1993; Liethwood and Menzies, 1998; Govinda, 1998; Rugh and Bossert, 1999); in the case of monitoring and training, the respondents' understanding about the extent of the supportive role played by the monitoring system through the creation of meaningful linkages between the information flow and decision-making and follow-up support were investigated (i.e. Sproull and Zubrow, 1981; Williams and Bank, 1984; Williams, J.D. 1995).

2.8. Conclusion

The effectiveness of educational decentralization remains largely unresolved in various literatures available. It is difficult to see a consistent pattern of decentralization among empirical analyses, primarily because the programs are highly varied and the contexts in which these policies are introduced are unique to each country. Additionally, effects of decentralization often take a long time to manifest. Some developing countries' attempt educational decentralization programs while, in actuality, not significantly changing their systems (Gauri and Vawda 2004).

The central dilemma with the argument in favor of decentralization is that while the decentralization process is premised on the principles of democracy and equitable distribution of resources, its application is deeply entrenched in divisive political, social and institutional forces. Therefore, authorities in this field like Fry (1983) and Sayed and Soudien (2005) argue decentralization is not a panacea, and policymakers should take into account that they pose certain dangers. Although, according to Bardhan (2000c, p.

19), "The idea of decentralization might need some protection against its own enthusiasts, both from free market advocates, who see it as an opportunity to cripple the state and from those 'anarcho-communitarians' who ignore the 'community failures' that may be as serious as the market failures or state failure that economists commonly analyze". As a result of lessons learned in the domain of decentralization, the policymakers as well as academics have become more cautious in drawing simple binary conclusions on the applicability of decentralization.

CHAPTER 3

The Context Relevant to Decentralization and Primary Education System in
Bangladesh

3.1. Introductory Remarks

This chapter elaborates on the context relevant to this research with a
background history of education policy and governance system as instituted
in Bangladesh during the post-independence period following December 16,
1971. Herein, I discuss the education governance system and structure with
a particular focus on the RNGPS and Quomi madrassas, as these two
categories have been chosen for this research.

3.2 Post-independence trends in governance with respect to decentralization

Decentralization has become an important topic in discussion about
governance in Bangladesh. Under centralized governance systems, the state
did not achieve the goal set forth for primary education benchmarks. Sarker
(2005) argues that following the dismal performance of the state-led
development, the public sector has come under scrutiny. During the 1970s,
the failure of the state-centric approach in producing economic growth and
poverty reduction was widely accepted, and by the early 1990s the paradigm
shift became even more evident. In this context the potential of non-state
providers, specifically the NGOs, were seen as having a supplementary role
as well as a comparative advantage in addressing poverty (Turner and
Hulme, 1997).

Historically, Bangladesh has inherited an overdeveloped bureaucratic system
(Alavi, 1979; Ahmed, 2005). The complexities of such a system are felt in
every sphere of the society. Following independence in 1971, government
nationalized all educational, industrial and commercial concerns. This left
little scope of participation for the non-state providers. In this period, a rural
service provision was placed within the bureaucracy, but this enthusiasm for

state-led development fell short of its objectives (Humphrey, 1986; Ministry of Education, 2004). Different studies have identified the constraints of state-led development (Khan, 1998; World Bank, 1996; Sobhan, 2004). In this regard, some observations of these state-led development initiatives are as follows:

i) Low levels of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, transparency and dynamism in public service;

ii) Poor performance of public enterprises as a result of lack of incentives and accountability;

iii) Denial of access to state resources, specifically to the poor;

iv) Lack of connection between reward and performance;

v) Mounting corruption and rampant plundering.

3.3. Education system in Bangladesh

The educational system in Bangladesh is three-tiered and highly subsidized. The government operates a large number of schools in primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. It also provides partial funding for many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the government funds more than 15 state universities. In addition, there are at least 20 private universities accredited by the government. The three main educational systems in Bangladesh, ordered by decreasing student number, are:

i)   General education system;

ii)   Madrassa education system;

iii)   Technical vocational education system;

Each of these three main systems is further divided into four levels:

i)   Primary level (years 1 to 5);

ii)   Secondary level (years 6 to 10);

iii)   Higher Secondary level (years 11 and 12);

iv)   Tertiary level.

(Source: Canadian International Development Agency, 2005)

As stated, general education in Bangladesh has four major stages: primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary education. Primary education is a 5-year cycle while secondary education is a 7- year cycle, with three sub-stages: three years of junior secondary, two years of secondary and two years of higher secondary. The entry age for primary is 6 years of age. The junior, secondary and higher secondary are designed for ages: 11-13, 14-15 and 16-17 years olds, respectively. At all levels of schooling, students can choose to learn either in English or in Bengali. Private schools prefer and offer English-based instruction and curriculum, while government-sponsored schools opt for Bangla medium. In the general education course, higher secondary is followed by college/university level education through the Pass/Honors Graduate Courses (4 years). The duration of a Masters or graduate degree is one year for holders of Bachelors (Honors version) and two years' for the holders of the Bachelor degree (Pass version).

3.4. Governance of education system in Bangladesh

The education system in Bangladesh is governed by two ministries, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME), in association with various departments and directorates and autonomous bodies. The Ministry of Education is responsible for policy formulation, planning, monitoring, evaluation and execution of plans and programs related to secondary and higher education, including technical and madrassa education. There are a number of agencies involved in governing the education sector, which are;

i) Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) - is responsible for administration, management and control of secondary and higher education, and other special type of education.

ii) Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) - is responsible for the management and administration of technical and vocational institutions.

iii) Ministry of Primary & Mass Education (MOPME) - is responsible for running the primary and mass education as its name implies.

Agencies that directly participate in monitoring and aiding the education sector are;

i) DPE (Directorate of Primary Education) - controls, coordinates and regulates the field level administration for primary education.

ii) National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) – is responsible for providing training and certificate courses for strengthening the capacity of teachers and relevant education personnel.

iii) Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit (CPEIMU) - monitors the compulsory primary education program at the field level and conducts child-survey to collect information on the numbers of primary school-age population and children attending schools.

In addition to those listed above, there are two more specialized agencies that provide technical and information support to both the ministries, which are;

i) National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) - performs the responsibilities of renewal, modification, development and distribution of primary, secondary and higher secondary textbooks and;

ii) Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) - is responsible for the collection, compilation and dissemination of educational information and statistics at various levels and types of educational levels, including primary education. The following organization chart shows the various hierarchies in the primary education governance system in Bangladesh.

Diagram 1: Primary and Mass Education System in Bangladesh

Organizational Chart of Primary and Mass Education

MOPME - Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
DPE - Directorate of Primary Education
CPEIMU - Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit
NAPE - National Academy for Primary Education
BNFE - Bureau of Non-formal Education
NCTB - National Curriculum and Textbook Board
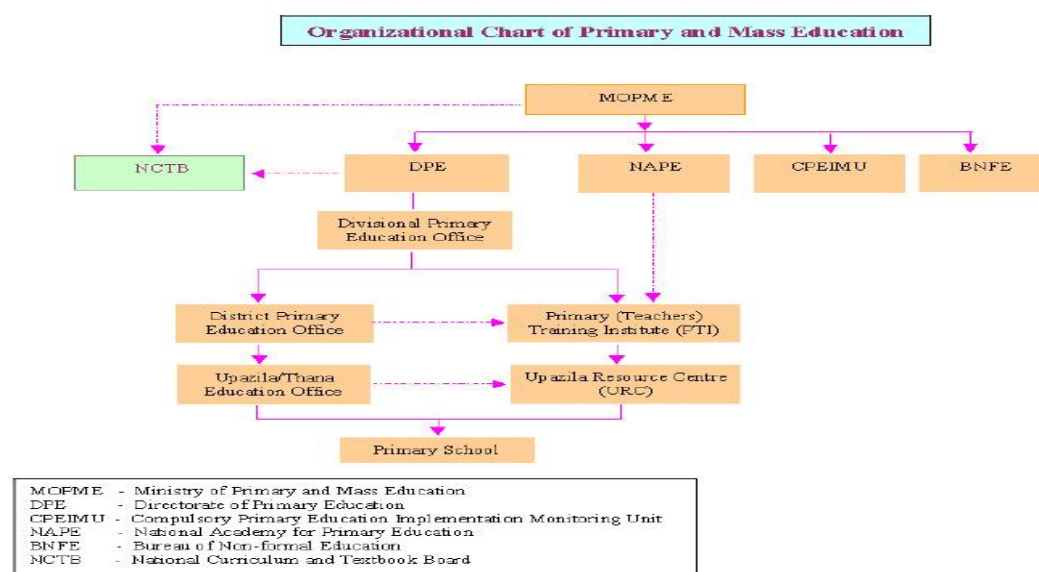
3.5. Madrassa System

The madrassa education in Bangladesh is a slightly modified version of madrassa education in India (and, later, in Pakistan). There are two types of madrassas in Bangladesh;

i) Quomi madrassas -- estimated at more than 6,500 schools at the secondary, intermediate, and higher levels, with about 1.4 million students and 130,000 teachers. Quomi madrassas in Bangladesh are pre-dominantly of Deobandhi persuasion.

ii) Aliya madrassa – these madrassas are unique in the sense that, although Islamic religious curriculum is taught, equal emphasis is given to all general subjects such as English, Bangla, science, maths, social studies, etc.

The equivalent grades in general education to that of the Aliya madrassa education are as follows:

ibtedayee (primary level, grades 1–5),

dakhil (junior secondary level, grades 6–8,secondary level grades 9–10)

alim (higher secondary, grades 11–12),

fazil (Bachelor's degree level, grades 13–14),

kamil (Master's level, grade 15–16).

The fazil and kamil levels are affiliated with the Islamic University in Kushtia. Quomi madrassas are private institutions, having developed outside the government regulatory framework (ADB, 2008). The Quomi madrassa also have parallel structure similar to ebtedayee (equivalent to primary education), but it is not recognized by the state.

Aliya madrassas are state supported madrassas with a modified Dars-e-Nizam curriculum with the inclusion of general education courses. Aliya madrassas are also known as mainstream madrassas with fewer rigors demanded per the religious curriculum. An approximate equivalency has been established between general education and Aliya madrassas graduate certifications, allowing graduates from both systems to be able to compete for government jobs as well as apply for higher studies at universities. The Quomi madrassas, on the other hand, operate without state support and recognition, with donations and charities from the community. Degrees obtained from a Quomi madrassas are not recognized by the state; the scope of entry into general education and job markets is very limited (Bangladesh Enterprise Limited, 2011).

The madrassa system of education poses a contradiction in terms of student access even though the madrassa system is under-supported and marginalized by the government; it supports over 5.5 million students who are either overwhelmingly poor or homeless. This study focuses on the Quomi madrassas; thus, a detailed description of Aliya madrassas has not been included. Before Mullah Nizam Uddin standardized the madrassa curriculum known as the Dars-i-Nizami in the Indian sub-continent, madrassa teachers selected which book to use in their individual classrooms. The madrassa curriculum is traditionally inflexible due to the religious requirement of preserving authenticity. Though over time the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum has been modified, it is still taught via the canonical texts learned through commentaries (shariah) and the glosses or marginal notes (hashiya). South Asian students do not understand these texts in Arabic they are required to memorize these texts.

The Quomi madrassa curriculum is built on NFE (Non-Formal Education) principles. It is organized by subjects with no age-specific constraints. This flexibility caters to the majority of madrassa-going students who are not only poverty-stricken but also, in most cases, wage-earning members in their respective families. Managing such a curriculum requires highly trained teachers, adept in small group as well as larger group teaching. This is absent in the case of Quomi madrassas.

In order to bridge the general and faith-based education, the state has mandated inclusion of all subjects taught in the general education system in addition to faith-based subjects. As the length of time for the two different educational systems are the same, general education contents is offered in a condensed form to accommodate religious instruction in Aliya madrassas. This was a step to bring the country's education providers under a single framework as recommended by the Qudrat E Khuda Education Commission Report and all subsequent education policy reports, including the one published in 2010. However, Quomi madrassas follow their own curriculum in defiance to the state.

3.6. Non-State Provision

Non-state providers are currently seen as part of the solution to accelerate quality measures in primary education in Bangladesh. The proponents in favor of allowing the non-state actors' to participate, argue that in the face of state failure it is worth exploring the potential of different providers, although the state generally continues to be seen as a last resort provider (World Bank, 2002). In the education context private education has been defined as 'all formal schools that are not public, and may be founded, owned, managed and financed by actors other than the state, even in cases when the state provides most of the funding and has considerable control over these schools (teachers, curriculum, accreditations, etc.)' (Kitaev, 1999, p. 43).

The following table shows the category of non-state providers of primary education in Bangladesh recognized by the state.

Table 2: Types of non-state providers in Bangladesh

Schools	Key features	Numbers
Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS)	School established on the initiative of individual/community. Usually land for the school is donated by a philanthropist from the community Furniture and fixtures, as well as, the recurring cost (i.e. teachers schools) is paid for collectively by the community Recognized and partially financed by government	19,814
Unregistered Non-Government Primary Schools (UNGPS)	Same features as registered non-government primary schools but not recognized by the government	1,699
High school attached primary schools	Physically attached with high schools falls under the jurisdiction of secondary and high secondary authority	1,283
Community schools	Established in areas where children do not have access to schools receive limited financial support from the government	3,218
Kindergarten	Privately owned, caters to the rich No uniformed curriculum medium of instruction in English	3,745
Independent ebtedayee madrassas	Religious schools based on Islamic faith curriculum combines religious, as well as, science, math and English	18,000
Attached to High Madrassa	Same as independent ebtedayee madrassas and attached to high madrassas fall under the jurisdiction of secondary and high secondary authority	8,214
NGOs	Community based, innovative and pro-poor. Not officially recognized by the government generally infrastructure consists of single room (BRAC model).	30,000

It needs to be stated that children provided primary education through NGO schools, mainly through BRAC education program, is not recognized by the state. In addition, the Quomi madrassa being completely outside of the state's jurisdiction is not acknowledged by the government. The realization that it is rather difficult to distinguish between state and non-state providers reverberates throughout this investigation, especially the SMCs and PTAs, by structure and function do not directly belong to the state. SMCs and PTAs are voluntary non-state entities that exist in virtually all categories of state and non-state schools. On the other hand, non-state providers still have to operate under some form of regulatory framework imposed by the state. Such mixed characteristics make the study of non-state providers rather complex.

Even where schools are owned and managed by the private sector, they are often subsidized by the government who pays the costs of curriculum development, inspection, examinations, and teacher training (Rose, 2007, p.2). According to UNESCO, an educational institution is considered private if it is controlled and managed by a non-government organization (e.g. religious group, association, enterprise) or if it's governing body consists mainly of members not selected by a public agency (UNESCO, 2005, p. 45). This report emphasizes this classification is based on governance rather than financing criteria.

3.7. Two categories of non-state providers

This section analyses the various functions of two types of non-state providers under investigation, namely:

i) Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS);

ii) Quomi madrassa.

For the purposes of investigation three themes were investigated. These included the functions of School Management Committees/Madrassa Management Committees and the provision of monitoring and training mechanisms.

3.7.1. Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS)

Although the state is committed to uniform, mass-oriented, free and compulsory education, it was recognized during the 1980s that this could be achieved through different forms of service delivery, which paved the way for the establishment of Registered Non-Government Schools (RNGPS) (Rose, 2007). The RNGPS are monitored and regulated by the state in some areas as semi-state entities. Establishment of RNGPS requires community initiative. The people of a specific community come together, provide land and resources to build the actual school buildings, provide necessary resources to start a school and, finally, enroll children in that community. Once the initial ground-breaking phase takes place, the divisional office evaluates and sends a report to the Evaluation Committee at the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. The Committee then decides whether the school could begin operating. Permission to operate is valid for one year. After one year the authorities re-evaluate the school's performance and decide on its registration status for another year. After that it is registered every five years (RNGPS Registration Ordinance, 2011). However, in reality schools obtain permission to operate and secure registration status despite not fulfilling all the conditions stipulated in the state ordinance.

The state provides detailed operating guideline for the School Management Committee. The committee is responsible for ensuring that interest groups related to the school are represented. The structure and functions of SMCs are spelled out in RNGPS Registration Ordinance, 2011. The SMC includes head teacher of the school in question, a teacher's representative, guardians of children, and philanthropists or representatives as identified by the philanthropists. The committee has duration of three years after which the committee is dissolved and a new committee is established. The SMCs of RNGPS can appoint teachers from a list approved by the district administration. This example indicates the degree of control the state exerts over RNGPS.

i) Teacher recruitment and training

The present recruitment rules allow for a female candidate with a Secondary School Certificate (SSC passed with a 2nd division) to be recruited with a compulsory passing marks in a competitive recruitment test. The male candidates have to have a minimum of a High School Certificate (HSC) qualification. Decrement in the pre-requisites for female teachers was deemed necessary to attract female candidates to the profession as there is lower female representation in the educational system. It is expected the presence of female teachers would also attract female students to attend schools. Recruitment regulations for other jobs in the sub-sector have also been revised.

The government determines the salary range for teachers belonging to RNGPS at 90% of the salary provided to teachers belonging to Government Primary Schools (GPS). In a large number of cases, the 10% discrepancy in salary that was supposed to be contributed by the communities never materializes. Bangladesh's Constitution includes provision of free and compulsory primary education to its people, and the RNGPS are instructed not to charge fees or receive any "official" contributions from parents or others as such. Unlike the government schools, RNGPS teachers are hired at the upazila, or sub-district, level rather than the zila or district, level. Once recruited, teachers at both types of schools (Government Primary Schools and Registered Non-Government Primary Schools) are sent to obtain the same training administered by PTI (Primary Teachers Institute).

ii) Management and monitoring activity

Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit (CPEIMU) is a unit within the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education for the Government of Bangladesh. The main objective of this unit is to monitor and evaluate the implementation of Compulsory Primary Education Programs. Over time, the CPEIMU has become weak and monitoring activity has been primarily taken by DPE. The PEDP I, II and III, all have supported the strengthening of monitoring system at the DPE level so far. There is a MIS section at the DPE which is attached to the planning department. Through

external and donor agency assistance it now has developed the capacity to compile a large range of information. Nevertheless, how this information should be organized and analyzed in order to make well-informed decisions remains a challenge.

Efforts have recently been made to create a platform for meaningful monitoring to be carried out. First, the government has introduced what it calls PSQL (Primary School Quality Level). There are criticisms that the PSQL is supply-oriented; for instance, PSQL includes indicators like percentages of schools that uphold rules including 40 students per classroom, percentage of schools which meet the standard of 26 feet x 19 feet 6 inches classroom, percentage of schools with potable water etc. Despite these criticisms, it is clear the introduction of measurable and verifiable indicators would positively contribute to a better planning and monitoring system. Second, through PEDP III, further attempts are being made to strengthen the capacity of the lower tier management by supporting decentralized planning at the district and upazila level (Annual Sector Performance Report, 2013).

3.7.2 Quomi Madrassas

Quomi madrassas are complex and varied, since they are the results of independent initiatives from diverse communities. The existence of nine different Quomi boards is evidence of the divisiveness amongst the Quomi madrassas, yet the majority of madrassas are registered with Befaqul Madrassil Arabia.

i) Key Features of Madrassa System

Some of the elements that have a bearing on access and equity to primary education governance system are discussed below;

Background: The Deobandi traditions on which Quomi madrassas operate prescribe no support from the state. The 'Quom', or the community, is the principle benefactor of the Quomi madrassas, and 35% of these madrassas are unregistered. The Ministries and relevant state agencies exert almost no control over the Quomi madrassas. True to its name the Quomi madrassas draw their support and energy from the community and have survived over

time. However, a major price of this freedom is that the Quomi madrassas are left out of the system, and, thus unable to provide children attending these madrassas access to the state exam administered at grade five, which certifies completion of primary education examination. As stated earlier, the Quomi madrassa system is governed through at least nine independent madrassa boards. Out of these boards, BMAB, which is the largest, was founded in 1978 and aims to bring all the Quomi madrassas in the country under a common curriculum by conducting centralized examinations.

a) BMAB has the following control and regulatory functions:

b) control, coordination and development of the curriculum of the madrassas;

c) development and coordination of teaching methods;

d) publication of course books for madrassas;

e) teacher training;

f) inspection of madrassas,

g) conducting centralized examinations and the distribution of certificates and scholarships;

h) auditing of accounts of the madrassas;

i) promoting the cause of madrassa education; and

j) administering the Mufti Board to resolve issues related to Islamic jurisprudence in the country (BMAB 2003, p. 5).

During this investigation there was very little evidence on grounds that suggested the board was able to perform all the responsibilities listed above in a meaningful manner. The board itself is riddled with problems, lacking both human and financial resources. Other than delivering curriculum and conducting public exams, it does not have much impact in other areas (ADB, 2011). Moreover, there are some madrassas that are not run under any board at all. These include Hathazari Darul Ulum Mainul Madrassa, Azizun Ulum Babunagar, Ubaidiya Lanukul Nasirul Islam Nazirhat Madrassa, Darul Marif Bahaddarhat Madrassa, Lalkhan Bazar Darul Ulum Madrassa, Muzaharul Ulum Chattagram Madrassa and a few others.

Funds for running the operations of the madrassas are collected through zakat, fitra, donations of cattle hides of sacrificial animals during Eid-ul Azha (Islamic religious event) and grains from the harvesting seasons. This community support in recent years has been complemented by donations from Bangladeshi expatriate population working abroad, particularly those in Middle Eastern countries. Similarly, some of the Middle Eastern NGOs also provide financial assistance in construction of mosques and madrassas. There is no reliable source to suggest the exact amount of funds these madrassas generate.

ii)   Madrassa Management Committees (MMCs)

The most significant component of the MMCs is that the madrassa headmasters are usually the founders or closely related to the founders of the madrassa; they undergo a fairly rigorous selection process via the committee in place or the Majlis e Sura (committee of Islamic scholars). The Majlis e Sura does not interfere with the operations of the madrassas, but provides guidance on religious standards and holds a rather influential place in madrassa affairs.

With variations in the degrees of involvement, the MMCs are responsible for:

a) building Infrastructure

b) making decisions regarding matters related to the construction of a madrassa like land procurement, construction, repairs, maintenance, quality water and latrine facilities, etc.

c) provision of study materials, books, pencils, etc.

d) managing madrassa operation.

Administrative activities include granting leave of absence, meal and lodging for students at residential schools, administration of board examination (where applicable), enforcing board curriculum, meetings with teachers, and any other logistical work. In addition to the list above, the principal is also responsible for building relationships with other members of the MMC,

parents, community, madrassa board and local authorities. While having so much power, the principal at the same time cannot make unilateral decisions on important matters like development and maintenance of properties, hiring and firing of teachers etc.; consequently, the MMCs actually have democratic dynamics placed within an empowered structure. The MMCs are perhaps one of the central pillars which keep madrassas functional (ADB, 2011).

iii)   Madrassa Teacher Recruitment and Training

There are two sets of circumstances within which the teachers are recruited within the madrassa system. If the power structure favors the major donor or founder, then teachers are often selected arbitrarily by the founder of the madrassa. Alternatively, in cases where authority is shared equitably amongst the members, MMC employs a more methodical selection process to hire teachers and school staff. A common strategy in teacher recruitment and training in madrassas is to hire family members or friends of the students or the MMCs, which helps create reliability on part of the teachers as well as consideration towards irregularity of wages received. If the teacher is connected to one or more families within the MMC then socially he would be more easily held accountable to that MMC. In addition, the teacher could be easily persuaded to remain at post in case salaries are not issued on a regular basis.

A substantial number of teachers are trained by one of the madrassa boards. However, the quality of teaching is questionable as it was revealed subsequently through interviews that the teachers have rather archaic notions about the teaching-learning process and are, in fact, interested in learning modern pedagogical techniques. Training provided to the teachers are informal in nature, and it was found on a number of instances that Quomi madrassa boards organize formal teacher trainings where the teachers pay for themselves (ADB, 2011).

iv) Monitoring

Institutional monitoring of Quomi madrassas is rather weak even though the madrassa board confirms reports of monitoring. Measures taken towards correcting the cases of irregularity discovered in the process of monitoring are not known. If measures are taken when results are downward trending in public examinations, teachers simply are, in most cases, let go. On few occasions teachers are provided training by the board. Principals and MMCs reported participating in teacher supervision, sometimes on a daily basis, by visiting classrooms and providing advice for improvement as the opportunities arise. This kind of monitoring is unstructured in nature and does not contribute much to the quality of the teaching-learning process. They are, however, usually quite useful in maintaining the day to day operations of madrassas.

At another level, recently the state has instructed its intelligence agencies to keep the writers and publishers of religious books for Quomi madrassas under constant monitoring (Dhaka Tribune, 2014). This step has been taken to prevent radicals from inciting religious violence through text books and other reading materials. In addition, the intelligence unit of Bangladesh Central Bank has also been instructed to monitor the external funding sources of Qoumi madrassas. This exemplifies the problematic nature of the relationship between the state and Quomi madrassas, which has serious political implications. For the purposes of the study this dimension of monitoring will not be addressed.

3.8. Description of the area selected for the study

Bangladesh is demographically a homogenous country where the socio-economic status of people and the type of schooling do not vary to a significant degree, excluding a few pocket areas located in the south west of the country, as well as people residing in coastal area. The area selected is compatible with the dominant characteristics of national demographics, and the same could be stated for the general learning outcomes of children in primary education measured in terms of the rate of success in primary education completion examination, which is above 90%, on average.

3.8.1. Tangail district (zila) and Gopalpur sub-district (upazila)

The districts and sub-districts in Bangladesh are integral in administrative and socio-political scenario of the districts to which they belong. The Tangail district with Gopalpur as a sub-district is qualified herein. The description of the qualified area –

Tangail Zila – with an area of 341,435 square kilometer, bounded by Dhaka, the capital of the country and Manikganj on the South, Jamalpur Zila on the North, Mymensingh and Gazipur Zilas on the East and River Jamuna and Shirajganj Zila on the West. The area was designated as Tangail Zila in 1984. With historic roots as an indigo producing area for the British Raj, 'Tangail' derives from the word 'Tanga', or horse-pulled carts used in the indigo trade.

3.8.2.   Administration: Tangail subdivision was established in 1870 and was turned into a zila in 1969. The area of the town is 35.22 sq. km. Tangail Municipality was established in 1887. The zila consists of 12 upazilas.

Source: http://mapofbangladesh.blogspot.com/2011/09/tangail-district.html

3.8.3. Educational Institutions:

Despite a lower rate of literacy, Tangail has a fairly long history of education and education patronage by local philanthropists. The contribution of Hindu

philanthropists is particularly noteworthy and mostly took place before the sub-continental partition of India in 1947. Before partition, Hindus in this area belonged to the upper rung of the society. Kumudini College was established in 1943 by Ranada Prasad Saha (R.P.Saha), a philanthropist of Tangail. He also established the Bharateswari Homes for girls in 1945 at Mirzapur. Government M.M.Ali College was established by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani at Kagmari, about 1 kilometer from city center, and is one of the first public colleges of Bangladesh. Later the college was converted into Kumudini Government Women's College.

Currently, there are five Government high schools in the city. Among these schools, Bindu Basini Government Boys High School (1880) and Bindu Basini Government Girls High School (1882) were established by the Roy Chowdhury family from Santosh; this famous family also co-founded East Bengal club of Calcutta, Shibnath High School and the Ramkrishna Mission School. M.A. Karim from Silimpur established a high school in 1964. Wazed Ali Khan Panni, a Muslim zamindar (landlord) and education enthusiast of Tangail, established the Government Saadat College. Mirzapur Cadet College, the third military school of Bangladesh, was established in the region in 1963.

3.8.4. Gopalpur (sub-district under Tangail district)

Gopalpur came into existence in 1928 as a thana (sub-district) and was upgraded to upazila (sub-district and another name for thana) in 1983. Folklore states, a saint by the name of Gopal Shah meditated where the present day Upazila or Sub-District Headquarters offices are located. Gopalpur consists of a total population of 3.5 million, of which 1.7 million are male and 1.8 million are female. The literacy rate in Gopalpur is 47%, of which male literacy is 50% and female literacy is 43%. The school attendance rate (5 to 24 years) is 55%, of which 59% are boys and 51% are girls (GOB, 2012).

There are no official statistics available for the Quomi madrassas. During the course of investigation, a number of madrassas were found that neither fell within Aliya or Quomi system of madrassas. According to the local people,

countries of Middle Eastern origin were financing these madrassas, and they do not belong to Deobandi persuasion like the Quomi madrassas. There is apparently very little or no mention of such type of madrassas in the current education literature. Some of these madrassas were found to be in dilapidated and semi-abandoned form, indicating they have most likely run into financial and management problems. Since the matter was not within the scope of the study, this aspect was not further investigated.

3.8.5. Reasons for selection of Gopalpur sub-district

The sample size chosen is not an exact representative of Bangladesh primary education sector but close enough to provide a snap shot that will help shed light on the relationship between state and non-state provision. The set of reasons leading to the selection of the sub-district of Gopalpur are as follows;

i) Representation: Gopalpur sub-district falls within Tangail district. The literacy rate of Tangail district is slightly lower than the national average; the difference is minor enough to render no concern to consider Gopalpur as representative of the national average.

ii) Homogeneity: Bangladesh is ethnically and religiously a relatively homogenous country, with the variation of a small proportion of indigenous population mainly concentrated in the South East part of the country. Therefore, there are no major differences between the sub-districts in terms of access and equity throughout the country excluding Dhaka.

iii) Possibility: Even though Gopalpur district shows to be lagging in literacy at present, its history is rich in education and cultural activities. The residents have always been enthusiastic towards education, which is well reflected in interviews of respondents from RNGPS. In addition, BRAC has been a longtime development partner in the community and thus generated enough trust and goodwill.

3.9. Summary

The narrative of the background of education system in Bangladesh depicted a complex centralized arrangement which has been shaped through historical events. This complexity is again further exacerbated due to the presence of eleven categories of non-state providers in which various streams of madrassa systems of education assert their own distinct identities. In this regard, the RNGPS falls in the category of non-state providers who are very much controlled through the state's centralized agencies. On the other hand the state is virtually unable to exert any control over Quomi madrassas. This contextual representation of the education system, specifically the primary education system, is critical in the conceptualization and interpretation of the empirical findings in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter elaborates the methodology related to this research study. It sets off by engaging with an epistemological and ontological stance that informs this inquiry in section 4.2. This section lists the research questions. The research questions outline a platform for designing and developing the methods and methodology. It is followed by the philosophical basis approach and a detailed outline of data collection including its analyses. In addition, the chapter includes my personal and professional experience as well as ethical stand-points.

4.2. Epistemological and Ontological Issues

Each researcher navigates various means and processes of finding a viable course to address the subject matter of his or her research investigation. Research design and its mode of operations need to be couched on sound epistemological and ontological considerations. The ontological dimension deals with the very nature and essence of the social phenomenon investigated. I have been guided and influenced by Cohen et al (2007) and framed this investigation by a series of questions, "Is social reality external to individuals - imposing itself on their consciousness from without? Is it product of individual consciousness? Is reality of an objective nature, or the result of individual cognition? Is it 'out there' in the world, or is created by one's own mind?" (Cohen et al, 2007 p.7). These questions guide what is known in philosophical terms as a nominalist-realist debate. Cohen et al (2007) also state, "The former view hold that the objects of thought are merely words and there is no independent accessible thing constituting the meaning of the word. The realist position, however contends that objects have an independent existence and are not dependent for it on the knower" (ibid, p.7).

The researcher decides his or her position within the nominalist and/or realist philosophical discourses. The literature on research methods (e.g. Bryman, 2003; Cohen, et al. 2011; Morgan, 2007; Stanley and Wise, 2002) provides an explanation and analysis on matters related to the basis of knowledge—its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how it could be communicated to other human beings (Burrel and Morgan, 1979). These are epistemological dimensions of research relating to meaning and application of knowledge. This process requires the researcher to question and delve into his or her own assumptions towards types of knowledge in the realm of the world. According to epistemological principles and driven by questions such as 'what is knowledge?' and 'how it is acquired?' I have attempted to understand the role of multitudes of school-level actors and their input in primary education in Bangladesh. The interpretative paradigm guided me to contextualize these school-level actors' daily operational reality in terms of the internal (school operations) and external (school administrators and community) factors per the governance jurisdiction.

With the assumption that reality is individually constructed, this study acknowledges the existence of multiple realities and is premised on an interpretative paradigm that all human actions and viewpoints are meaningful, and, thus, it needs to be interpreted and understood according to its source and context of social practices. In order to make sense of the social world the researcher needs to understand the meanings that form and are formed by interactive social behavior (Scott and Usher 1999, p.18). According to Bryman (2008), the process of social research involves both the subject (the researcher) and the object (other participants in the study) sharing with the interpreter. The researcher is challenged not only to derive findings on the participants' individual realities but also to decipher them. This research adopts a phenomenological approach in regards to methodological strategy. The phenomenological approach entails description of a given issue explaining causality of issues under investigation from the viewpoint of those who are involved in order to develop in-depth understanding or to clarify potentially conflicting viewpoints (Denscombe, 2010).

4.3. Research Questions

Based on the above stated realities and consequent formulation of rationale, the investigation is guided by the following research parameters or premises and questions.

4.3.1. What is the nature of interactions between the schools as decentralized entities and the government in the matters of governance, support and capacity building, particularly in cases of the two major school-types - Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) and the Quomi madrassas.

4.3.1.1. What are the perceptions of the respondents regarding decentralization?

4.3.1.2 Do the respondents have any preference for a particular form of decentralization?

4.3.1.3 To what extent are the respondents in concurrence with the national primary educational policy statements related to decentralization?

4.3.2. What is the nature of institutional support (related to capacity development) as provided by the center and how it determines the nature of relationship between the state and the non-state providers?

4.3.2.1. To what extent are the SMCs belonging to two school-types able to contribute to the school performance?

4.3.2.2. To what extent are the central agencies able to provide meaningful technical and operational support to the school-level operators?

4.3.2.3. How do the administrators, belonging to the central agencies, perceive the school-level operators and with what implications?

4.4. A qualitative Interview survey approach

By design my research was a qualitative study based on interpretative paradigm. Data was typically collected at a participant setting. The interview questions were designed in a way that it allowed spontaneity but at the same

time remained within the specificity of the research agenda. This aspect has been further discussed in section 4.5.2. The nature of research questions that were being asked were subjective, meaningful and volunteerism component of human understanding (Cohen and Manion, 2011). Therefore, despite the fact interviews are processes were views of the interviewer and interviewees are co-constructed (Kvale), in this particular case the world-view and understanding of the respondents took precedence over interviewer's view.

However, since the research agenda and research questions were set by me, the researcher, along with its subsequent analysis was also done by me; I had a presence in the process. Therefore, to ensure that my objectivity is maintained, I had to reiteratively refer back to my positionality. The entire research effort was an inductive interpretation of respondents' understanding of the research questions. Within the entire research design understanding of the context within which the investigation was carried out was also an important ingredient from which the research narrative was derived. This approach is well represented by the following paragraph.

> "All human actions are meaningful and have to be interpreted and understood within the context of social (as well as institutional) practices. In order to make the sense of the social world, the researcher needs to understand the meanings that formed by interactive social (as well as institutional) behavior". (Scott and Usher, 1996, pp.18).

The open ended questions helped the respondents to provide free-flowing response, which was critical for the purposes of the study. The questions were based on interpretative paradigm, and were designed to investigate the phenomenological complexity of the issue. Researches usually have what (descriptive) and why (explanatory) content built into it, similarly this research study combined both the aspects, but in essence it was exploratory in nature.

4.5. Data Collection

Data collection was initiated after obtaining permission from the relevant state officials. The study or investigation or research was green-lighted without many bureaucratic hurdles. "Who you know" is critical in accomplishing any projects in Bangladesh, and, unfortunately, is a typical way of life in most developing countries. Also, BRAC's partnership in education programs at a number of Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) in the sub-district which I selected also made it much easier to initiate this study. Also worthy of mention, BRAC staff at this particular sub-district are well-known and highly regarded by the government officials.

The information collected from various interviews and group discussions were triangulated, verified and organized thematically. Qualitative data was collected mainly through interviews and group discussion. Kvale's 7 steps were adopted as guidelines in conducting interviews, which are;

i) Thematizing: Formulating the purpose of investigation;

ii) Designing: Planning the design of the study;

iii) Conducting interview: carrying out interview on the basis of interview guide;

iv) Transcribing: preparing interview material for analysis;

v) Analysis: identifying the methods of analysis for the interview;

vi)Verifying: Ascertaining the generalizability, reliability and validity

of the interview findings;

vii) Reporting: Communicating findings of the research. The information was translated into themes and categories and incorporated within the research structure.

Important facets of data collection in theory and as experienced in this investigation are discussed in the next page.

4.5.1. Document review

The document review is important in placing the study within the framework of analysis. In other words, the document review initiates the process of contextualization. It is a systematic analysis of documents, whether in hard or digital form, in order to highlight certain instructional aims, needs and challenges and describe institutional activities (Bowen, 2009). Bryman (2012) commented that reviewing documents is likely to reveal authentic and meaningful data about the phenomenon under investigation. McCulloch (2004, p.129) remarked that "although documentary research is often thought of as one single type of source, it offers a number of different perspectives from which to view a given problem of topic".

Atkinson and Coffey (2004) stated that most of the modern types of social formation are entrenched in bureaucracy and are dependent on paperwork; thus, studying not only aids understanding of how these organizations function but also helps publicize or justify themselves (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004, p.58). Therefore, a document review not only helps contextualize and conceptualize an issue, it also provides credible context to relevant research findings. However, since the study was conducted mainly on the basis of perceptions of the stakeholders on particular issue, the use document research had a limited use.

Document analyses were performed to understand the rationale and constraints experienced in the Bangladeshi educational process in the context of decentralization. The documents reviewed in this regard are recent official documents on education policies, laws and regulations for educational administration, appraisal reports and other research reports by foreign-funded projects, including documents covering the historical development of the education system used to identify critical sector-specific issues and to cross-check findings from interviews and statistical data in existence.

4.5.2. Interview survey

Interviews are the most frequently used tools in qualitative research as they help to explain reality from the respondents' point of view (Schostak, 2006). They proved important in the investigation on perspectives of the school-level actors regarding their own roles in the realm of the state-managed system. Interview as a research tool also enables convergence of thoughts through interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, "a kind of framework within which the participants try to exchange meanings that are negotiated and that can be understood by both participants" (Antikainen, 1996, p. 25).

The level of structure in research interviews has significant influence on the type of data collected (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Warren, 2010). Interviews are generally divided into three types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Cohen et al., 2011).

Structured interviews are designed through a unified set of sequenced questions that are asked in the same way to all the candidates. This type of interview aims to collect very accurate answers that can be easily aggregated and compared. This format of interview tends to be useful in cases where measurable and verifiable factors are under investigation. It is also useful in cases where large sample size is involved and when the researchers employing this format are interested in generalization of the reality. In such type of interviews the questions are very structured and asked in the same manner to all participants (Finlay and Lyons, 2001). These types of interview questions are useful for collecting quantifiable data from a large sample in circumstances where it is impossible to recode and transcribe interviews in full, though this type of interview is associated with risks (Cohen et al., 2011). One such risk is the potential failure of ignoring the respondents' views on the topic. I deemed a free flowing narrative from the respondents was critical in shedding light on their understanding of state/non-state relationship. In the structured interview format, the interviewer does not have much flexibility to pursue relevant issues or

factors impromptu to the situation, leading to a possibility of incomplete observation.

Semi-structured interviews have a clearly developed interview guide with the list of questions and themes that need greater discussion (Bernard, 2011; Kvale, 1996). This type of interview allows the researchers to maintain the focus of the investigation while allowing the respondents to comment on relevant issues, even though the researcher may not have originally considered these issues. The semi-structured format creates the possibility of optimizing learning about the phenomenon under investigation. Bryman (2012) and Kvale (2006, 1999, 1996) stressed the use of semi-structured interviews when the investigation has a fairly clear focus with an apprehension of other off-shoot issues surfacing. Semi-structured interviews were carried out in this research in order to be participatory and explore social phenomena in this particular context (Bryman, 2012; Warren, 2010). The open-ended nature of the questions facilitated the gathering of substantial information.

The unstructured interviews, on the other hand, provide more general topics of discussion and allow respondents to explore the topic in an agreed upon way (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Kvale, 2006). This type of format allows for a plan and guide for initiating discussions, if not any specific questions. The strategy contains both direction and flexibility allowing respondents a window to open up regarding their feelings towards issues under investigation. Since the unstructured interview creates ground for diverse responses, it encourages respondents to provide as much detail as they want. Unstructured interview techniques are useful for oral history, creative interviews and live story interviews (Fontana and Frey, 1994).

In order to carry out this investigation, two interview schedules were prepared. One interview schedule addressed the SMCs, teachers and head teachers belonging to two school-types. This group was questioned on the meaning of decentralization and the nature of support provided by the state in the forms of monitoring and training. The other interview schedule was about the administrators belonging to the central agencies. The purpose of

this particular interview schedule was to obtain an understanding of the extent of trust and respect held on part of the central agency administrators towards the school-level actors. This aided in figuring out the current state of accountability as well as possible implications if authority was delegated to the school-level actors.

Initially, the plan was to record the interviews of the respondents, but due to their objections to it we refrained from doing so. Respondents belonging to the RNGPS showed reluctance due to doubts of breach of confidentiality, which may put them and their jobs in jeopardy. However, all pertinent disclosures were made prior to the interviews, and my ethical obligation as a researcher to withhold the respondents' identity in confidence was also communicated clearly.

The types of interview vary according to various sources. Le Compte and Preissle (1993) give six types: standardized interview, in-depth interviews, ethnographic interviews, elite interviews, life story interviews and focus groups. Boghan and Biklen (1992) add semi-structured interviews and group interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985) add structured interviews. Oppenheim (1992:65) adds exploratory interviews. My interview method was primarily semi-structured interview, although at the same time it was exploratory in approach and in-depth in nature. Interviews carried out for the study followed a similar line. Interviews cannot be categorized in a straightforward manner; it requires a more nuanced understanding. I developed my interview method with topical guidelines created carefully with the guidance of my supervisor. It was possible for me to reasonably address the research questions. The outlines increased the comprehensiveness of the data collection in a systematic manner. It also allowed the interview to remain conversational and situational (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2007). Having stated that, I was aware this approach runs the risk of omitting important issues on the part of the interviewer. Additionally, flexibility in sequencing creates the possibility of eliciting considerably different responses from the respondents. The elaboration of topical guidelines for the purposes of the interview went a long way in mitigating the possible anomalies arising out of semi-structured interviews. Since I had a research

assistant during the entire process for recording the interview, I also oriented and alerted him to remind me whether I had missed any important points during the course of the interview. This cross-checking also proved to be quite beneficial. Finally, my long-term experience with school-level actors specifically representing RNGPS was instrumental in contextualizing the issue. It made it easier for me to inquire into their world of work by being able to converse with them in their own language. This helped to improve the credibility of my findings.

4.5.3. Sample

Sampling refers to the unit of data analysis that helps generalize information per the whole population. The type of sampling that should be used is determined by the type of research (Yin, 2009). In this case, the sampling group included school-level actors such as teachers, SMC members and head teachers. Most sampling methods are purposive in nature since researchers usually approach research with a specific plan in mind (Dunne et al., 2005; Flyvberg, 2006). Purposive sampling represents a collection of non-probability sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling involves the selection of a portion of the finite population being studied and does not attempt to select a random sample from the population of interest. Rather, subjective methods are used to decide which elements are included in the sample (Battaglia, 2008)].

The sampling method used for the investigation was purposive because this method relies on the judgment of the researcher when selecting the units (e.g., people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) to be studied. Usually, the sample being investigated is quite small, especially when compared with probability sampling techniques (Smith, 1983). Unlike the various sampling techniques that can be used under probability sampling (e.g., simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, etc.), the goal of purposive sampling is not to randomly select units from a population to create a sample with the intention of making generalizations (i.e., statistical inferences) from that sample to the population of interest.

The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which best enables one to answer their research questions. The sample being studied is not representative of the population, but for researchers pursuing qualitative research designs, this is not considered to be a weakness. Rather, it is a choice; the purpose of which varies depending on the type of purposive sampling technique used (Deming, 1960). Purposive sampling may include one or more predefined groups that act as a representation of reality (Fossey et al., 2002). Purposive sampling, as selected for this study, also met my goals of not creating generalizations of the data collected.

Yin (2009) indicates that focus of qualitative research is not normally representation but rather how and why people act in certain ways. From the administrative aspect, the upazila level is the lowest tier of administration in the governance system; this applies to primary education governance as well. The upazila administration and the schools under its jurisdiction are burdened most by the state's requirement and demands. Schools located under the remit of a particular upazila administrative system are concluded to be a feasible unit of analysis (bearing in mind that a single sub-district can only be a representative but not exact replica of the other approximately 584 similar sub-districts in Bangladesh).

The sub-district I have chosen is located in the central part of Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh is a relatively homogenous country with people speaking the same language and sharing similar culture and religion, most sub-districts are fairly similar in their make and feel. There are a few regions substantially different from the rest of the country, i.e. the tribal people in the hill tracts and people of the coastal regions are culturally and linguistically very different from the majority of the country. However, in order to maintain consistency and a streamlined focus of analyses, I have not addressed these groups lying outside of main population.

The particular sub-district was also chosen since BRAC has an administrative presence and was particularly useful in facilitating logistics to carry out the investigation. BRAC also has developed rapport with the

schools and local administration under its ongoing general education program.

Table 3: Sample distribution

Sl. No	Respondents	RNGPS	Quomi Madrassa	Interview-type
1	Head Teacher	33	8	Semi-structured in-depth interview
2	Assistant Teacher	41	7	
3	SMC Member	45	2	
	Total	119	17	

In addition to those listed above, I also interviewed one senior official from the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and similarly the top administrator in the division, district and the sub-district (upazila) with jurisdiction over Gopalpur upazila where this study was carried out.

There is no specific sample size for qualitative research. However, as a rule of thumb Creswell (2007) suggests 20 to 30 interviewees for qualitative research. Denizen and Lincoln (1994) recommend between 30 and 50 respondents. The problem for selecting the sample size is that qualitative research methodologists largely fail to provide convincing rationale when suggesting sample size for qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

4.6. Data analysis

This section elaborates the process of analysis which was initiated through compressing, categorizing and organizing data into themes (Bryman, 2008). The process of analysis underwent rigorous feedback from the supervisor and occasional comments by peers and a few experts in this field.

4.6.1. Interviews

A considerable time was spent on introductions and familiarizing the respondents in preparation for the interviews, particularly in the wake of resistance and possible non-cooperation by the stakeholders as a result of recent political events in Bangladesh. Once rapport was established, I focused on the design and length of the interviews. The maximum time period within which respondents felt comfortable was found to be approximately one hour. Additionally, the questions needed to be presented in a simple and clear manner.

The key challenge in the very beginning was to establish a commonly shared comprehension regarding decentralization. To achieve this, I inquired what 'decentralization' meant to the respondents in an open-ended manner. The next step was to figure out which type of decentralization was preferred by most. The typical schema between me and the interviewees were cordial and respectful. Most respondents had 10+ years of experience at their respective schools and were minimally influenced by any outside opinion, including mine. I set the agenda and a frame of guided questions. During the entire course of investigation I was keenly aware of my professional and ideological position as an education practitioner.

I have followed Kvale's seven stages of interviewing as I feel it covers the steps comprehensively and systematically, which leads to effective interviewing. My experience of the interviewing process is elaborated below.

i) Thematizing

After selecting the research topic and having established the context, I attempted to identify a number of themes for the interviews. This led me to

question what the processes are that facilitate or hinder effective delivery in primary education. This inquiry was based on interpretative principles. Unlike a positivist interested primarily in obstacles that hinder the effective delivery of primary education, I phrased my questions in such a way that kept avenues for dialogue open and for multi-dimensional responses. I also explored how the non-state providers define their relationship with the state in operational terms and what implications it might hold for the primary education practitioners.

ii) Designing method of investigation and instrument

As this investigation is institutional in category, the pathway is determined by a combination of state and non-state providers. I decided to opt for a qualitative approach in order to provide room for flexibility in survey instruments. Since the school-level actors are the main subject in this research, their spontaneous response is utmost essential. The study is divided in two phases – the first phase involved interviewing the school-level actors and the main thrust of the study, which required investigating two specific aspects: a) the respondents' understanding about decentralization and b) the extent to which input from the state helps or hinders school operations per the respondents' belief. The relationship between the state and non-state providers can also be described as relationship between the center and periphery, respectively. Additionally, this research required me to investigate how the administrators at the state level perceived the periphery or the school-level actors and their ability to participate in a governance framework within the context of decentralization. This concluded the second phase or dimension of the research.

iii) Interviewing

Given the complexity of the research topic, I have tried to design the interview process to be as simple as possible. After establishing initial rapport with the respondents and scheduling interviews I grouped the interview-questions into three successive stages. First, I introduced the topic, background and purpose and ensured ethical considerations were communicated. I then introduced the different themes. Secondly, I conducted

the main volume of interviews in a conversational tone, which helped in guiding respondents according to the theme of discussion without any offense to them. In the third sub-stage, I summarized key remarks, observations and conclusions to the respondent to ensure agreement and that the respondents and I, were on the same page.

iv) Transcribing

Before starting interviews, I requested permission to record—to which most respondents showed hesitance and suggested recording would force them to be politically correct in fear of their positions being compromised in case the recordings are lost or made public by any chance. I decided not to use the recorder so the respondents were at ease in sharing their thoughts. This also reflects fear of censure by state-level actors in the case the respondents' opinions were not congruent to that of the administrators. This posed a little house-keeping challenge of writing while the respondents were talking, but it was resolved by involving an assistant who would write down the proceedings, giving us a means to cross-check our accounts of the interview.

v) Analyzing

Outlining a roadmap for analysis seemed to be a bit of a challenge before I started the interviewing process. Since the research initiative is exploratory in nature, a rigid analytical framework was perhaps not well-suited. However, the three different themes derived for the purposes of guiding the interviews provided directions to conduct analyses involving condensation (abridgement of meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations), categorization (coding interviews into categories), narrative structuring (temporal and social organization of data collected), interpretation (speculative interpretation of text) and generating explanations via ad hoc methods (a combination of commonsense approach, qualitative and textual methods to bring out meaning). My main goal was to have an understanding of the themes and the internal mechanisms of the existing structures and functions of primary education system and the extent these factors influence the state-non-state relationship.

vi) Verifying

Verifying concerns validity and reliability. Reliability refers to how consistent the results are, and validity means whether an interview study investigates what is intended to be investigated (Kvale, 1996). The issue of reliability and validity has been discussed further in the subsequent section. In this section, the discussion on reliability and validity has been restricted to the scope of the interview. Verifying involves checking the credibility of information gathered through triangulation (Guion et. al., 2006). In this case, I have interviewed three categories of respondents at the school-level (teachers, head teachers and SMCs), which offered the opportunity for triangulation. In order to validate, I prepared interview guides. The guides were tested before it was applied for the actual investigation. During the testing it was emphasized whether the interview guides helped derive an adequate response on the pre-determined themes. Repeated referral back to the research questions was particularly useful in this regard. I recruited two field researchers; this was particularly useful, since each day after returning from the field we held group discussions about the findings of that particular day. This enabled us to collectively review both the validity and reliability without having to unilaterally assign meaning to the findings. Finally, I was in close contact with my supervisor during the entire process, which was instrumental in ensuring my interview was designed and carried out with the prescribed form of verification.

In qualitative research these aspects can be problematic. In question of internal validity, the respondents belonging to RNGPS may become somewhat cautious in giving away facts since I am an NGO counterpart. However, it was clear to me based on my prior experience in this sector that the question of 'acquiescence' (Breakwell 2000), where the respondent acts obliging or agreeable, was not there. My dilemma with reliability and validity could be best described by Kitwood (1977), where he states that the more the interviewer becomes rational, the less likely the interview is to be perceived as friendly, resulting into circumscribed and cautious response. Therefore I chose an informal approach even though the topic of decentralization may have been somewhat skewed due to my preference.

4.6.2. Translating the Data

Conducting interviews in Bengali and presenting findings in English meant that language-related issues had to be addressed in this case. Birbilli (2000) has discussed the intricacies and implications of potential issues that merge from language used in data collection being different from the language of presentation. According to Birbilli the researcher might have to make a number of translation related judgments which might have consequences for the validity of the research. He further suggests that quality of translation is likely to be influenced by the researcher's knowledge of the language and culture of the people being investigated. Being a Bangladeshi was quite helpful in identifying contextual and cultural aspects of the participants. According to Temple (1997), even an apparently innocuous, familiar term for which there is a direct lexical equivalent may carry emotional connotations in one language that may not occur in another. In this situation, Temple (1997, p. 610) argues that an emphasis should be placed on 'obtaining conceptual equivalence without concern for lexical comparability'.

Before translating interviews, an essential question I asked myself was my approach to translation. Wolcott (1994) maintains that this decision is central, as research reports usually present responses as direct quotations, with little indication of the translation process. Direct quotations are evidently an important tool when presenting participants' views, reflecting issues they have prioritized and the way in which they have expressed these issues. It may or may not closely follow the form or organization of the original (Richards, Platt and Weber, 1985).

4.6.3. Validity and Reliability

Validity is the degree to which a particular research instrument measures its claims. Four categories of validity are referred to by Cohen and Manion (2007). The first two categories are related to the construction and design of the research: i) construct validity; and ii) content validity. In order to ensure construct validity I reviewed comprehensive literature on decentralization. Furthermore, in accordance to the requirements of construct validity, I have

also attempted to ensure the participants in the research will also find the contents of the research useful to them in their professional lives.

The aspect of content validity required careful determination on my part in deciding which institutional dimensions may have the most consequences for school-level actors. As a reasonable amount of information was gathered, it provided a challenge to organize it under the concept of decentralization with institutional, political, economic and social connotations. Therefore, I had to be cautious in determining the trajectory of analysis to assure it did not cover too many factors, which, in turn, may take the focus away from the research subject. The third factor is monitoring, which sets the tone for operational process of institutions. The fourth factor is training delivery process, which has direct bearing on the quality of education. I understand these factors were sufficient to validate concepts held by the respondents in the context of decentralization.

For data collection, I have emphasized semi-structured interviews, which were deemed useful for obtaining respondents' own perception of realities per the issue of decentralization. A close look at the internal validity aspect of the study has helped me pay attention to the objectivity of the data collected. I also made sure to cross-refer the data collected by myself and the research assistant to maintain consistency and avoid bias.

By contrast, Maxwell (1992), agreeing with Walcott's (1990) critique, claims that 'understanding is a more fundamental concept for qualitative research than validity' (p. 281). He suggests five types of validity for qualitative methods, which are descriptive, interpretive, theoretical, generalizability, and evaluative validity. Descriptive validity is concerned with factual accuracy in descriptions of physical objects, events, and behaviors. In this case, I have identified and cross checked the identity and location of schools in addition to the targeted respondents in charge of central and sub-district administration and the local intelligence shared by the BRAC educational program staff. Interpretive validity concerns objects, events and behaviors of people engaged in the situation. Maxwell notes that 'accounts of participants' are never a matter of direct access, but are always

constructed by the researcher(s) on the basis of participants' accounts and other evidence' (p. 290). This was one of the core issues of the investigation.

To ensure interpretive validity, the research primarily emphasized interviews not only as a method but also as a way to determine the position of the researcher. In this case it had to do with the respondents' response to a given set of circumstances in relation to the state governance and construction of that reality with the researcher's view, which is well represented with the expression 'inter-views'. Professional pre-assumptions and the possible bias were kept in check during the entire course of the investigation. Theoretical validity differs from the first two in the sense that it refers to an explanation or theory of some phenomenon as well as a description or interpretation of that phenomenon. The legitimacy of the concepts that the theory employs are also scrutinized as being applied to the phenomena. The first three notions of validity are most important in assessing a qualitative account while the last two are less so. The theoretical validity was ensured by employing the key aspects of decentralization in the form of deconcentration and delegation, which concerns the degree at which transfer of power is handed from the center to periphery.

Generalizability refers to an extension of the account of a particular situation or population either to persons, events and settings within the community group or institution studied (internal generalizability), or to other communities groups or institutions (external generalizability). The nature of study itself was not intended to generalize, but to develop insights into the matters under investigation.

In the above narrative, I have attempted to establish that relevant and important measures related to reliability and validity is taken to the best extent possible for interview survey. It needs to be noted that reliability and validity are not as relevant to interview survey as they are for surveys and experiments (Bassey, 1999). Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) suggest that reliability for qualitative research may not work for a quantitative research, assuming that

the possibility of replication as reflected in its three principle types of reliability: stability over time and over similar samples. The interview survey would have certainly benefitted from longitudinal study, which would have allowed for the possibility to provide better reliability of findings over time and similar samples. Yet, this was not possible due to lack of time and resources.

Since my research is qualitative in nature, it needed to be addressed through honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data collected; the participants approached the extent of triangulation; and disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (Winter 2000). Therefore, as an alternative to reliability and validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the concept of trustworthiness while conducting the study. This entailed spending a sufficient amount of time in the field, including familiarization; that is, even before completing the tools for investigation I had visited a number of prospective schools later to be investigated. I also was very careful in processing the raw data collected to avoid mistakes. I cross-checked information with the help of an experienced field researcher. As I went deeper into the research, following from preparatory stage to the operational dimensions, I could cross check whether the detailed response of the respondents conformed to their broader understanding of decentralization. Finally, my colleagues and academic supervisors offered advice and suggestions regarding the research.

4.7. Positionality

The theory of positionality interestingly has its roots in geographical sciences (Sacks, 1974) and Hirsch (1976); however, it has transpired into multidimensional meanings in relation to ascendancy, hegemony and status per Merriam et al (2001) –in relation to where one stands to "the other" and in regard to politics of knowledge construction (England, 1994; Rose, 1997). McDowell (1992) observed that researchers especially must take account of their own position in relation to the research, its participants and the research setting. The reconstruction of one's own positionality with respect to education, class, race, gender, culture and other factors provides a better

understanding about the dynamics within and across one's culture (England, 1994; Merriam et al, 2001; Rose, 1997).

For several decades, social science researchers, especially those belonging to qualitative paradigmatic school of thought, have called for an understanding of the nature and appreciation of the subjectivity of the principal investigator. They saw it as a vital and needed process for self-reflection and a determination of self within social construct under investigation (Behar, 1999; Kirschner, 1999; Rose, 1997).

Within the above stated frame of reference, my experience as a Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) worker has played a significant role in selecting the research topic. Amongst other influencing factors are the NGOs' role in supporting and complementing state initiatives. NGOs in Bangladesh have acquired an identity of socially-conscious groups or organizations through various movements for social justice and poverty alleviation. The Freirian model of conscious empowerment through multi-level socio-economic interventions embodies these activities. The Freirian model relates to the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who evolved a philosophical approach that saw education as a liberating force for the downtrodden masses, whom he called the 'oppressed'. In his groundbreaking book entitled The Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) Freire introduces the idea of 'conscientization'. Conscientization involves teaching adults how to read and write in relation to awakening of their consciousness about the social reality that surrounds them. Freire further argued that mere dialogue is not sufficient for acquiring meaningful knowledge. The 'oppressed' must act together critically to transform it through action and reflection—a process he termed 'praxis'. As an NGO practitioner the decentralization process resonated with me since, in theory, the process tends to mitigate conditions of political powerlessness by creating processes of social 'participation' and 'empowerment' at the grassroots. However, during the course of the research it unfolded that the process of decentralization is not straightforward. Instead, the process entails many complications and calls for more critical and evidence-based understanding. Both the theoretical and empirical aspects of the study hinted that decentralization, in order to be functional is

conditional to a number of factors. The gap between policy and implementation ought to be narrowed down. The institutional plans and policies that are elaborated for making meaningful decentralization happen are often mechanical, not executed as planned or fragmented rather dysfunctional across the central agency. All these factors add up in defeating the empowering influence of decentralization (DFID, 2013).

In my experience, a preference for bottom-up approach in policy development has become intrinsically apparent in the overall development discourse in Bangladesh. A study of the elemental factors concerning an effective bottom-up approach in the primary education can prove to be useful to policymakers, academics, as well as, practitioners.

Due to my NGO experience, a tendency to lean towards a decentralized form of governance is not unusual. However, various global and local literature shows that decentralization could not offer and/or has not offered a panacea for all ills in the primary education governance; country-experiences are quite varied and with mixed results. This phenomenon has called for closer attention to objectivity in conducting this study. The Institute of Educational Development operating under BRAC University where I am currently employed is dedicated to providing technical support to government primary and pre-primary education initiatives. This requires frequent interaction on my part with state officials from all levels and the school-level operators. Since RNGPS are directly placed under the state governance system, I have established fair working-relations with the system as well as the school authorities over the last 20+ years.

However, my experience with the madrassa system has been minimal, leading to a possibility of a somewhat negative view on my part towards the madrassa system for education, methods of operations, ideology or even world view. In that regard, I tried to weigh in on my position on this issue objectively and neutrally. Particularly, incidents of burning BRAC schools in the early 1990s by the fundamentalist groups who are also main patrons of madrassas created divisiveness in the community. This violence was triggered due to objections from the radicalized religious quarter who could

not accept boys and girls learning together. Their other objections included singing and dancing being used as teaching methods, as well as an absence of religion in the curriculum. Yet at another level, incidentally, government school-level operators opposed violently as well when BRAC announced technical and monitoring cooperation at government-run primary schools. The affairs of primary education can entail serious social and political implications in Bangladesh.

I have a preference for secular mode of delivery in general education. However, a diligent study of the madrassa schools made me realize they are fulfilling a particular educational need of the society, so they need due attention from the state. As I draw conclusions to my research, I could not ignore the contribution these madrassas make to the extreme poor of the community, who would have otherwise remained outside of the school system. In reviewing my positionality with respect to this research, I concluded adoption of an inclusive method, and not a prescriptive method, may very well be the best vehicle to achieve universal access to primary education with equity in Bangladesh.

4.8. Ethical considerations

The significance of ethics is linked with establishing trustworthiness in respect to qualitative research. Dealing with ethical dimension of research includes issues like voluntary participation, imposed limitations, informed consent, risk of harm, confidentiality and anonymity. They cannot be ignored as they relate directly to the integrity of a piece of research (Roberts, 2005). The discourse on ethics is initiated by asking a number of fundamental questions, such as: How should we treat the people on whom we conduct research? And are there activities in which we should or should not engage in our relations with them? (Bryman 2008: 113).

Ethical consideration involves how people are treated and how to manage the data gathered from participants (Bryman, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Cohen and Manion (2011) supported the notion that ethical considerations are not only about awareness of the subject matter but also about being careful that the study will not cause harm to anyone. Christian

and Lincoln (2011) introduced a "code of ethics", which consists of three general guidelines emphasizing the moral principles of the social sciences. First, the researchers should obtain the informant's consent, implying that all the respondents ought to participate on a voluntarily basis. Second, the anonymity and confidentiality of participants should be maintained and honored. Finally, researchers need to be accurate and careful in analyzing and reporting the findings—this is termed 'respectable handling of data'. This study sincerely attempted to apply the above stated code of ethics. The study was also guided by University of Sussex research code of ethics.

Verbal consent was obtained from the Director General, DPE (Directorate of Primary Education). The Divisional Director of Dhaka verbally instructed the District and Sub-district education administrators to inform the schools of the ensuing study and so to extend all possible cooperation for the research. Obtaining these verbal consents was possible due to my long-term association with the officials as the head of professional development at the BRAC University, Institute of Educational Development. My association assisted in the process because written request has to go through a time consuming process and at times requires clearance from the Ministry, and I was given verbal consent to expedite the process due to mutual trust and respect that has been built over the years.

For each respondent, before every interview, I communicated the purpose of the interview, made it clear it was not compulsory the respondents participate and stressed confidentiality would be maintained. In case of Quomi madrassas, there was no need for the central board's permission. For madrassa respondents, the possibility of censure for making statements that would not be well-received by the center was not an issue like their counterparts at the RNGPS. To ensure accuracy of data and analysis, a number of measures were undertaken. The most significant measure was to cross-check data.

4.9. Limitation of the Study

This study is country specific; insights derived are difficult to generalize beyond its borders. Even within Bangladesh, I have selected a small element

of a larger and complex system; therefore, the research is unable to provide an all-encompassing picture of how the system functions and with what consequences. The research puts more emphasis on micro level explanations; as a result the research does not provide in-depth analysis of macro-level perspectives or about the processes involved in developing the theory of decentralization. Due to this, a strong micro-macro connection may not have been established in this study. The process of decentralization needs to be understood in terms of overall governance system. A comprehensive understanding of the system requires an expansive interaction with all stakeholders within the system, as well as the processes it entails. In this case, this was not possible.

4.10. Summary

The chapter discussed methodological aspects related to the investigation. Through this exercise, it was possible to clarify how I conceptualized the issue and what factors guided me in investigating the issue. The central philosophical position that has outlined the nature of the research and its investigation was based on an interpretative stance.

A logical consequence from this exercise was its following a qualitative paradigm. The interpretative position and qualitative approach were responsible for determining the tools used. These methodological considerations made me choose case study as the approach for the investigation. My positionality as an education professional also serves as credentials to the objective nature of my research narrative. The chapter also described in details the processes of data collection and the processes involved in its analysis. Additionally, throughout this study, an earnest effort is made to engage empirically and is concluded by reflecting upon the ethical as well as practical limitations of the education apparatus as a whole in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 5

School Level Actors' understanding of decentralization

5.1 Introductory remarks

The platform for this investigation is based on how the school-level actors' view themselves in decentralized roles within the framework of state governance of primary education. The school-level actors and their concepts of decentralization represent a wide spectrum of issues about the literal and contextual meaning of decentralization. Based on the interpretive paradigm, I have attempted to understand the school-level actors' relationship with the state per individual and on a collective basis.

In the first set of questions asked, the school-level actors were requested to respond to three basic questions.

i) The first question was an inquiry about their understanding of the word 'decentralization', which was an attempt to find out their concept of decentralization.

ii) The second question aimed to learn their preference for any particular type of decentralization. The respondents were presented with three basic forms of decentralization to choose from – a) deconcentration; b) delegation or c) devolvement (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983). During the initial stage of preparing the interview schedules, it was discovered that the respondents found it rather difficult to decipher what the abstract definitions of the stated terminologies meant; as a result, each form of decentralization had to be explained through relatable examples.

iii) The third question sought to examine the school-level actors' stance on the decentralization policies and statements. This information was obtained on the basis that with a number of simple decentralization-related statements in the national education policy, it was easier to determine whether they agreed or disagreed with these statements, and if so, why.

The above three questions underpin the analysis of this chapter.

5.2 Understanding of decentralization

In order to make sure all interviewees were on the same page as the interviewer, several examples and parallels were drawn to explain premises of the interview questions. For instance, explaining the forms of decentralization – deconcentration, delegation and devolvement. In the case of deconcentration the interviewees were asked whether they would prefer a higher level of power and resources transferred from the Ministry/DPE to the district and upazila level offices. I also further explained that even in cases of deconcentration the final word still lies with the Ministry/DPE and that the delegation of authority can be revoked or infringed anytime the central agency wanted. The two other forms of decentralization were also explained in a similar manner.

Three groups of respondents (Head teachers, Teachers and SMC members) belonging to two school-types were interviewed and observed. The findings suggested that while the perceptions of the respondents did not literally match standard definitions, their understanding of the implications and consequences of decentralization were sufficiently functional to the extent that it was possible to proceed with meaningful dialogue. Generally throughout the investigation the RNGPS respondents were much more engaged and interested in the discussion. This is also due to the fact that they are directly under the state's operational jurisdiction, so this was not merely a discussion on decentralization but a part of their day-to-day involvement in school operations. Particularly, the head teachers belonging to RNGPS appeared to be more conversant, closely followed by the teachers.

On the other hand, SMC members from RNGPS were less conversant on the issue when compared to the head teachers and teachers, perhaps due to their lesser involvement in school matters than their counterparts in MMCs (Madrassa Management Committee). The SMCs, for instance, could not tell in detail what the nature of financing was and what kind of issues it created for school operations. The teachers, on the other hand, had more knowledge about school operations, but they could not speak clearly about what

implications it had for decision-making. Since head teachers have to make most of executive decisions, he or she could speak in greater detail as to how the dynamics work and how the school as a whole copes with them.

> "Decentralization is dividing of power in a way so that everyone at the school can contribute to the welfare of the school". SMC [RNGPS] 19/7/12.

> "Decentralization means more power to us. But who wants decentralization?" Teacher [RNGPS] 19/7/12.

> "Decentralization means more power to the upazila administration so that schools can be better monitored". Head Teacher [RNGPS] 30/7/12

> "We are not familiar with school affairs or affairs of the teachers and head teachers. We do not get involved with school on a day to day basis. Our job is to provide support to school whenever it is needed." SMC member [RNGPS]12/7/12

> "Decentralization means transfer of more power from the central and divisional offices to district, upazila and schools". Teacher [RNGPS] 25/7/12.

> "Decentralization could be a disguised attempt by the state to takeover Quomi madrassas". Head Teacher [Quomi Madrassa] 27/7/12

In case of Quomi madrassa, the 'disguised attempt on part of the state to take over the Quomi system' informs their level of distrust of state. This kind of tension has emerged from the state's repeated failed attempt to establish a

madrassa authority to assert some kind of control over the Quomi madrassas' conduct of affairs. It was also quite apparent that in case of RNGPS, the school-level actors were familiar with the idea of decentralization. Through orientation and training provided by the government, the RNGPS respondents were already informed about the values associated with decentralization and the state's intention to progressively empower them through the decentralization process. However, the head teachers and teaching staff expressed frustration over the lack of decentralization when it came to daily administrative matters. This was not as apparent in the SMCs belonging to RNGPS. The SMCs are voluntary entities, and they are not bound to deal with the state administration on a regular basis.

Even though the respondents were asked the literal meaning of the word "decentralization", they were also, on most occasions, keen to reflect on its contextual meaning. These reflections were indicative of their understanding and dealings in decentralization in reality. For instance, one of the statements above says "….who wants decentralization?" This is an expression of resentment. The respondent suggested that while they are being oriented of the virtues of decentralization, in reality it has yet to take place, and the center is not ready to let go of control – thus, in spite of all the 'talk', they are still constrained and limited in their work. How such control manifests itself according to the school-level actors has been discussed under specific themes in the subsequent chapter.

From the above investigation it was quite clear the respondents of both school-types were quite on track when it came to the basic conceptualization of decentralization and its implications. For instance, they could relate with ease the link between decentralization and 'transfer of power' (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983), though, understandably, they were not acquainted with the other finer sub-divisions of decentralization like deconcentration, delegation and devolvement (ibid). The interviewees were well aware of some key notions associated with decentralization like democratic norms and values as well as participatory decision-making process.

> "In decentralization even people down the ladder are able to voice their concern". Teacher [RNGPS] 25/7/12

> "Through decentralization the community will participate in the affairs of school more spontaneously". Teacher [RNGPS] 25/7/12

From the above statements it became rather clear, specifically in the case of RNGPS, the respondents could equate decentralization with more empowerment and democratization for the people at grassroots administration like themselves (McGinn and Welsh, 1999).

Yet the information on decentralization provided by the center did not quite reach the SMCs or the communities at large with family members in primary schools. I could not find any evidence of familiarity on the SMC's part when it came to the wide range of issues including curriculum design, conducting assessment, pedagogical support, allocation of resources etc. within the context of decentralization. It was apparent the state was not encouraging dialogues in the policy discourse but rather handing out directives and agendas to the school-level actors. This assumption has been further evidenced in the subsequent chapters.

In cases of Quomi madrassas, almost a reverse trend was observed. The MMC members were found to be most knowledgeable on various aspects of school operations, followed by the head teachers. The teaching staff of Quomi madrassas seemingly had very little understanding of the macro picture of primary education governance; accordingly, their responses appeared to be rather limited. Many of the respondents politely accepted their lack of knowledge and interest on issues of governance by the state. The limited responses are indicative of a relationship with the state that is not determined in operational terms. The relationship with the state for Quomi madrassas mainly revolves in the political domain. This relationship is often mired in conflicts and mutual suspicion.

"Yes, for me decentralization means dividing power. But this is something the state is concerned about. We do not have anything with the state. So we have nothing to do with decentralization". Head Teacher [Quomi madrassa] 5/7/12.

"We do not have to worry about decentralization, since we only rely on our Quom (community)" MMC member [Quomi madrassa] 7/2/12.

"We are already decentralized. State has been trying to take control on us on many pretexts. Maybe decentralization is one of such pretexts". Teacher [Quomi madrassa] 9/7/12

From the above statements, the Quomi madrassa respondents not only dismissed the role of the state but also expressed an underlying disdain and suspicion; this sentiment was not only targeted towards decentralization but any and all issues pertaining to the government. It almost felt as though the MMC members were keen to run the operations in their madrassas as a quasi-state and defined their relationship to the government on their own terms.

5.3. Key findings on the understanding of decentralization per state-non-state relationship

From a researcher's viewpoint, one of the underlying purposes of this investigation was to see whether the school-level actors were in fact able and interested to initiate a communication process with the center and work together towards successful implementation of decentralization. The investigation yielded two relevant findings in this context. First, the respondents were reasonably clear about the central concept of decentralization as having to do with 'transfer of power'. Second, in most

cases the school-level actors provided their experience-based judgments in terms of how the decisions from the center affected them.

5.4. Perceived preference for decentralization

This study of perceived preferences for a particular type of decentralization is an important denominator for exploring possibilities in the ways in which respondents are willing and able to collaborate with the state. This is because preference for a particular type of decentralization indicates the administrative framework within which school-level actors think that they will be able to operate meaningfully. It is worthwhile to note the respondents were not aware of the basic categories of decentralization. They were introduced to the three basic categories of decentralization (e.g deconcentration, delegation, and devolvement) during the investigation along with real life examples based on their real life experience with the central state agency. The very fact that they were able to respond to the investigation was evidence that the respondents could be engaged in decentralization related policy dialogue or, for that matter, that they could be made 'dialogue ready' through appropriate training and orientation intervention. The RNGPS respondents clearly expressed their preference for deconcentration.

> "Ours is a poor community. A lot of sacrifices had to be made to provide land and building for the school. If we did not have assurances from the administration about teacher's salary and other logistical support; perhaps we would not have been inclined to take the initiative of establishing school. The children mostly belonging to poor families would have suffered". SMC [RNGPS] 19/7/12.

In addition to the above, the respondents were very welcoming to the idea of increased authority and responsibility for the school-level actors. However, they clearly wanted to have such transfer of power from the current bureaucratic administrative structure led by the Directorate of Primary

Education (DPE) to the school-levels. They were not receptive to the idea of replacing the central authority's role with that of the local authority at the upazila level. The respondents felt the purpose of decentralization would be lost if power were to be transferred to yet another level of hierarchy instead of empowering the people actually involved in the day-to-day operations of the school. They thought that local governance route to administrative interventions was an invitation for 'elite capture' (Murphy, 1993).

> "The local governance, the upazila and union parishads are highly politicized. They are jointly run by the central level operators and village elite. They have no (welfare) interest for school and its poor students". SMC member [RNGPS] 7/7/12

This attitude is not viable in building an accountable system of decentralized governance involving authority and governance at the provincial level, in Bangladesh's case at the district, or zila, and the sub-district, or the upazila, level. In Bangladesh the democratic institutions have not been able to provide good governance with adequate transparency and accountability (Asia Foundation, 2012). For the purposes of the study this aspect could not be expanded.

The Quomi madrassa respondents preferred a delegated space of decentralization. Their time honored Deobandi principle clearly dictates they remain outside the fold of the state (Bano, M., 2008). In order to put their thought processes into context perhaps some critical references of their historical emergence is needed, even though this investigation was not premised on history, which is as follows:

"The Deobandis trace their origin to the Dar ul Ulum (Center for Knowledge) madrasa established in 1867 at Deoband, India. Influenced by Waliullah and his teachings, this group's founders sought to revive a version of the Prophet Mohammed's teachings and to reject all Western and other outside influences, which they viewed as amoral and materialist. The school was established to train a new generation of ulama who would know how to

interpret sharia and guide other Muslims in leading their lives in accordance with Islam. The Deobandis emphasize the need to purify Islam by discarding un-Islamic practices, such as the veneration of Sufi shrines and saints, that they think have crept into the religion as a result of Muslims' interaction with polytheists and unbelievers. They have generally held a very restrictive view of the role of women and been predisposed to anti-Shia and anti-Western sentiments. Jihad has played an important role in their thinking since the militant campaigns against British rule initiated by many Deobandi pioneers" (Haqqani, pp.77)

The Deobandis belonging to Quomi Madrassas in Bangladesh have, over the years, softened up their militant stance. They have apparently relinquished their political aspiration to statehood. They have well immersed themselves in society, especially those marginalized and abandoned by the state. Having stated that, the Deobandis have kept themselves isolated from the state on a matter of their original principle. They are not comfortable with the state being secular in nature and are not in favor of general education. The manifestation of this mentality found direct and indirect expression in their responses. The overall implication of this is that they preferred to operate in delegated space outside the state's fold.

5.5. Key findings on preferences for decentralization per state-non-state relationship

The RNGPS school-level actors felt the business of governance of primary education ought to be based on interdependence between state and non-state providers. Such a perception appears to emanate from a more comprehensive understanding of reality where state or non-state providers cannot address resource constraints without the other. As a result, they mainly preferred deconcentration form of decentralization. Deconcentration requires state dictated collaborative arrangement between the state and non-state providers. The essence of this is the RNGPS respondents understood their resource limitations and were receptive to state dictated support. However, with this framework they wanted more operational freedom. The Quomi madrassas, on the other hand, have been successful in addressing their resource

constraints by collaborating with the community. As a result, madrassas prefer to remain outside of state's governance network and are apprehensive of any attempts at facilitating dialogue with the state.

5.6. Acceptance of the policy statements

Empowering communities through appropriate means is an important aspect for strengthening decentralization. This has been recognized by national education policy. The policy states the following regarding the involvement of communities:

> "To ensure community participation in the development of activities of school, the management committees will be further empowered, where necessary, to become more active. The management committee will be constituted of some ex-officio members and others elected through thoughtful consideration. Simultaneously, the accountability of the committee must be ensured"(National Education Policy, 2010, p.16).

In cases where head teachers are from both RNGPS and madrassas, there is recurring support uniting the overall community to ensure equitable access to primary education for all children. A similar trend has been noticed amongst other teachers and SMC members.

> "The government is poor. The community is also poor. We should help each other". SMC member [RNGPS] 9/7/12.

> "Without the active involvement of parents and guardians quality education cannot happen. The community and SMCs are very much needed to actively participate in the process". Head Teacher [RNGPS] 14/7/12

Now the question is to what extent the state uses this favorable mind-set of the RNGPS school-level stakeholders to strengthen the critical component of community/SMCs for meaningful decentralization. One solution is to have qualified and motivated teachers assigned where they are most needed (this entails their active engagement in providing leadership in eliciting active community/SMC participation), with low levels of turnover and attrition in addition to an incentive system that encourages teachers' commitment and professionalism (Gaynor, 1998); this should particularly be seen within the context of the role of the head teachers. There is growing discourse from global experience to enhance the multiple roles of head teachers, especially in a number of developed countries who are looking for a balanced role of head teachers involving both pedagogical and administrative dimensions of education (Germany, Sweden, Estonia etc.). The head teachers are placed in a strategically advantageous situation whereby they can facilitate meaningful participation from the communities/SMCs. The state is currently providing institutional support for strengthening the role of community/SMCs, but it has yet to reflect on school performance. Perhaps, the system has not clearly seen the linkage between the roles of head teachers and teachers and the community/SMCs they serve.

Quomi madrassas were not in favor of the inclusion of female members, parents or guardians in school matters due to their religious preference. This attitude runs contrary to the fundamental principles related to women's right enshrined in the Bangladesh Constitution.

> "Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and public life."
> (Article 28 (2) in National Women Development Policy, 2011, p. 7.)

It also runs contrary to the fundamental principle stated in Education policy, which states,

> "The Education policy will strive to] remove socio-economic discrimination irrespective of race, religion and creed and to eradicate

> gender disparity; to develop non-communalism, friendliness, global fraternity, fellow-feeling and respect for human rights" (Education Policy, 2011, p.8).

The Quomi madrassa respondents were decidedly against the participation of women in MMCs as directed in the education policy statements.

> "Allah has divided the role of men and women. Dealing with madrassa related administrative matter is not a women's job. But at the same time I want the role of SMCs to be strengthened, since they are the main people who look after madrassas on a daily basis". Principle [Quomi madrassa] (20/7/13)

The gender issue has been a point of contention between general and faith-based education, and the debates accumulate to comical proportions at times. This is evident from the following statement made by an official who is responsible for curriculum development and publication of textbooks (in Bangladesh the curriculum developers are responsible for both curriculum development and publishing textbooks):

> "Now the government is trying to introduce a number of science and language text books to the Quomi madrassas. They have initially agreed to introduce a few books, but on conditions that pictures in the cover and in the interior of the books where boys and girls playing together has to be changed. Moreover, the girls in the textbooks should not be wearing short dresses. They should be in Hijab [laughing]". Senior government official [DPE] 15/6/12

The same official stated the government is contemplating the issue, and many think this will be a good entry point to introduce general education for all, including communities favoring madrassa education. Thus, a consensus has been building at the central agency level to accede to the MMCs' demands.

The outcome of the investigation suggests female participation was welcomed in the SMCs of the RNGPS. The madrassa system otherwise favors strengthening the MMCs whereas the RNGPS respondents were less in favor of strengthening the SMCs, in apprehension of interference by the parents, guardians or the community. This was indicative of an internal power struggle among the head teachers, teachers and SMCs belonging to RNGPS. This suggests decentralization can further intensify the conflicts between different groups and agencies at the grassroots due to the absence of the central control as a mediating force (Green, 2008). This implies the female role is problematic in the case of madrassas, while the collective role of SMCs is problematic in the case of RNGPS—not the role of women. The net outcome of these is that the performance of MMCs is less constrained for madrassas since they perform as a more cohesive unit, making them better contributors in enhancing school performance, which is evidenced from subsequent findings. However, the internal power struggle does not help the cause of meaningful community participation in case of RNGPS.

The Quomi madrassa authorities seem to be suspicious of government policies. The disapproval of these policies ensued into a number of political confrontations and protests during 2010, the year the latest education policy was adopted, and afterwards. During this investigation, lack of interest in being interviewed was quite significant amongst the Quomi madrassa respondents. My efforts to collect data were not welcome, and, more so, my association with an NGO worsened their doubts.

> "We do not have to deal with the issues of
> decentralization which are related to the state.
> We do not have to look for much help from
> our own boards also. But we believe that any

> system that calls for strengthening the SMCs
> or MMCs should be welcomed. MMC member
> [Quomi madrassa] (20/7/13)

The policy statement also considers establishing independent district boards, which were present during the British period (Education Policy, 2010). They were placed to decentralize the financing and administration. The respondents from RNGPS felt that further administrative decentralization through district boards would be in their interest. However, they welcomed the idea conditional to their active participation in the decision-making process. Yet when asked about district board's proposed jurisdiction to levy taxes for education at the district level, they were not quite sure. First, they had not been exposed to such ideas. Second, they could not assess its implication. According to most of the respondents, if such financial decentralization does not ensure their participation in allocation of finances with transparency and accountability, then it would make little difference as far as they were concerned. There were also a substantial number of respondents who were not sure how to respond since this matter was not within their direct experience. The issue of district board is not discussed very often within current policy discourse.

5.7. Implications of updated policy statements related to decentralization for state-non-state relationship

The policy statements provide an idea about where the state would like to lead the country's primary education sector. It is clear the state will not relinquish its authority to the central agencies in governing education system. However, the state does acknowledge that the processes at school levels could be more efficient and that the non-state providers could very well be supporting and complementing forces to this end. The state's model of decentralization resonates well, specifically with the RNGPS respondents, and provides a positive platform for change. Another significant understanding derived is that elite capture poses a very real problem to the success of decentralized efforts. For madrassas, the relationship with the

state is influenced by political and ideological factors, and they are likely to remain as self-governed institutions with community support.

5.8. Summary

Inquiry into a number of basic concepts and perspectives regarding decentralization broke ground for this research. The investigation has yielded three major insights. Firstly, the empirical understanding of decentralization suggests being an active participant in the administrative system provides RNGPS respondents with pragmatic insights. Even though the respondents are not able to articulate their opinions according to academic definitions of decentralization, they are wise and experienced enough to participate in the education policy dialogue, indicating the government officers in the administration need to respectfully engage in dialogues with these school-level actors to establish a feasible system in primary education. Secondly, owing to the differences in institutional dynamics and ideological positions, the two school-types hold different preferences in the forms of decentralization. Therefore, any future intervention or dialogue will require the central authority be sensitive to individual preference. Thirdly, the overall concurrence to the policy statements related to decentralization holds a positive and promising sign for the policy makers in expecting success in the efforts of decentralization in primary education sector in Bangladesh.

Chapter 6

Attitudinal and Institutional influences on school-level actors

6.1. Introductory remarks

School performance depends on how and/or when various forms of institutional support are provided from the central agencies as well as how this support is perceived by the school-level actors. These factors can help or hinder the progress in performance levels. In this context two determinants were investigated and are discussed in this chapter in two parts. The first part discusses the attitude or mind-set of central level actors towards the school-level actors. The purpose of this investigative discussion is to understand the level of trust the administration at the education ministry or secretariat imparts upon the school-level actors. I also expected to shed light on the current institutional environment and whether it would be favorable to establish a participatory two-way communication that is much needed for meaningful decentralization. The environment is an indicator of the extent to which decentralization may or may not empower the school-level actors.

The second factor pertinent to this investigation is how the school-level actors perceive their role in relation to the institutional inputs provided. In this regard three important denominators were selected that have implications in the relationship between the state and non-state providers. The first element selected was the SMCs because the organization of SMCs, whether it belongs to non-state providers or not, are non-state in character. This is because SMCs, for all forms of schools, represent the community and play a mediating role between the schools and the communities. The second element was the monitoring system. In a centralized governance system, the monitoring system plays the role of a watchdog to ensure school-level actors are adequately fulfilling operational mandates of the center. Thus, the presence or absence monitoring inputs provides practical insights into the state-non-state relationship. Thirdly, the presence or absence training inputs

is an important denominator of how the teaching-learning process is managed to ensure expected learning outcomes.

It should be noted the denominators stated above have also been identified as important elements specified in PEDP (Primary Education Development Program) for strengthening the role of school-level actors belonging to RNGPS. PEDP is a national flagship project based on a sector-wide approach, which has the responsibility of implementing state policy on primary education. In addition to the rules and regulations of the ministry of primary education, the mind-set and attitude of the central agencies play an important role in shaping the relationship between the state and non-state relationship. This has been discussed separately for RNGPS and Quomi madrassas.

Part 1: Attitudes of administrators towards school-level actors:

6.2 RNGPS administrators

By design and attitude, from the ministry to the divisional levels, it appeared that the respondents' perception clustered together consistently; while from district level to the upazila level onwards the perceptions showed a different yet consistent pattern. Consequently, these two clusters have been discussed in two separate sections below.

6.2.1 Ministry, directorate and divisional levels

One of the most significant elements inhibiting a meaningful dialogue between the center and the periphery is the lack of perceived confidence in the capability of school-level actors as held by administrators at the center. This becomes a roadblock to forming a cooperative environment as well.

> "They (teachers, head teachers and SMCs) find it difficult to follow simple and basic instructions from the center. Getting engaged with them in policy dialogue is an out of place idea. Any such attempts will only add to their

confusion". Senior government official [Ministry] 29/6/12.

The senior ministry official's statement reveals a disturbing trend in teachers' conduct. It is alleged that many teacher sub-contract teaching responsibility to some unqualified persons for less pay than what qualified teachers receive. By doing this, these teachers can invest full time in other more lucrative economic activity and still get a cut from his own salary after paying for the imposter. If these allegations are based on reliable information, then perhaps it gives some legitimacy to the central level actors' negative understanding to the school-level actors. On another note, it also exemplifies that the salary of teachers are not market-driven. In the above comment, the respondent describes the understanding of the senior level administrators at the center. Absence of mutual respect deters a feasible communication process to be established. In addition to the above, there apparently is a general lack of trust towards school-level actors as well.

> "Teacher absenteeism, teacher teaching through his self-appointed unqualified and illegal representatives, not bothering to apply participatory approaches have resulted into low performance of children. They (teachers and head teachers) have not changed their ways despite their increase of salary. Senior government official [Ministry] 29/6/12.

The above suggests government officials mainly have a negative attitude towards school-level actors, creating an unproductive environment. These high-level officers, in general, are rather critical of schoolteachers' competence, qualifications, capacity and even personal integrity. This suggests a communication gap between the center and periphery.

It was easier for me to relate to the responses of the school-level actors on centralized rules, regulations and procedures, since each respondent's response could be assessed against a specific regulation within which each school-level actor operated. However, it could not be articulated with

certainty for which exact reason each central level official held the school-level actors at low esteem. The scope of the research did not allow for the confirmation of the validity of such negative claims by the center. However, this dynamics has caused much frustration amongst the school-level actors, which was apparent in various opinions and statements.

> "They think (the senior administrators) that we are dishonest; so they are always looking ways to get us through monitoring. We have to be very careful about these administrators, since they have the power to make our lives difficult". Head teacher [RNGPS] 15/7/12

When an official was asked about accountability and the relationship with the school-types under investigation, he responded in the following manner.

> "I cannot say much about the madrassa system since our main focus is on the government primary schools and RNGPS. The government has, and is, providing a lot of support to the school system within limited resources available. You will always hear the complains from the teachers, but they seldom talk about improvement of quality of education" Senior ministry official". [Ministry of Primary and Mass Education] 03/05/12

Based on the above circumstances, the type of accountability process is determined between the ministry and directorate. According to Ferlie's (2005) model the nature of accountability is a combination of political and organizational dimensions. The education ministry remains culpable to the current ruling party, and, thus, the exaggerated claims, such as the statement above, are made to ensure survival. On the other hand, the ministry is inclined to control all forms of activities of the directorate, thereby establishing a culture of only top-down organizational accountability. There is almost an inherent sense of distrust actors on both sides between the

administrative senior officials as well as school-level actors. This poses a constraint to successful decentralization.

Divisional offices are the important administrative liaison between the Directorate and the field level administration. Its main role is to administer and coordinate the operations of the RNGPS through the district and upazila administration within the division under its jurisdiction. To the field level operators, the divisional offices hold employer authority since the divisional offices manage job relocation, administrative actions against irregularities, promotions, granting of leaves etc. Due to their close affiliation to the top administration, the divisional officers share similar outlooks as of the senior administration officers. This is evidenced in the following statement made by one of the divisional heads.

> "They (district and sub-district level officials) are always grumbling about their situation. They should ask themselves whether they have developed themselves as competent officials in all these years". Divisional Director [Directorate of Primary Education] 12/07/03

6.2.2. District level and sub-district level offices

The district (zila) level and sub-district (upazila) offices appeared to be more vibrant and displayed a more participatory interactive environment. The district and sub-district levels also appear to be the hub of activities, since teachers and SMC members, as well as people from different cross-sections of the community, communicate with each other and exchange information at these offices. These offices were found to be easily accessible, which suggests that the relevant stakeholders have greater access to the district and upazila level. However, due to the centralized nature of administration, this opportunity has yet to be translated into a district led planning and management initiative for the entire district, which would involve all forms of schools within the jurisdiction of the district and sub-district.

Regarding this, the district administrator stated the following.

> "What the center does not understand that we
> at the district are much better placed to make
> administrative decisions since every event in
> the district is on our finger tips. Recently the
> center decided to add three new grades in a
> limited number of primary schools (according
> to the national education policy the primary
> education is supposed to be progressively
> upgraded from grade five to grade eight).
> Unfortunately,   when   the   center   took
> administrative action to that affect, it was too
> late, since by that time all the grade five
> children had already moved away to the
> secondary schools. If the state had given the
> operational responsibility of implementing this
> directive   directly   then   this   would   have
> certainly not happened" District official [DPE,
> District Office] 03/08/13.

Officers at the district and a number of other sub-district or upazila levels
have been serving for a considerably long period of time. As a result, this
category of administrators has, over the years, developed a very good
network with the local administration and relevant stakeholders. The social
capital gained over a long period of time appeared to be a very important
factor that could potentially be utilized for planning and managing affairs of
primary education within a given district.

> "All we need is a general directive from the
> center regarding implementation of primary
> education. If we are empowered with the
> authority to implement primary education
> program without all the time interference from
> the center, then things will look much better

for primary education in Bangladesh". District
official [DPE, District Office] 03/08/13.

The above statement reflects the confidence of the district and sub-district level administrators in their ability to increase efficiency of delivering primary education services by creating space for operational decision-making for all the stakeholders. The sub-district administration voiced the same concern as the district administration. It is apparent that the sub-district administration is even nearer to the schools and is in a position to provide pedagogical support as well as inputs for school planning and management. The sub-district administrator was relatively younger and less experienced than the district administrator. Perhaps due to this, the sub-district administrator was more optimistic about the future of governance system, which is expressed in the following statement:

> "There is a gradual shift towards decentralization. For instance, before, the center used to provide a budget for sub-district office with specific budget line—but now that has been changed. The government now provides a budget and gives the sub-district administration the freedom to spend. For instance, my office required maintenance in a particular area like maintenance of the floor and the wall. If the government had specified me to buy furniture otherwise, that would not have been useful, since I have enough furniture in the office. Gradually the same principle will be applied to the schools, but it will take time". Sub-district official [DPE, Sub-district Office] 03/08/13.

However, per his suggestion, the process of delegation of authority is progressively happening within the administrative structure excluding the schools. To a more experienced district administrator, the situation looked

rather different. He resented an earlier statement of his implying the center is unaware about his potentials. From my professional experience, this perception is prevalent among large number of administrators with relative long durations of service (generally ten years or more) at the district and sub-district levels. This is indicative of the fact that the upazila administrator with lesser experience and lesser capacity felt more comfortable with the current situation. The district administrator with more capacity acquired over a number of years was not satisfied with the current situation. This is indicative of more demand for greater autonomy for action at the periphery with increased capacity. Therefore, capacity building (Robinson, 2007) and decentralization are mutually reinforcing.

The evidence above suggests the overall relationship between state and non-state actors at the individual level seem to be counter-productive. It runs deep into the institutional structure and psyche. This has resulted in the lack of trust and respect for the school-level actors. The senior education administrators are not educationists; rather, they are career bureaucrats. They are assigned their respective posts usually not for more than three years. They have limited experience of working in the districts, sub-districts and schools, and, as a result, they have no way to empathize with those who are directly involved with micro-level management of schools. Unless this arrangement is changed there is not much chance for any meaningful dialogue between the state and non-state providers.

6.3 Relationship between Quomi boards and madrassa level actors

Apart from being separate from the state, Quomi madrassas are also divided into many factions, which are represented by various boards. There are at least nine different madrassa boards representing Quomi madrassas. The most influential Quomi madrassa board is represented by the Befaqul Madrasil Arabia Bangladesh, which is the largest of its kind representing Quomi madrassas in Bangladesh. The other boards mainly represent the regional aspiration for religious curriculum.

Among the madrassa boards that are prominent in exhibiting regional influence are: Ittehad-ul-Madaris, located in Chittagong's Al-Jamiah Al-

Islamiah Patiya, which oversees approximately 600 madrassas in Chittagong Division along with a few in Feni and Noakhali. Azad Deeni Iddara-e-Talim Bangladesh supervises around 500 madrassas in Sylhet Division. Tanzeem-ul-Madaris is headquartered in Bogra's Jameel Madrasa and represents madrassas in North Bengal. Gohardanga supervises the affairs of Quomi madrassas in South Bengal.

While representatives of these boards sometimes provide different reasons for their divisiveness (e.g. "We give more importance to Farsi and logic" or "We use different books to teach Arabic literature"), the truth is each board represents a power center—an area of social control—enjoyed and dearly guarded by a clique of powerful maulanas (The Daily Star, 2013). Since this issue was not within the scope of the study this was not investigated further. The following statement was elicited on the issue:

> "We have inspectors who keep a tab on the madrassas. We have a few instructors too. But these are not sufficient. However, we rely on our brothers running the madrassas and we usually do not take action without their consent. We work with the Quom (community) and we rely on Quom". Senior Befaqul Madaris" [Quomi] 17/7/12

The above statement is in contrast to that of the RNGPS central administrators. The level of mutual trust and respect is much higher in the case of madrassa central officials as compared to the RNGPS central administrators. However, the board's weak presence in madrassa affairs indicates that boards do not play a significant role in day-to-day operations. This can also be traced to the lack of competency and resources on the part of the boards. The madrassas are well accustomed to dealing with their own affairs; in the absence of intervention from the board, they did not have much to respond.

Madrassa boards are political power centers. Apart from deciding curriculum and conducting exams, these boards make little contribution to the daily

operations of the madrassas. However, the madrassa board officials have mutual respect for school-level actors based on shared responsibility. Each Quomi madrassas are virtually self-operating entities directly accountable to the community in general and religious leaders belonging to that community in particular.

Part 2: Institutional influence on school-level actors about SMCs, monitoring and training systems:

The delivery of primary education hinges on many interrelated factors. In Bangladesh the role of SMCs and the robustness of its monitoring and training systems are considered important factors that can facilitate the achievement of expected learning outcomes. The institutional influences of the stated factors on school-level actors are discussed below.

6.4 SMCs and its role within the context of decentralization

Experience with SMCs, particularly with RNGPS, and government primary schools in Bangladesh have been mostly negative. Efforts over a decade's period have shown generally SMCs have fallen short of providing meaningful support to schools.

i. Institutional influences related to the composition of SMCs/MMCs

SMCs are a common non-state feature (as they are both in state and non-state schools, SMCs are represented by the community that is not directly accountable to the state agency and derive no financial benefits as such) that play an important role in enhancing the performance of the schools they serve. Their existence is evidence of the recognition of the pivotal role the community has in maintaining effective functioning of schools. This also recognizes that schools operate in complex socio-political environments and need structured representation of the communities to create a favorable relationship between the communities and schools. As Malen (1994) states, schools are mini-political systems, nested in multi-level governmental structures, charged with public service responsibilities and dependent on diverse constituencies. It appears that there is a collective consensus that this

role has not been fulfilled by SMCs to the expected level, specifically for the RNGPS (Richards, 2008).

SMCs belonging to RNGPS are centrally regulated. As such, SMCs are excluded from the process of defining their terms of who to include or exclude. Moreover, the recruitment of teachers and head teachers requires mandatory endorsement from the central administration. The membership of SMCs is often manipulated by the central political agencies, thereby making SMCs vulnerable to elite capture at the local level (Siddiqui, 2011). Furthermore, what little authority SMCs have is often challenged by the head-teachers and other teachers, who consider themselves more a part of the bureaucracy than the community—making SMCs even weaker. With that said, it is mandatory to include female guardian in the composition of SMCs.

> "The government has given us opportunity to voice our concern as female guardians for RNGPS. If the government had not done so it would have been difficult for us to voice our concern. Female SMC member [RNGPS] 12/7/12

The state explains its mandate to the SMCs and specifies their role through a short training. Such training is continued infrequently through additional follow-up training, which is quite helpful, according to the respondents. Notwithstanding the claims made at the training sessions, SMCs find very little freedom to exert their authority.

> "During orientations we have been told to take initiative for the school. The government wants us to play a more pro-active role in ensuring good performance of the school. But how can we participate pro-actively when we cannot do anything about absentee teachers?" SMC member [RNGPS] 7/7/12

In the case of Quomi madrassas, it is important to mention the particular composition of MMCs creates ideological dominance over the community, as the Deobandi principle requires the maulanas to assert their control over schools. Thus, there is conscious effort by the MMCs to leave the sponsors out of the affairs of the school. Larger, more structured madrassas with more resources tend to follow this more of operation, but in the case of smaller and under-resourced madrassas, the sponsors are often capable of overriding such sentiments.

> "Our madrassa is run by the 'Alems' (same as mullah, meaning clergy) and community influential. The principal and the rest of the MMC members are key to running the madrassas. We are also open to community but usually the rest of the community specifically women have limited role" Teacher [Quomi] 21/7/12

> "There is no central agency above our head to interfere with our decisions on schools. More so, the principal has been given sufficient power to take decisions as he deems fit in consultation with the MMCs". Teacher [Quomi] 23/7/12

Although madrassas depend largely on the marginalized communities, the madrassa leadership remains in the hands of the religious leaders and a few village elite, keeping in mind the head teachers also play an important administrative and coordinating role. The women and the marginalized poor, unlike in the SMCs of RNGPS, are hardly represented. However, there appears to be collective consensuses among the community that these people are sincere in representing the poor.

> "Our Alems (clergy) know best, we have trust in their intentions and decisions" MMC [Quomi] 19/7/12

The existence of this strong community support does not come as part of the complete package in the case of Quomi madrassas. The following statement suggests a sense of disengagement from the parents and community. The source of disengagement comes not only from a sense of powerlessness, but also from a sense of trust and respect towards madrassas since they have assumed responsibility for the destitute children where the state has failed to do so.

> "The parents are not so much involved. They are grateful to the madrassa for providing their children with food and lodging along with deeni elm (religious knowledge). They have our trust." Head teacher [Quomi Madrassa] 19/7/12

The head teacher, who is responsible for running the school operations, is assisted by his fellow maulanas and religious-minded people in the MMCs. The community, particularly the sponsors, is interested in the overall well-being and expansion of the madrassas.

> "They are not usually involved in the day to day functions of the school. A few years back one of the sponsors wanted to include agriculture in the curriculum, but the maulanas did not agree, so the matter was left there. It is not so easy to change curriculum like this since we need to take permission from the board and the board is determined to preserve its Deobandi principles." Teacher [Quomi Madrassa]19/7/12

Despite many weaknesses and internal inconsistencies, SMCs/MMCs in Bangladesh still hold potential for facilitating meaningful community participation in this way.

ii. Institutional influences of internal dynamics in SMCs and the role of head teachers

The responses about SMCs suggest there is an element of power conflict between the SMCs and school management consisting of head teachers and teachers, especially with regard to RNGPS. Perhaps the underlying reason for this is the dominant role of head teachers who are simultaneously responsible for running the school administration and representing the SMCs. Since, by the virtue of their positions as gatekeepers, head teachers can filter demands and affect deliberations in meaningful ways. They have leverage over the composition of committees, an advantage that enables them to invite traditional supporters to be members, co-opt vocal critics and condition parents into a supportive, at times submissive, role (Goldring, 1993).

> "Even though as members of SMCs we have our say, but when it comes to decision-making the opinions of head teacher and the chairperson matters the most". SMC member [RNGPS] 19/2/12

> "We think the head teacher is in the best position to address the issues related to school. Besides, many like me are illiterate. So people like us hardly are able to make ourselves useful [absence of voice] in the affairs of school". SMC member [RNGPS] 19/2/12

The head teachers appeared to be less interested in further empowering the SMCs, while they have no problems of furthering the involvement of the SMCs in school activities.

> "The role of SMCs is very significant, but they should function under our [head teacher's] leadership. We work full time at schools, so

we know better what intervention is required"

Head Teacher [RNGPS] 9/7/12

The rest of the MMC members tend to provide active counseling, but the head teacher makes the key decisions.

> "The head teacher of our madrassa is a wise Alem, we trust his wisdom in decision making. But we also provide our ideas and he listens to our ideas, but in the end he decides. This is alright". MMC member [Quomi] 15/7/12

The internal conflict between SMCs and head teachers and the nature of dynamism it generates is not helpful in facilitating the leadership role of the head teachers. This is true for RNGPS but not so much for Quomi madrassas. Global experience suggests the strong leadership role of teachers is almost a non-negotiable pre-condition for enhancing school performance, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes (Liethwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins, 2006). It has been argued that:

> "To date, we have not found a single documented case of school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership" (Leithwood, Seashore, Louis, 2012, pp. 3).

The internal conflict among actors at school-level and central control exerted from the center does not allow for qualities like commitment, resilience, passion and understanding (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). The head teachers from Quomi madrassas, on the other hand, have the space and support to display their leadership qualities, but they perform without any form of meaningful modern institutional support. Their world of practice is without any viable form of professionalization.

iii. Influence of upazila administration on SMCs

The AUEOs (Assistant Upazila Education Officers) and UEOs (Upazila Education Officers) are not in favor of delegating any legal authority to SMCs, implying they do not welcome effective involvement or intervention from local bodies (Govinda, 1998). Similarly, upazila administration does not want head teachers to be more empowered.

> "If legal power is given to the SMCs, then in all probability powerful anti-social elements will take over SMCs. The government will then find it even more difficult to implement its plan". Upazila Education Officer [RNGPS] 21/7/12

> "The head teacher is part of malpractices. Otherwise, how teachers' absenteeism remains unreported in most cases. They need to be intensely monitored". Upazila official [RNGPS] 21/7/14

The repeated attempts by the state and external donor agencies to reconfigure SMCs within the concept of the 'balanced model' (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998) have thus far yielded very little results. One important reason for this failure perhaps lies within Govinda's (1998) observation of the power conflict. It appears the power struggle between the SMCs and administrative structure is not conducive for decentralization of authority. In case of madrassas, the schools are run based on the principles of community control (ibid) where SMCs, even though influenced by the powerful religious elites within the communities, still have a major say in the day-to-day affairs of the school, mainly under the coordinating leadership of madrassa head teachers. Therefore, from a decision-making perspective, (Agrawal and Ribot, 2007) it became apparent SMCs clearly do not have any say in making or modifying rules and decision-making in the case of RNGPS.

The only function the SMCs belonging to RNGPS seem to have is compliance. This is in sharp contrast with the community managed general education schools before independence, which could exert considerable influence in instituting, modifying and adjudicating (ibid) decision-making for the improvements of school performance. They were even more powerful in terms of ensuring compliance particularly from teachers, thereby creating an environment of accountability.

> "When we were young, the school affairs used to be mainly looked after by the SMCs in conjunction with the community. The SMCs could hire and fire according to the needs of the school. This is no longer possible despite the schools being termed as non-government"
> SMC member [RNGPS] 14/7/12

Currently in the absence of such powers, SMCs feel isolated and have lost interest in the affairs of schools considerably. This is especially true for RNGPS where the school children represent mostly poor and disempowered communities who are not able to make the schools accountable.

For madrassas, the notion of empowered community is limited to the MMCs and the community elite, including the financiers. The role of parents and especially that of women remain rather limited. As a result, the entire construct of madrassa management is hardly women or community friendly.

The responses of upazila administration suggest the role of SMCs have improved in the case of RNGPS. It was found SMCs are regularly trained and monitored by the central administration. It is therefore possible that such interventions have left a positive impression amongst the respondents. An interesting example of this is the following observation made by a RNGPS SMC member:

> "During last monsoon the roof of our school got partially damaged. Water kept on pouring and particularly children belonging to grade

three found it difficult to remain in the class. It was through the initiative of the 'upazila sir' (the upazila official, respectfully addressed by the SMC member) the SMC raised money for roof repair. The main portion of the money was provided by a respectable haji (person who has performed Haj)." SMC member [RNGPS] 19/7/12

This statement suggests many communities are positively concerned and engaged in the welfare of the schools but often require mediation of the state to facilitate their involvement.

In the case of RNGPS, the roles of SMCs are secondary. In the case of Quomi madrassas, the role of madrassas is primary. The structure and functions of the RNGPS are determined by the state. Even though they are trained by the center, they do not have legal power over the schools. The response of the SMCs is characterized by a sense of powerlessness and isolation; the state has apparently failed to realize the non-state character of SMCs—that they are functioning on a voluntary basis and have their own working culture does not always resonate with the bureaucracy. As a result, the SMCs are not getting involved with school affairs as much as the state would have liked them to. On the other hand, the MMCs are devoid of any support or, for that matter, interference from the center. Consequently, they are free to define their relationship with the madrassas and community and remain the central feature of madrassa management.

The head teachers of both RNGPS and Quomi madrassas play an important role. For RNGPS, the head teachers tend to remain more loyal to his or her bureaucratic paymasters rather than to the communities. This tripartite relationship among bureaucracy, head teachers and SMCs/communities remain problematic. The centralized agencies do not want to lessen their control over the schools; therefore, this tripartite arrangement leaves the SMCs under-empowered. The head teachers of madrassas also perform under a tripartite relationship (Madrassa boards, madrassa and head teacher),

but in this case all the parties are non-state in nature, including the central boards. Additionally, in this latter relationship, the power center for running the madrassa operations is the MMCs. In the absence of bureaucracy there are more elements of cooperation among the parties than conflict.

It could be stated that a key element of community participation is the direct involvement of the people in local affairs; Frase (cited in Tikley and Barret, 2009) suggests that participation requires a social arrangement that permits all to participate as peers in social life, overcoming institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating at par with others. The SMCs belonging to RNGPS suffer due to absence of these basic participatory conditions as its structure and functions are dictated from the top. Conversely, the MMCs operate as direct mediators between communities and madrassas, and there seems to be little interference from the center.

Data suggest the respondents appear to view the role of SMCs belonging to RNGPS mostly in connection with compliance (Agrawal and Ribot, 2007). For instance, they attribute the improvement in the functions of SMCs in terms of holding regular meetings, participation in orientation meetings, carrying out of supervisory activities etc. Their passivity is further compounded by the fact that the SMCs have not been provided with legal power to make school accountable through any form of reward and punishment.

In the case of madrassas, the MMCs are quite active despite operating outside the remit of PEDP. In fact, the very absence of state intervention brings them nearer to communities. The communities feel that they have a direct stake in madrassas, a sense that is further strengthened through religious bondage. Paradoxically these madrassas are serving the state's agenda of providing access to education to the extreme poor and marginalized. However, they have not found a viable means to collaborate with the state in making their madrassas an integral part of the national education system.

6.5 Understanding of the respondents regarding institutional support in the form of monitoring

The fact that the state agencies provide monitoring support to schools signifies the state has a major stake in the performance outcome of the schools. Yet the degree to which this influence is helpful for overall school performance is partially contingent on the scope and quality of monitoring services provided. RNGPS have a centrally managed monitoring system in place, but the current system has been limited in facilitating the quality improvement processes. School administrators and teachers are supposed to rely heavily on their working knowledge to make decisions (Sproull and Zubrow, 1981; Williams and Bank, 1984), which has yet to happen. The net result is a functional monitoring system still has not emerged for RNGPS despite many efforts from the central agency.

i. **Influences of monitoring design**

This current monitoring system, according to Agrawal and Ribot's (2007) model, has remained in the hands of the center. The same is also applicable for the power to adjudicate, as explained earlier. In addition, the process of accountability is very much top-down in nature; the school-level operators are expected to comply with the implementation process rather than actively participate within a participatory monitoring system. Further absence of the principles and practices of School Based Management (SBM) calls for (1) the delegation of real powers to the principal in managing financial and human resources, including, for instance, staffing selection and configuration and the use of an almost fully decentralized budget, and (2) legislation transferring significant powers to the community e.g. on the selection of the principal and the adaptation of the curriculums (De Grauwe, 2004) are absent in case of RNGPS.

An essential feature of a successful monitoring system is its requirement that the implementers be sufficiently resourced and supported from the center, with clearly delineated responsibility and accountability. That teachers can be engaged by the upazila administration for non-education activity without

the consent of the central administration is evidence of the absence of this basic provision. This is exemplified by the following statement:

> "Last year we were asked to conduct household survey (for national census). This involved a lot of time outside classroom. The children suffered. The monitors from upazila and central office are not able to stop the district administration from engaging us in non-education activities. What they do is put undue pressure on us. We are overworked". Teacher[RNGPS]17/7/12.

For Quomi madrassas there is one state-run Madrassa Teachers Training Centre, which mainly caters to the government-run madrassa system. The madrassa boards belonging to Quomi madrassas provide training, but they are limited in scope and do not engage with modern pedagogy.

ii. Influences of current interventions for strengthening monitoring

Through PEDP 3 the government is currently attempting to take a holistic approach under the framework of what it calls Results Based Management (RBM). This strategic shift in approach comes as recognition that the primary delivery system requires an overhaul. The central feature of this change is to ensure there are measurable and verifiable outputs and outcomes, as well as clearly spelled out goals (UNDG, 2010). Following the key aspects of good governance, the RBM approach attaches significance to accountability and inclusiveness. One of the central features of RBM is involving all the relevant stakeholders, including different levels of government, social partners and civil society. A natural consequence of this strategic shift is it creates institutional momentum in favor of decentralization. Within this management framework the act of monitoring finds added significance since RBM involves spelling out specific outputs, outcomes and impact, which in turn better helps to monitor progressive achievement of project targets.

Two kinds of block grants or direct capitation have been introduced. One is SLIP (School Level Implementation Plan), through which schools get limited funds that they can use directly in consultation with those who are operationally responsible for schools; this includes SMCs. In the same manner, through UPEP (Upazila Primary Education Plan) it was envisaged to directly finance the upazila administration. UPEP and SLIP were supposed to be implemented simultaneously, but it has not taken off as expected. SLIP, however, has been implemented only in the case of GPS (Government Primary Schools). At the time of this investigation, no RNGPS were brought under the SLIP initiative. Therefore, for the purposes of the study, this aspect was not considered as relevant.

This information suggests two facts: First, the government considers RNGPS as second priority in relation to GPS since it has decided to cover all the GPS under SLIP first. Second, even at this initial level the system has not been able to initiate UPEP and SLIP simultaneously, which was the original intention of the planners. There is policy that discriminates RNGPS as non-state entity, and lack of institutional capacity makes it difficult to adopt complex institutional adjustments associated with decentralization.

In case of madrassas there is no institutional monitoring system present. Since the decision-makers are located at the community level, they get instant information and feedback on events taking place that need to be addressed. They are in a strategically advantageous situation to make time-appropriate and responsive decisions; although, in the absence of any formal understanding about monitoring and its implications, they are unable to deal meaningfully with the quality-related issues.

Therefore, efficient monitoring needs to address multi-dimensional issues, including the responsiveness and receptivity of the actors who perform within it. An inflexible top-down administrative monitoring system might curb educators from questioning the purposes of schooling and from critically examining what they teach and how they teach (Williams, 1995). This has been generally the experience with the monitoring system at RNGPS.

"What we face is administrative monitoring like whether we are coming to class on time and regularly, whether we are keeping the financial records updated, whether we are keeping the scores of children in exams etc. We get much less support in pedagogical matters. In fact those who monitor us are much less knowledgeable and skilled in pedagogy than we do". Teacher [RNGPS] 17/5/12

For RNGPS, the governance framework has ample provisions for carrying out monitoring within its structure. In addition to the upazila administration, which is supposed to spearhead the supervision effort, there are still many other layers of administration through which supervision is carried out. For example, the district office, divisional offices, as well as the central Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) all have the responsibility of carrying out monitoring and supervision. The Primary Teachers Institute (PTI) and Upazila Resource Centre (URC) also conduct occasional monitoring, but their supervision is not as systematic and widespread as the upazila administration. However, from the experiences of the respondents belonging to different layers of administration who actually carry out monitoring and supervisory activities, it was apparent that the number of people available to conduct these supervisory tasks and the number of schools to be supervised did not match favorably.

"I am assigned to monitor 20 schools per month. During my visitations, for each school I have to collect a large number of information in prescribed formats. I have spent time with the school teachers interviewing them about the different school activities and problems faced. All these things take time and effort. I find it very difficult to fulfill the number of schools I have been asked to cover. I have no vehicle to make work easier. The money for

> travelling is insufficient and at times I have to
> pay from my own pocket". ATEO [RNGPS]
> 17/7/12

The result is education administrators at the various levels neither have the competency nor the time or resources to provide effective monitoring support for improving the quality of education.

It appears there are monitoring procedures and structures in place, but implementation remains a challenge. In the case of RNGPS, the head teachers, teachers and SMCs collectively think the annual monitoring report is the strongest element in the current monitoring system. However, feedback based on the monitoring report is seen as the least significant part of monitoring and evaluation. Absence of strong feedback followed by appropriate action is observed as one of the weakest aspects of the monitoring intervention.

> "Monitoring is helpful. But the administrators
> are unable to provide pedagogical support
> since we are already better trained than them".
> Teacher [RNGPS] 17/7/12

The above statement suggests, unlike teachers, the administrators who carry out monitoring have no basic qualification on pedagogical processes. Therefore, attempts at decentralizing monitoring efforts are not backed by adequate capacity building initiatives (Robinson, 2007).

Central administration believes that monitoring should have a coercion element built into it to ensure compliance. However, the problem is that such an arrangement is not conducive for participatory monitoring whereby provision of meaningful technical support is possible. This culture of coercion inhibits creation of an environment of openness and mutual trust required to have a meaningful dialogue on teaching learning processes.

> "The only thing they do is administrative
> monitoring, where they (central level
> education administrators) emphasize on

117

fulfilling on our assigned duties including maintain appropriate record. When they come to school at least once a month, almost half a day is wasted to satisfy their needs; as a result the children suffer. We have to be careful since they can take administrative action against us". Teacher [RNGPS] 19/7/12

The institutional monitoring mechanism for the Quomi madrassas is sparse and ineffective. The madrassa boards responsible do not have any form of regulated competency standards, resources or even mandate to conduct monitoring. Lack of the monitoring component is an important element that has left the madrassa system in a delegated space. When it was enquired about the kind of monitoring system the Quomi madrassas have—whether they make any effort towards planning, developing monitoring indicators, evolving a data collection strategy etc., it became rather evident they are deficient in providing such monitoring inputs.

"We do not have any monitoring inputs from the board that are carried out in the way you have asked. However, we have our own way of community (quom) based monitoring. This is a simple monitoring involving direct observations and actions". MMC member [Quomi] 15/6/12

The madrassas themselves are left with the responsibility to develop their own monitoring mechanism with the help of the community. Yet given the technical nature of conducting monitoring and that a long-term sustained commitment is needed for this purpose, the communities have not been able to devise any form of a viable mechanism. However, they feel that their current simple form of monitoring is reasonably functional. There is a collective absence of awareness or intention to introduce an institutional form of monitoring inputs that are able to systematically keep a tab on outputs, outcomes and impact of the type of education provided.

Monitoring is a systematic professional activity and is an essential feature of large multi-layered bureaucratic institutions. RNGPS functions under such a large system. Due to the bureaucratic nature of the institution and the fact that it is run by non-educationists at the top, the school-level actors are asked to ensure mainly compliance. The monitoring system hardly supports the teaching learning process that could facilitate more quality; therefore, non-state providers working under the state system often find their initiative and innovative impulse restricted due to the limiting influence of bureaucratic state interventions. On the other hand, in the case of Quomi madrassas who work outside the state, the community does not have the institutional and professionalized capacity of installing a meaningful monitoring system that can facilitate the teaching learning process.

6.6 Understanding regarding provision of training

The formal primary education sub-sector in Bangladesh provides training to teachers in the form of in-service training. The pre-service provision was discarded due to a large system loss; many individuals did not join as teachers after completion of training. The profession of teaching is a highly demanding, low paying job in Bangladesh. Becoming a teacher is a low professional priority among the majority of educated people. As a result, there were incidences of high drop-out in cases of pre-service training. Parallel to the government training delivery mechanism, there is an NGO driven system spearheaded mainly by three leading national NGOs, which include CMES (Center for Mass Education for Science), UCEP (Underprivileged Children's Education Program) and BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities). Since the two school types under investigation do not receive any form of training from these NGOs, they have not been discussed. Despite being a non-state agency, RNGPS are not allowed to take training from the non-state agencies in the NGO sector. The Quomi madrassas also do not participate in NGO provided training since it seems to be in contradiction to their religious ideology.

> "Why should we take training from
> NGOs? They are not respectful to

Islamic way of education". Head teacher
[RNGPS] 19/7/12

The above statement suggests that some RNGPS consider themselves to be part of the state system. Despite all forms of challenges they face under the current governance arrangement, they prefer to maintain the current status quo because they consider the centralized bureaucracy to be the lesser evil compared to NGOs and the local governance.

> "NGOs and local government do not have the resources or capacity to provide adequate support to us. Involving local governance like the union parishads will mean inviting factional politics in schools. It is better to work with the administration, even though their support is inadequate". Teacher [RNGPS] 21/7/12

The Quomi madrassas have minimal resources available for training. Also, as it has been demonstrated in the subsequent section, there is a lack of awareness about the value of training within Quomi madrassa system.

i. Influences of institutional arrangement to the delivery of training

Bangladesh, like larger countries, has multiple layers of government from the central level to divisional, district and sub-district level. Under this model, the body that employs teachers varies, but generally the central government retains the responsibility of hiring teachers, usually giving them the status of civil servants.

The National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE), which is the lead government training providing institution, is weak. The very nature of financing has made it a rather weak professional leader for the sector. The yearly budget allocation for the NAPE includes approximately $1.4 million for staff and approximately US $ .12 million for the training program (Bangladesh Education Sector Review, 2007).

The training design and contents are decided and delivered by the NAPE, with the school-level operators having very little say in this. The training is provided as a uniform package from the center, and there is no evidence of any effort to modify it according to the specific circumstances of the teachers. The school-level operators, however, have some say in selecting teachers and training available from the array of trainings made available by the center. According to Agrawal and Ribot's (2007) model, the scope of decentralization under such circumstances is rather limited. Thus, it is quite clear a degree of structural decentralization through establishment of URCs has not helped the cause of improved training.

> "The URCs mainly provide subject based training. The training is conducted by better teachers from among the schools under the URCs jurisdiction. The subject-teachers are not very well trained and they themselves have many limitations in teaching skills. In the end this is not so much helpful" Teacher [RNGPS] 19/7/12

The state has taken initiatives to improve the quality of training through the support from external agencies. As a result, a substantial number of primary education administrators and trainers have received high level training at home and abroad. In addition to this, the training delivery system has now been brought closer to the doorsteps of teachers at schools that are better able to address the needs of the teachers.

> "Previously, we had to go to the PTIs for training, which required travelling, time and effort. There are only 54 PTIs for hundreds and thousands of teachers. URCs have helped us a lot. It is easily accessible. Now we receive much more training with much lesser effort". Teacher [RNGPS] 25/6/12

However, the provision of training has not been able to integrate its activities as a functional system consisting of monitoring, evaluation and a feedback loop to measure the effectiveness of training. There is now an attempt to rectify these through recently adopted RBM. Compounded with this is the problem of a power-based relationship between the school administrators, trainers and teachers that hinder participative processes for creating effective teachers. The introduction of participatory processes within training cannot hide the fact that teachers have little or no say in the determination of training policy or design. This essentially means the grassroots level operators have become passive recipients of training, which are designed and delivered often through judgment of those who have technical competencies but very little actual teaching learning experience at primary schools.

From the response of PTI instructor, in the case of RNGPS, it is quite evident the operational dimensions of conducting training are firmly in the hands of the upazila administration. This has been evidenced from the statement of a teacher instructor from PTI.

> "Our job is to provide training to the teachers in PTIs, which are located at the districts. In recent years we have increased outreach due to the establishment of URCs at the upazila level. However, we do not have any mandate to monitor and provide feedback to teachers and head teachers on the issues of teaching-learning. Monitoring is the sole responsibility of the district and upazila primary education administrators". PTI instructor [PTI] 15/7/14

Given that the upazila administration is the closest administrative tier to the schools and given their close proximity to the schools, they are strategically well placed to have oversight on school activities and performance. While training design and provision for training is developed at the central level, the organizing and delivery of training is mainly carried out by the upazila administration through URCs based on the guidelines and instruction

provided from the center. Therefore, training is organized and facilitated by the upazila based on controlled decentralization.

ii.   Influences of inadequate provisioning

For the RNGPS, a major constraint in applying participatory teaching learning process using the constructivist principle is the unfavorable teacher-student ratio, which at times can become more than 80 students per teacher. However, the national average has improved over the years and now stands at approximately 40 students per class. There are often an insufficient number of teachers in a school, which forces a teacher to teach additional classes beyond their subject expertise. Moreover, long hours of teaching take a toll on teachers since most of the schools teach two shifts a day.

> "Since there are not sufficient teachers in the school, I have to work for extended hours. I have to teach subjects outside the area of my expertise. Also, at the end of the day I get very tired, so my performance suffers". Head Teachers [RNGPS] 19/7/12

Additionally, pressure from the center to ensure maximum students successfully complete the grade five public exam forces teachers to emphasize memorization, which is not helpful for meaningful learning. Therefore, it is not only delivery of training that is in question, but also the conditions within which the training skills are applied.

The problem with the training system is not only due to the lack of technical competencies of its leadership; it is also due to the lapse in the provisioning and deployment of teachers and their training, which makes it difficult in applying whatever teaching skills they have learned.

> "We have been provided with musical instruments and computers, but so far no teacher knows how to use them. They should

123

have provided us with training before giving us those things". Teacher [RNGPS] 20/7/12

Procurement of materials is in the hands of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. As stated earlier, the decision-makers at the Ministry are not educationists by profession. This has resulted into a procurement of musical instruments and computers for virtually all RNGPS schools (including the government schools) without having thought to deploy teachers trained in computers and musical instruments. Currently, in many schools these computers and musical instruments are lying without any use.

The RNGPS system is run on the administrative model, where the central state is responsible for determining salaries and fringe benefits, setting standards for performance, rewarding and punishing etc. (Cathy, G., 1998). Such an all-pervasive institutional culture influences the fabric of all schools under its remit. In fact, this was one of the initial reasons the investigation was carried out with the expectation that this exploration would result into some way out.

Quomi madrassas are virtually devoid of any meaningful training system of their own. According to a research conducted by the Save the Children (2009) the Quomi madrassas do not have any well-organized teacher training system in place. Only a couple of the Quomi madrassa boards organize formal training that teachers pay for themselves (BEI, 2011). The number of these teachers training provisions is grossly inadequate for the large number of teachers involved with Quomi madrassas. In addition, there is very little awareness regarding improvement of teaching learning through appropriate participatory interventions.

From a general educationist view-point, Quomi madrassas contain a highly unfriendly environment for any training. In a report on the Madrassa education in Bangladesh, the atmosphere in Quomi Madrassas is described as conservative with hardline attitude against any sort of modern thinking. In these madrassas, importance is given to Urdu and Persian rather than Bengali. Shortage of teachers with good command in both of these languages results in children not acquiring sufficient literacy in any of the languages.

As a result, the students are not attaining proficiency in any language, including their mother tongue (Abdalla and Raisuddin, 2004). Focus group discussions conducted by Abdalla and Raisuddin (2004) revealed that Students cited cruel punishment as the one thing they disliked the most about madrassas. They gave examples of how such punishment was humiliating and painful in front of their classmates, and how teachers would not make an effort to understand students' views. Perhaps the core problem is the maulanas do not acknowledge there is a problem. The following statement suggests that the training challenge with Quomi madrassa goes beyond the issue of training itself.

> "The teachers are free to adopt their own way
> for teaching based on Islamic guideline which
> calls for students' unquestionable respect for
> teacher. Teacher [Quomi]17/7/12.

The training system for RNGPS is very top-down in approach. As a result, the system does not generate the necessary processes that could be considered as facilitative for quality enhancement. The very structure of the training system makes the center the designer and deliverer of training. The school-level actors have become the recipients of training. Despite measures being taken to bring training to the doorsteps of school-level actors, there is little evidence of improvement. There are numerous reasons for this. One important reason is that bureaucratic norms and values restrict participation.

The Quomi madrassas present an interesting case. They do not have any intentions to consider the updated teaching learning processes and emphasize rote learning. Physical and other types of abuses are wide-spread. Despite this, they appear to better prepare their children for religious purposes in comparison to state run madrassas, which also includes the general curriculum (BEI, 2011). The children in Quomi madrassas get more attention and contact hours as compared to RNGPS. Due to teacher absenteeism and non-performance, the contact hours in RNGPS is approximately 450 hours as compared to the global standard of approximately 900 hours (Unicef, 2009).

The provision of training is intimately linked to pedagogical support. From observations it was apparent that RNGPS have yet to recover from rapid physical expansion without much simultaneous focus on quality. Expansion has brought both an aggregation of old problems and a series of new ones (MOE-Unicef, 1990) specifically for RNGPS. As the governance system is highly centralized, the nature of training delivery mechanism is also centralized. This has created the grounds for assuming an expert driven education system leading to a robotic approach of teacher development that fails to inculcate appropriate teaching skills (Leu, 2005). The global experience also demonstrates the importance of dialogue at national, district, school and community level (ibid). Therefore, an interactive process systematically developed for improving professionalization of pedagogy was felt to be an important dimension for contributing to better learning outcomes within the framework of decentralization. The study has revealed that such a process is not at all part of institutional processes dictated by the center in the case of RNGPS. This indicates, in the absence of such involvement, teachers generally experience a general lack of motivation and commitment. The Quomi madrassa teachers, however, are apparently more motivated than their RNGPS counterparts due to religious obligations, despite the fact they operate under worse circumstances than RNGPS teachers.

6.7 Summary

The research questions addressed herein are: i) how the central agencies viewed the periphery and the school-level actors in terms of mutual trust and respect; ii) specific forms of institutional inputs and perspectives of the respondents towards these inputs. The investigation revealed the possibility of a significant trust deficit between the center and periphery in the case of RNGPS. While in the case of Quomi madrassas, there is no dearth of trust and respect, but due to lack of adequate resources and capacity, the relationship is rather inconsequential in operational terms. Similarly, in case of RNGPS, while the respondents do not have any problems in having the state as a source of support and guidance, they find the state's influence rather restrictive because of the nature of bureaucratic impositions. This has

been revealed through exploring SMCs, training and monitoring components. The net result of this is that, even though the state has a system and structure in place, it becomes ineffective due to centrally dictated processes that do not take into meaningful account any feedback from the periphery. In case of Quomi madrassas, such a system and structures are absent, so while the Quomi madrassas have successfully addressed their existential concerns by rooting themselves within communities, they do not have institutional capacity to address technical issues like training and monitoring. This aspect gets even more problematic when Quomi madrassa respondents are not too aware of their inherent institutional deficiency.

CHAPTER 7

Reflections and Conclusions

7.1 Introductory remarks

This final chapter summarizes the findings of this investigation on impacts and possibilities of decentralization in primary education. I have explored and discussed the research questions as well as implications and ramifications of the findings on research policy and practices. Conclusions are drawn with reflections on my experiences throughout this research.

7.2 Summary of findings

7.2.1 Background and premise

The study was conceptualized and framed in the context of the widely discussed and debated topic of decentralization in the education sector. The scope of decentralization embodies a large number of social, political and economic factors inter-laced with several levels of actors to the extent that it deserves further research and analysis. Following the Dakar EFA Conference in 2000, the guiding principles, specific goals and targets for 2015 emphasized the role of decentralization of primary education governance. It was acknowledged the intended decentralization of primary education governance should be accomplished through increasing the capacity of different providers at all levels of the education system. My personal experience as a practitioner and my awareness of the growing collective consensus at the global level towards the overall decentralization of educational governance was the impetus for this study. Particularly, this study examines decentralization in terms of state-non-state relationship.

7.2.2 Understanding of the respondents regarding decentralization (response to sub-question number 1)

This study notes two important aspects involving the subject of the actual understanding of decentralization. Firstly, it was possible to rate how the school-level operators comprehended the meaning of decentralization. Secondly, it was also critical to establish the investigation on the basis of commonly shared meaning in order to maintain clarity and consistency of the research narrative. It was rather clear on most of the occasions that the respondents were well acquainted with the basic notion of decentralization; through experience, they were quite conversant about how decisions are made at the center and what implications it has on operational terms at the school-level, specifically within the context of their individual role. They were also very sensitive towards the way the center decides and transfers decisions to the schools in addition to how they influence the way the school-level actors conduct the affairs of the schools.

It should be mentioned that, since the study attempted to find out the dominant features of a particular school type, it did not reflect on the insignificant differences in understanding of respondents within a particular school-type. They described their understanding of decentralization as a delegation of authority, transfer of power and creation of conditions for more participatory decision-making. When introduced to the three formats and key variants of decentralization (i.e. deconcentration, delegation and devolvement) through simple examples, the school-level actors could point to the type that would work best for their particular kind of work. With quite a pragmatic outlook, the RNGPS respondents mostly favored the deconcentrated form of decentralization, which ensures a sustained flow of financial and technical support from the state. The Quomi madrassas are built by and for the community and prefer to be independent from the state; the madrassa respondents mostly preferred a delegated form of decentralization.

After reviewing the policies related to decentralization, the RNGPS respondents generally supported most of the statements in favor of strengthening the role of school-level actors with support from the state, while the Quomi madrassas respondents were in favor of delegated space. These findings indicate RNGPS respondents viewed themselves as part of

the government process whereas the Quomi madrassas were apprehensive of government actions or roles, making it difficult for the state to engage in a meaningful dialogue.

7.2.3 Nature of relationship between the state and non-state providers, in terms of the role of SMCs/MMCs, as well as monitoring and training inputs provided by the center (sub-question 2)

The relationship between state and non-state providers is considered and measured in terms of technical and financial inputs provided by the state. From a practitioner's point of view and based on the government's strategy to strengthen specific components for decentralization, three main elements were chosen, which were i) the SMCs, ii) training and iii) monitoring support. SMCs were chosen as community-based groups as they play a mediating role between schools and communities. Training and monitoring were chosen for analysis since, in both circumstances, the relationship with the center and the schools include direct participation, providing a scenario where various dynamics unfold. This was particularly true in the case of RNGPS.

At the school-level, SMCs contain a critical environment where the decentralization and democratization of school management can take root. However, this potential is compromised due to internal disharmony within its power structure. The non-teacher members from the community have little say or interest in the affairs of school. In instances when they are able to influence any school decisions, it is due to political contacts they may have, who have only narrow political interest. In both circumstances the role of non-teacher SMC members is problematic. The role of the SMCs becomes even more problematic due to the conflict between the teacher members and non-teacher members. In this struggle it looks like the non-teacher member lose out since the teacher members are part of the bureaucracy and the upazila administration are not too inclined to strengthen the SMCs.

Similarly, with no opportunities to participate in curriculum design, teaching methods, student evaluation or any other aspects of the training and monitoring system, the school-level actors are limited to only fulfilling

administrative obligations imposed by the center. The monitoring system, according to the school-level actors, is more like policing rather than a supportive intervention. As in the case of training design and delivery, it was found the school-level actors are mostly passive participants; thus, claims of decentralization appear to be quite problematic, which has been communicated in the responses of RNGPS respondents.

The Quomi madrassas work within an institutional format that has remained virtually unchanged for centuries. The madrassas' roles resonate closely to the demographic they serve mostly due to religious affinity and extreme poverty. The study shows the Quomi madrassas are dictated upon by the mullahs, sponsors and elders in the community with virtually no roles for women. Unlike the SMCs belonging to RNGPS, which are not held in high regards by the extended communities, the MMC members generally enjoy more respect and confidence throughout the community. However, in absence of any governmental or standard institutional relevance, the madrassa respondents could not refer to any monitoring mechanism or training needs that could eventually contribute to the quality of education madrassas provide.

7.2.4 Extent of trust and respect of the education administrators towards the school-level actors

For RNGPS, the understanding of the school-level actors is based on how the central agencies deliver its administrative mandate. Therefore, the understanding differs in reaction to the way the central agencies have defined the role of the school-level operators. In this context, it was felt that it was important to investigate the understanding of the administrators at the central agencies; since it was felt their nature of understanding would provide an idea about whether a meaningful decentralization process could be further intensified through setting up of two-way interactive mechanisms.

The key central administrators are not educationists by profession or do not have any direct experience in working with schools. Mostly policy strategists, these administrators supervise and manage teachers and district/sub-district level administrators who, on the other hand, are full time

primary education professional, and this creates a reality gap in the first place. Yet the education ministries are not designed to allow teachers or district level administrators pursue a career path on the policy-making side that can lead to decision-making positions at the central administration. One conclusion this arrangement leads to is a widespread belief that the school-level actors are not qualified enough to take on higher responsibility at the central and divisional levels; the enforcement of compliance is necessary via administrative monitoring. This attitude has resulted in a monitoring regimen that appears to subjugate the school-level actors and demotivates them from taking spontaneous initiatives in the matters of school. Due to this attitude, the center finds it very difficult to come into terms with the fact that a long-term policy dialogue is possible for better governance.

7.3 Implications of the study

The study was premised on the state's failure to provide universal access to primary education. Within this context the role of non-state providers was explored. In this section, the implications of the study are discussed in terms of insights that have evolved and what meanings it conveyed. From a practitioner's point of view I am aware of the inflexibilities inherent in the governance system in Bangladesh. Accordingly, I intended to frame the research in a way that could initiate some basic viable processes towards making decentralization work for the primary education sector. In the case of RNGPS, the inquiry into a monitoring system has shown how some of the significant bottlenecks in transforming the policies into practice come into play. The inquiry into training has revealed some important dimensions about capacity building measures according to the respondents. Similarly, inquiry into SMCs has shown to what extent SMCs are able to meaningfully mediate between the community and schools to make decentralization work. In the case of Quomi madrassas, the absence of state intervention has been characterized by a number of strength and weaknesses, which does not usually surface into ongoing policy discourse.

The dominant discourse within state agencies does have very little space for school-level actors to participate in dialogue related to policy and strategies

related to primary education governance. Decentralization stands as a highly plausible solution, but for it to be successful there has to be a seamless participatory processes between functions.

The evidence elicited from the investigation indicates the state should get attuned to the mind-set of the school-level actors in translating their concerns into meaningful policy discourse. Specifically RNGPS the central agencies need to review their current level of distrust towards the school-level actors. It also came out quite clearly that the current decentralization effort from the state falls short of providing decentralization with empowerment. In the case of RNGPS, it is observed more of as transferring of responsibility without adequate matching of authority. At the other end was the Quomi madrassa without any form of control from the state. The Quomi madrassa respondents were less conversant on the issue since the state governance system does not exert any institutional influence on them. From the investigation it was quite clear that before any institutional collaboration can take place, there ought to be a mandated political compromise between the state and Quomi madrassas.

The study has clearly shown that the current framework, within which SMCs belonging to RNGPS are operating, is not helpful to community-based decentralized school management. The uniformed and dictated arrangement from the center has failed to garner spontaneous community action that can make the process of decentralization meaningful. The top-down nature of governance has created disconnect between the center and periphery. This suggests that a number of measures could be taken to bridge this gap. First, it needs to be acknowledged by the center that such disconnect exists. Second, sufficient goodwill needs to be generated whereby both the sides become open to the idea that this gap could be reduced through mutual consultations. Third, such a dialogue will only become meaningful when both sides are able to empathize with each other. This calls for taking appropriate 'dialogue-readiness' measure through appropriate sensitization and consultations. The basic approach of dialogue could be applied with some modifications for both school-types. However, issues to be raised in such a dialogue will be specific to the respective realities of the two school-types.

The study also provides an understanding about three specific themes on which dialogue can be initiated, specifically for RNGPS. For instance, SMCs have been considered as a community-based entity that can become an important 'empowerment-point' for facilitating decentralization process. The well intentioned attempts at making decentralization work as prescribed by the center have not yielded the expected results. Therefore, a further probe into the matter based on the understanding of the SMCs through active engagement might help to offer new insights.

Probing the nature of relationship between the state and non-state providers concerning training and monitoring provided a further understanding of the conditions that help or hinder efficient performance of schools. The study has revealed through the understanding of the school-level actors that there are serious missing links or gaps in participatory processes that are required to make monitoring and training work in a meaningful manner. Thus, the study has provided the impetus for the policymakers to address the issues discussed within the context of decentralization.

Also, the study reveals there are two main issues that define the relationship between the state and Quomi madrassas. The first issue is the ideological divide in spelling out the curriculum; the second issue is the mistrust between the two entities that comes as a result. It transpired from the contextual analysis and responses from the Quomi madrassas that the traditional approach taken by the state is not helping the cause of improving the relationship between the two. Considering the state's failure of adopting authoritative bureaucratic approach to bring Quomi madrassas under its fold requires having a comprehensive plan to engage both Quomi madrassa leadership as well as its constituency of teachers, head teachers, MMCs and community in an unconditional dialogue. Rather than adopting current state strategy to convince Quomi madrassa leadership to accept general education within their current curriculum, the state should perhaps initiate dialogue by helping them to improve teaching learning within their own curriculum through appropriate quality improvement measures as a stepping-stone.

7.4 Implications of the study from research standpoint

The research adopted an interview survey approach. Due to time and resource limitations, the research was limited in scope. Furthermore, the study has adopted a snapshot approach, which misses out on a more dynamic and comprehensive analysis of the issue. Having stated that, the study has yielded a number of critical insights that link the concept of decentralization to creating appropriate conditions for improved school-level operations. From methodological standpoint, the study encourages the practitioners to look more deeply into the issue. This involves broadening the scope of the study as for instance, longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding about the kind of effect and impact state interventions are making on the various non-state providers. As a result, this would provide a much sharper perspective on what works and does not work within the context of state-non-state relationship.

In this case, as a professional, I was interested to find out the state/non-state relationship on the basis of three specific themes that directly influence the expediency of school-level management. In doing so, I could not accommodate many other dimensions related to other political, social and economic aspects that help or hinder the process of decentralization. For instance, at one stage of the research I was advised to look into the possibility of considering the role of local governance and politics influencing the understanding of the school-level actors. Without adequate integration of the stated dimension, a more rounded understanding of the issue is not possible. Therefore, to inform the policymakers about the conditions that would make meaningful dialogue possible between the center and periphery, similar studies need to be undertaken to explore the central level decision-makers' and policymakers' understanding about school-level actors.

7.5 Reflection on the study

The study was particularly educating for me as I am a late entrant in a doctoral course. Most of my professional career has been dedicated to a combination of project implementation and consultancy mainly related to

education projects. As a result, I had developed an assumption that I would be able to fulfill the doctoral requirement with a relative case. However, my experience proved otherwise, and, as the experience unfolded, this process has enlightened me with new perspectives both as a researcher and as an education professional.

At the initial stage, after having the research proposal approved, a number of methodological issues had to be encountered. The first challenge was to determine the scope of the study. This called for developing a pragmatic approach considering resource and time constraints. One meaningful way to determine the scope of the study was to reflect on the research questions. During the process of developing instruments for addressing the research questions, a number of issues were encountered. For instance, without adequate information regarding sampling and its relationship with epistemological and ontological implications for determining the sample size, I encountered a series of problems. First, I needed to find an area where the demographics related to primary education was consistent with most of the part of the country. Bangladesh being politically, ideologically, linguistically and economically relatively homogenous, this was not very difficult to find. The second, priority was to select an area that would be administratively facilitative for me to carry out further study. I found the sub-district of Gopalpur within the District of Tangail fulfilled these conditions.

Initially, I intended to opt for the mixed method approach. I had invested a lot of time and effort in preparing survey questionnaires and had recruited a number of field researchers who were engaged in collecting information from the field. However, during the course of the investigation I was alerted by my supervisor about the ontological and epistemological inconsistencies the mixed method approach often entails. Moreover, since the sampling size was grossly inadequate for any kind of generalizability, surveying of an entire sub-district did not make sense. These experiences further enriched and sharpened my understanding about research. It transpired from my experience that all the preparation that goes behind research is equally important as conducting the research itself.

At the tactical level, deciding on the research instruments as well as the scope of the study was like going through adjustment just like a photographer who adjusts and readjusts her or his lens until the object to be photographed is clearly visible. By its very nature all forms of research contains within itself an element of uncertainty. To ensure a meaningful outcome, the researcher must be ready to repeatedly review the research process. As the research progresses, there is always the possibility of getting sidetracked by issues during the process of investigation, so the researcher needs to reiteratively go back to the original research questions repeatedly. The significance of asking the right research questions and sticking to them during the entire course of research could be hardly overemphasized.

At another level, I have come to realize that each time a researcher encounters a new research topic; it provides her or him with the opportunity to look into her or his mental baggage, which is referred to as positionality. In this regard I have stated earlier how my positionality towards decentralization changed as a result of deeper encounter with relevant literature. On the other hand, when I became engaged with the Quomi madrassas, my notion about them also changed. Usually, among the general education practitioners there is a strong value-driven disdain for Quomi madrassas and vice versa in Bangladesh. If I had not carried out the study, it would have perhaps been much harder for me to be open to the possibility that actors representing both school types come from specific historical context, and, because of this, they tend to see the reality of primary education differently. It also transpired to me that both systems have their own strengths and weaknesses, and opening up to participatory dialogue will create the possibility to share each other's experience in a constructive manner.

7.6 Conclusion

The central question of this exploratory investigation was to find out how the RNGPS and Quomi madrassas as non-state entities relate to the state in the context of decentralization based on the premise that state has failed to provide universal access to quality primary education. As global attention

moves to decentralization for its plausible results in improving accountability and responsiveness and in fostering efficient resource mobilization, there is substantial evidence that it will be beneficial to the case of Bangladesh as well. However, there are many details that must be sorted for a successful implementation.

This led to the exploration of the possibility of state-non-state cooperation. The highly centralized nature of governance and supply driven mentality has been associated with the failure of state in facilitating quality. As a logical consequence of this, the possibility of engaging the school-level actors into policy and strategy related dialogue was contemplated. The investigation has shown that the school-level actors have sufficient understanding about decentralization and can articulate their issues and relate it to the national context. Therefore, contrary to the widely held belief among the central level administrators, the school-level actors are sufficiently capable of entering into dialogue with policy and decision-makers. The study has provided the policymakers with the impetus to reconsider their departure points while articulating policy.

Finally, the relationship between state and non-state providers is determined by their origin. If the establishment of schools is state sponsored and state defined like the RNGPS, then it is quite natural for the schools to be directed, resourced, monitored and evaluated by the state while Quomi madrassas are not. The madrassa curriculum is ideologically different and, in many respects, opposed to the state policy, resulting in the Quomi madrassas turning to funding sources other than the state. In this regard the Quomi madrassas have successfully established themselves outside the sphere of influence of the state with strong support from their communities. This financial, ideological and administrative autonomy has given the Quomi madrassas the ability to negotiate their own operational liberty with the state. Finally, it is not only the burden of the state to understand and further engage the non-state providers, but each form of non-state providers needs to step up their initiative in learning from the others in making and sustaining progress in primary education in Bangladesh.

Bibliography

.

ABDALLA, A., RAISUDDIN A. N. M. & HUSSEIN, S. (2004) *Bangladesh Educational Assessment - Pre-primary and Primary Madrasah Education in Bangladesh.* Washington, DC, USA: United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for Basic Education and Policy Support.

ACEDO, C., GOROSTIAGA, J. & SENÉN-GONZÁLEZ, S. (2007) Decentralization and Structural Change in Secondary Education in Argentina: The Case of the Province of Buenos Aires. *Prospects.* 37(1). p.127-145.

ADB (2007) *Education Sector in Bangladesh: What Worked Well* ADB Bangladesh Resident Mission.

ADB (2011) *Country Partnership Strategy,* ADB, Bangladesh Resident Mission.

AGRAWAL, A. & RIBOT, J. (2007) *Analyzing Decentralization: A frame Work with Asian and East African Environmental Case.* London: World resources Institute.

AGRAWAL, A. & RIBOT, J. (1999) Accountability in Decentralization: A Framework with South Asian and West African Cases. *The Journal of Developing Areas,* 33. p. 473-502

AHEARN, E. M. (2000) *Educational Accountability: a synthesis of the literature review of a balanced model of accountability.* Office of Special Educational Programs, U.S. Department of Education.

AHMAD, E. & BROSIO, G. (2009) *Decentralization and local service provision: What do we know?* Asia Research Centre Working Paper 27, London School of Economics.

AHMAD, E. & BROSIO, G. (eds.) (2009) *Does decentralization enhances service delivery and poverty reduction?* Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing Inc.

AHMED, M. (2005) *Bangladesh Education Sector Mapping.* Institute of Education and Development, BRAC University.

AHMED, M. (2007) *Access to Education in Bangladesh: Country Analytic Review of Primary and Secondary Education,* Create Pathways To Access Research Monograph.

AIKARA, J. (1997) *Learner Achievement in Primary Schools. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences,* Unit for Research in the Sociology of Education.

ALAM, M. (2003) *Devolution of Power Programme in Pakistan: A Case Study of Faisalabad District,* Department for International Development (DFID).

ALAVI, H. (1979) *The state in postcolonial societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh,* in Goulbourne, H.(ed.) *Politics and State in the Third World,* Macmillan, London.

ALEX, G. (2000) *Decentralizing agricultural extension: lessons and good practices.* Washington, DC: The World Bank.

ANAND, S. & SEN, A. (1997) *Concepts of Human Development and Poverty: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective.* New York: UNDP.

ANDREA, F. & FREY, J. (1994) The Art of Science. *Development Policy Review.* 16 (4). p. 405-31.

ANTIKAINEN, A. (1996) *Living in a Learning Society.*

ANTIKAINEN, A. (2006) *In from the Margins.*

ANTIKAINEN, A. (ed.) (2005) *Transforming a Learning Society: The Case of Finland.*

ARNOTT, M. R. (2000) *The Governance of Schooling: Comparative Studies of Devolved Management.* London: Routledge-Falmer.

ATKINSON, P. & COFFEY, A. (1997) '*Analysing Documentary Realities'*, in Silverman, D. (ed.) *Qualitative Research Theory Method and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

ATKINSON, P. & COFFEY, A. (2004) *Analyzing Documentary Realities, in Qualitative Research: Theories, Methods and Practice,* 2nd Edn. (ed.) D. Silvermann p. 56-75, London: SAGE Publications..

AUCOIN, P. & NEINTZMAN, R. (2000) "The Dialectics of Accountability for Performance in Public Management Reform." *International Review of Administrative Sciences.* 66(2). p. 45–55.

BALANSKAT, A. & GERHARD, P. (2005) *Head teacher Professional Profile and Roles Across Europe*, Corrigenda OECD, UK.

BALANSKAT, A. (2013) *Analysis of 1:1 Learning Initiatives in Europe.* EUR Number: JRC81903. IPTS publication.

BALL, S. & MAROY, C. (2009) School's logic of action as mediation and compromise between internal dynamics and external constraints and pressures. *Compare,* 39(1). p. 99-112.

BANBEIS (1987) The Education System of Bangladesh. BBS.

BANGAY, C. (2005) Private Education: Relevant or Redundant? Private Education, Decentralization and National Provision in Indonesia. *Compare.* 35(2). p. 167-179.

BANGLADESH BUREAU OF STATISTICS (2010) Household Income and Expenditure Survey.

BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE (2011) *Modernization of madrassa education in Bangladesh: a strategy paper Dhaka, Bangladesh.*

BANO, M. (2008a) Non-profit education providers vis-a-vis the private sector: Comparative analysis of NGOs and traditional voluntary organizations in Pakistan. *Compare.* 38. p.471–82.

BANO, M.(2008b) *Allowing for diversity: State-Madrasa relations in Bangladesh.* Working Paper. University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

BANO, M. (2008c) *Non-profit education providers vis-à-vis the private sector: comparative analysis of non-governmental organizations and traditional voluntary organization in Pakistan.* University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

BARDHAN, P. (2007) *"Local Democracy in Rural West Bengal: Political Participation and Targeting of Public Services",* Working Paper, UC-Berkeley, Department of Economics.

BARDHAN, P. (2002) Decentralization of Governance and Development. *Journal of Economic Perspectives.* 16 (4). p. 185– 20.

BARDHAN, P. (2005) Decentralization of Governance and Development. *Journal of Economic Perspective.* 16(4). p. 185-205.

BARDHAN, P. & MUKHERJEE, D. (2000) *'Decentralizing Anti-Poverty Program Delivery in Developing Countries',* University of California, Berkeley.

BARDHAN, P., S. MITRA, MOOKHERJEE, D. & SARKAR, A. (2007) *"Local Democracy in Rural West Bengal: Political Participation and Targeting of Public Services",* Working Paper, UC-Berkeley, Department of Economics

BARRERA-OSORIO, F., FASIH, T. & PATRINOS, H. A. (2009) *Decentralized Decision-Making in Schools: The Theory and Evidence on School-Based Management*, The World Bank, Washington DC.

BASSEY, M. (1999) *Case Study Research in Educational Settings,* Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press

BATTAGALIA, M. P. (2008) *"Non-Probability Sampling"* Encyclopedia of Survey Research Method. Sage Publications.

BEHAR, A. (1999) 'Initiatives for Decentralisation of Governance in Madhya Pradesh,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6 November 1999.

BEHAR, A. (2001) *'Madhya Pradesh: Gram Swaraj: Experiment in Direct Democracy',* Economic and Political Weekly, 10 March, 2001.

BEHRMAN, J., DEOLALOKAR, A. & SOON, L. (2002) *Conceptual issues in the role of education decentralization in promoting effective schooling in Asian developing countries* (ERD Working Paper Series No. 22). Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

BELFIELD, C.R. & LEVIN, H.M. (2002) *Education Privatization: Causes, Consequences and Planning Implications.* Berkeley: McCutchan.

BERNARD, H. R. (2011) *Research method in Anthropology.* Rowan Altamira Maryland, USA.

BERRY, B. (1985) *Understanding teacher supply and demand in the southeast: A synthesis of qualitative research to aid effective policy making.* Commissioned by the Southeastern Regional Council.

BIENNEN, H. (1990) Decentralization in Nepal. *World Development.* 18(5), p. 61-75.

BILOUSEACM, I. & PETRONELAZ, Z. (2010) *Decentralisation and Subsidiarity in the Management of Local Public Administration.* The Annals of the "Stefan cel Mare" University of Suceava. The Faculty of Economics and Public Administration.10 (1). p. 255-26.1

BIRBILI (2000) *Translating from one language to other.* Social Research Updates, 31, Retrieved from: http:// sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU31.html [accessed on June 12, 2012]

BIRD, R. (1998) *Rethinking decentralization in developing countries*(Sector Studies Series No. 21492). Washington, DC: World Bank.

BIRD, R. M. & FRANCOIS, V. (1998) *Fiscal Decentralization in Developing Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BIRD, R.M. (1995) *"Decentralizing Infra-structure: For Good or For Ill?"*in *Decentralizing Infrastructure: Advantages and Limitations*. Antonio Estache, (ed.) Washington, D.C.: World Bank Discussion Papers 290, p. 22–51.

BJORK, C. (2003) *Local Responses to Decentralization: Policy in Indonesia.*

BLAIR, H. (2000) *Participation and Accountability at the Periphery: Democratic Local Governance in Six Countries,* World Development.

BLAIR, H. (2007) *Small, Multi-grade Schools and Increasing Access to Primary Education in India: National Context and NGO Initiatives,* Create Pathways To Access.

BOREN, S. (2007) *The Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program: Background and funding*. Congressional Research Service Report 98-909.

BOWEN, F. M. (1997) *State structures for the governance of higher education: A comparative study.* The California Higher Education Policy Center.

BOWEN, F. M. (1997) *State structures for the governance of higher education: A comparative study.* The California Higher Education Policy Center.

BOWEN, G. A. (2005) Preparing a qualitative research-based dissertation: Lessons learned. *The Qualitative Report.* 10(2). p.208-222.

BOWEN, G. A. (2009) Social capital, social funds and poor communities: An exploratory analysis. *Social Policy & Administration.* 43(3). p. 245-269.

BOWEN, H.R. (1970) *Financial needs of the campus.* Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, 30(1). p. 75-93.

BRAY, M. & MUKUNDAN, M.V. (2003) *Management and Governance for EFA; Is Decentralization Really the Answer?*

BRAY, M. (1996) *Counting the Full Cost: Parental and Community Financing of Education in East Asia.* Washington: World Bank.

BREAKWELL G. (2000) *Interviewing.* In BREAKWELL,G., HAMMOND S. & SCHAW, C. (eds.) *Research Method in Psychology(2nd edition).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

BRUNS, B., MINGAT, A. & RAKOTOMALALA, R. (2003) *Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015: A Chance for Every Child.* Washington DC: World Bank.

BRYMAN, A. (2008) *Social research methods* (3th ed.) New York, United States of America:Oxford University Press Buchmann and Floden.

BRYMAN, A. (2012) *Social research methods* (4th ed.). New York, United States of America: Oxford University Press Buchmann and Floden.

BUCHMANN, M. (1986) Role over person: Morality and authenticity in teaching teachers. *College Record.* 87 (4). p. 529-543.

BUCHMANN, M. & FLODEN, R. (1990) Program *coherence in teacher education: A view from the United States* (Issue paper 90-6). East Lansing: Michigan University, National Centre for Research on Teacher Education.

BULLOCK, A. & THOMAS, H. (1997) *Schools at the centre?* A study of Decentralization, London: Routledge.

BURRELL, G. (1979) *'Radical organization theory'* In DUNKERLEY, D. AND SALAMAN, G.(eds.)*The International Yearbook of Organization Studies.* London: Routledge und Kegan Paul, Ch.4, p.90.

CARRON, G. (1991) *Non-Formal Education: Information and Planning Issues*. Paris: IIEP/UNESCO.

CATHY, G. (1998) *"Decentralization of Education – Teacher Management"*. World Bank Directions in Development Series, D.C.

CHEEMA, G. S. & RONDINELLI, D. A. (eds.) (1983) *Decentralization and Development Policy Implementation in Developing Countries.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

CHOWDHURY, A. F. (2004) *Non-State Provision of Basic Services: Education in Bangladesh.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

CHOWDHURY, A.M.R. & JALALUDDIN, A.K. (eds.) (1997) *Getting Started: Universalizing Quality Primary Education in Bangladesh.* Dhaka: The University Press.

CHRISTIANS, C.G. (2005) *Ethics and politics in qualitative research.* In: Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research.(3rd edition).* Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

COCHRAN, K.F. (1993) Pedagogical Content Knowing: An integrative model of teacher preparation. *Journal of Teacher Education.* 44(3). p. 263-272.

COCHRAN, K.F., DE RUITER, J.A. & KING, R. A. (1993) Pedagogical Content Knowing: An Integrative Model for teacher preparation. *Journal of Teacher Education,* 44 (7). p. 263-272.

COHEN, L., MANION, L. & MORRISON, K. (2007) Research Methods in Education(6th Edition)**.** Routledge. London and New York.

COHEN, D. & CRABTREE, B. (2006) *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project.* Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

COHEN, J. (2004) *Linking decentralization to school quality improvement.* Retrieved from Academy for Educational Development (AED).

COHEN, L. (2011) *Research Method in Education,* 7th Edition, London: Routledge.

COHEN, L. (2007) *Research Method in Education,* 6th Edition, London: Routledge.

COLCLOUGH, C. (1982) The Impact of Primary Schooling on Economic Development: A Review of the Evidence. *World Development,* Vol. 10 (3). p.167-185.

COLCLOUGH, C. (1996) Education and the Market: Which Parts of the Neo-Liberal Solutions are Correct? *World Development.* 24(4). p. 589-610.

CONDON, M. (1993) A constructivist basis for teaching and teacher education: A framework for program development and research on graduates. *Journal of Teacher Education.* 44(4).p. 273-278.

CONYERS, D. (1983) Decentralization: The Latest Fashion in Development Administration, *Journal of the Public Administration Development.* 3(2). p.106-122

CONYERS, D. (1986) Future Direction of Development Studies: The case of Decentralization, World Development. 4 (5). p.76-93.

CRESWELL, W.C. (2012) *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research.* University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

CROOK, R. & MANOR, J. (1998) *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa: Participation, Accountability and Performance.* London: Cambridge University Press.

CROOK, RICHARD C. & SVERRISSON, A. S. (2001) *"Decentralization and poverty-alleviation in developing countries: a comparative analysis or, is West Bengal unique?"* IDS Working Paper 130. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

CROUCH, L. A. (2006) *Education sector: standards, accountability and support.*

CROUCH, L. A. & HEALEY, F. H. (1996) *Education reform support: Overview.* Washington, DC: Bureau for Africa, United States Agency for International Development.

CROUCH, L. A., HEALEY, F. H. & DESTEFANO, J. (1996) Education reform support: Foundations and justification. Washington, DC: Bureau for Africa, United States Agency for International Development.

CROUCH, L. & WINKLER, D. (2007) *Governance, management and financing of Education for All: basic frameworks and case studies*. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 (through Research Triangle Institute).

CROUCH, M. & MCKENZIE, H. (2006) The logic of small samples in interview-based qualitative research. *Social Science Information.* 45(4). p.483-499.

CRUMPTON, B. (ed.) (1999) *Learning for Life in the Hills,* In MOLTENO, M. et al. (eds.) (1999) *Towards Responsive Schools: supporting better schooling for disadvantaged children: case studies from Save the Children,* London: DFID, Serial No. 38, p. 43-66.

CRUMPTON, B. (Ed.) (1999) *Learning for Life in the Hills, in* MOLTENO, N. M. et al. (eds.) (1999) *Towards Responsive Schools: supporting better schooling for disadvantaged children.*

CUMMINGS, WILLIAM, K. & RIDDELL, A. (1994) Alternative policies for finance control of the delivery of basic education, *International Journal of Educational Research,* 21 (8): 751-776.

DASGUPTA, A. & BEARD, V. A. (2007) Community driven development, collective action and elite capture in Indonesia, *Development and Change,* 38(2), 229–249.

DAVIES M.L., HARBER C.R. & DZIMADZI, C. (2003) "Educational Decentralisation in Malawi: A Study of Process." *Compare*, 33, 2, 139-154

DAVIES, M. L. & HARBER, C.R. (2002) *"The Chiradzulu Initiative: The Process of Change in the District Education Office in a Context of Decentralisation."* Report to the Department for International Development (DFID), UK.

DE GRAUWE (2005) Does decentralization lead to school improvement? Findings and lessons from research in West Africa. *Journal of Education for International Development,* Vol.1, No. 1. p. 20-31

DE GRAUWE A. (2004) *School-based Management (SBM): does it improve quality?* UNESCO.

DE GRAUWE, ET. AL. (2005) Does decentralization lead to school improvement? Findings and lessons from research in West-Africa. *Journal of Education for International Development,* 1(1). Retrieved from http://www.equip123.net/JEID/articles/1/1-1.pdf 24 Healey and Crouch, 2012 RTI Press [Accessed: 7th May 2013].

DE STEFANO, J. (2004) *Meeting EFA Mali Community Schools* (EQUIP 2 Case Study) Washington D.C.: Academy for Education Development. decentralization and globalization" in OZGA, J., SEDDON, T., POPKEWITZ, T. (eds.) *Education and Research policy. Steering the Knowledge-Based Economy, World Yearbook of Education*, *2006*. London: Routledge, 359-269.

DEMING W.E. (1960) "*Sample Design in Business Research".* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

DENSCOMBE, M. (2010) *The Good Research Guide: For Small Scale Social Research,* 4th Edition. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

DENZIN N.K. & LINCOLN Y.S. (2011) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research.* SAGE publication. London.

DESTEFANO, J. & CROUCH, L. A. (2009) *Education reform support today.* Prepared for USAID under the EQUIP 2 Project. Washington, DC: USAID. Retrieved from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/developing countries: A review of recent experience. Washington, DC: World Bank [Accessed: 19th August, 2013]

DFID (2001) *The Challenge of Universal Primary Education.* Strategies for Achieving the International Development Targets. London: DFID.

DFID (2007) *Tanzania Governance Report, 2007: Kikewete's First Two Years*. Tanzania Governance Review 2006-2007.

DIMAGGIO, P. J. & POWELL, W. (1983) "The iron cage revisited" institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields". *American Sociological Review*. 48. p. 147-60.

DIRECTORATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION (2013) *Annual Sector Performance Report, 2013*. MOPME, GOB.

DIRECTORATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION (2013) *Bangladesh Primary Education Annual Sector Performance Report.* Government of Bangladesh.

DONALD, R., WINKLER, A. & GERSHBERG, I. (2000) *Education Decentralization in Latin America: The Effects on the Quality of Schooling.* The World Bank, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office.

DOWNEY, C.J. (2004) *The three minute classroom walk-through: Changing school supervisory technique one teacher at a time.* Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin.

DUNNE, M. (2005) *Gendered School Experiences: The Impact on Retention and Achievement in Botswana and Ghana*. Education Series Research Report No. 56. London: DFID.

DUNNE, M., AKYEAMPONG, K. & HUMPHREYS, S. (2007) *School process local governance and community participation: Understanding access.* University of Sussex, UK: Center for International Education.

DUNNE, M. (2005) *Becoming a Researcher: A Companion to the Research Process in the Social Sciences.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

DUSHINA, D. (2008) *School and Decentralization: The case of Benin.* IIEP Research Papers. Series: Management reform for EFA. Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.

DYER, C. & ROSE, P. (2005) *Decentralization for Educational Development?* An Editorial Introduction. *Compare.* 35(2). p. 105-13.

DYER, C. & ROSE, P. (2005) "Decentralisation for educational development? An editorial introduction," *Compare,* 35 (2). p. 105–113.

EDITORS (2009) *Emerging Evidence on Vouchers and Faith-Based Providers in Education: Case Studies from Africa, Latin America, and Asia*. The World Bank; Washington DC.

EDUCATION WATCH REPORT (1999) *Hope Not Complacency.* CAMPE.

EDUCATION WATCH REPORT (2001) *The State of Primary Education in Bangladesh*. CAMPE.

EDWARDS, D.B. (2010) 'Trends in governance and decision-making: A democratic analysis with attention to application in education'. *Policy Futures in Education.* 8(1), p. 111-125.

EDWARDS, M. & HULME, D. (eds.) (1995) *Non-Governmental Organizations-Performance and Accountability.* London: Earth Scan Publications.

EKPO, A. H. (2007) *Decentralization and service delivery: A framework* (Prepared for the African Economics) Research Consortium, Nairobi, Kenya.

EKPO, A.H. (2007) "*Fiscal Federalism in Nigeria: The Challenges of the Next Decade"*. Institute of Governance, Jos.

ELLIE, F. (2002) Understanding and evaluating qualitative Research. Australian and New Zealand. *Journal of Psychiatry.* 36. p. 717–732

ENGLAND, K. (1994) Getting personal: reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *Professional Geographer.* 46(1). p. 80-89.

EVERARD, K.B. & MORRIS, G. (1996) *Effective School Management.* London: Paul Chapman.

FAGUET, J. & SHAMI, M. (2008) *Fiscal policy and spatial inequality in Latin America and beyond.* Policy research working paper series. The World Bank, Washington, DC, USA.

FAGUET, J. P. & SÁNCHEZ, F., (2008) "Decentralization's Effects on Educational Outcomes in Bolivia and Colombia," *World Development.* 36(7). p. 1294-1316.

FAGUET, J. P. (2004) Does decentralization increase government responsiveness to local needs? Evidence from Bolivia. *Journal of Public Economics.* 88. p. 867–893.

FAGUET, J. P. (2007) *To the MDGs and beyond: accountability and institutional innovation in Bangladesh.* Development series, 14. The World Bank, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

FERLIE, E. (2005) *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

FINLAY, W. M. L. & LYONS, E. (2001) Methodological issues in interviewing and using self-report questionnaires with people with mental retardation. *Psychological Assessment,* 13(3). p. 319-335.

FIRESTONE, W. & RIEHL, C. (eds.) A new agenda: Directions for research on educational leadership. p. 22-47. New York, Teachers' College.

FISKE, E. B. (1996) *Decentralization of education: Politics and consensus.* Washington, D. C., World Bank.

FLYVBJERG, B (2006) Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry.* 12(2). p. 219-245.

FONTANA, A. & FREY, J.H. (1994) *"Interviewing the art of science"* in DENZIN, N.K. AND LINCOLN Y.S. (eds.) Handbook of Qualitative Research. p. 361-376.

FOSSEY, E. (2002) Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry.* 36 (5). p. 717-732.

FRASE, L., ENGLISH, F. W. & POSTON, W. K. (eds.) (2000) *The curriculum management audit: Improving school quality.*4-18. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

FREDRICKSON, B. L. (2003) The value of positive emotions. *American Scientist.* 91. p.330- 335.

FRIEDMAN, L. M. (1985) *History of American law (2nd. Ed.).* New York: Touchstone Book.

FRITZEN, S. A. & LIM, W. O. (2006) *Problems and prospects of decentralization in developing countries.* LKY School of Public Policy National University of Singapore.

FRY, G. W. (1983) "Decentralization as a Management and Development Strategy: A Thai Case Study," *The Asian Journal of Public Administration.* 5(2). p. 44-53.

GALASSO, E. & RAVALLION, M. (2001) *'Decentralized Targeting of an Anti-Poverty Program',* Development Research Group Working Paper, World Bank, Washington D.C.

GALIANI, S. & PEREZ-TRUGLIA, R. (2013) *"School Management in Developing Countries,"* CEDLAS, Working Papers 0147, CEDLAS, Universidad Nacional de La Plata.

GALIANI, S. (2005) *"School Decentralization: Helping the Good Get Better, but Leaving the Poor Behind."* Working Paper, Universidad de San Andres.

GAURI, V. & VAWDA, A. (2004) "Vouchers for Basic Education in Developing Countries: An Accountability Perspective.*"The World Bank Research Observer*. 19 (2). p. 259-280.

GAYNOR, C. (1998) Decentralization *of Education: Teacher Management.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

GERALD, I. S. (1983) *Action Research: A sociotechnical systems perspective.* Edited by G. Morgan, Sage Publications, London.

GERSHBERG, A. I. (1998) "Decentralization, Re-centralization, and Performance Accountability: Building an Operationally Useful Framework".

GOLDRING, E. & RALLIS, S. (1993) *Principals of Dynamic Schools.* Newbury Park: Corwin Press.

GONZALEZ, et al.(2006) *Political budget cycles and fiscal decentralization.* Working Paper. Coventry: University of Warwick, Department of Economics. (Warwick economic research papers).

GOVINDA, R. (ed.) (1998) *Decentralisation of Educational Management: Experiences from South Asia.* Paris: IIEP/UNESCO Research Report No. 107.

GOVINDA, R. & BANDYOPADHYOY, S. (2008) *Access to Elementary Education in India: Country Analytic Review.* National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

GREEN, E. D. (2008) Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda. *Conflict, Security and Development.* 8(4). p. 427-450. Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics.

GUBA, E.G. & LINCOLN,Y.S.(1994) *Competing paradigms in qualitative research.*

GUION, R. M. & HIGHHOUSE, S. (2006) *Essentials of personnel selection: Personnel assessment and selection.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

GUNNARSSON, L. (2004) *Does school decentralization raise student outcomes? Theory and evidence on the roles of school autonomy and community participation* (Working Paper #04005). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

GUZMAN, A.B. (2007) Chronicling decentralization initiatives in the Philippine basic education sector. *International Journal of Educational Development.* 27. p. 613-624.

HALLAK, J. (1990) *Investing in the Future; Selling Educational Priorities in the Developing World.* Study prepared for UNDP. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning/Pergamon Press.

HANNAWAY, J. & CARNOY, M. (eds.) (1993) *Decentralization and school improvement: Can we fulfill the promise?* Consortium for Policy Research. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

HANUSHEK , E. A., LINK, S. & WOESSMANN, L.(2009) "Do better schools lead to more growth? Cognitive skills, economic outcomes, and causation." NBER Working Paper 14633. Cambridge.

HANUSHEK ,E A., LINK, S. & WOESSMANN, L. (2011) Does School Autonomy Make Sense Everywhere? Panel Estimates from PISA. *Journal of Development Economics, Elsevie.* 104(C). p. 212-232.

HAQQANI, H. (2002) *'A History of Madrassa Education, Education in the Muslim World: What next?'* Speech delivered at a symposium at AED, Washington DC.

HAQQANI, H. (2002) 'Islam's Medieval Outposts' Foreign Affairs' December p. 58-64.

HAQQANI, H. (2005) *Pakistan between Mosque and Military.* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

HARBER. C.R. (2001) "Education in Transition?: Change and Continuity in South African Education." In GRIFFIN, R. (ed.) *Education in Transition: International Perspectives on Policy Versus Process*, Oxford: Symposium Books.

HARGREAVES, A. & FINK, D. (2006) *Sustainable Leadership.* San Francisco, CA, Jossey Bass.

HARGREAVES, A. & FINK, D. (2008) "Distributed leadership: democracy or delivery?". *Journal of Educational Administration.* 46 (2). p.229 – 240.

HEALEY, F. H. & DESTEFANO, J. (1997) *Education reform support: A framework for scaling-up school reform (Policy Paper Series).* Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

HEALEY, F. H. & CROUCH, L. A. (1996) *Education reform support: Making it happen.* Washington, DC: Bureau for Africa, United States Agency for International Development.

HERRIOTT, R. E. (1963) "Some Social Determinants of Educational Aspiration." *Harvard Education Review.* 33(2). p. 157-177.

HERRIOTT, R. E. & ST. JOHN, N.H. (1966) *Social Class and the Urban School.* New York.

HERRIOTT, R.E. & HODGKINS, B.J. (1973) *The Environment of Schooling.* Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973 LC191/.H46

HILL, P. T. & BONAN, J. (1991) *Decentralization and accountability in public education.* New York: Rand Corporation.

HILL, P.T., BONAN, J.J. & WARNER, K. (1992) Uplifting education: Set schools soaring with site-based management. *The American School Board Journal. 179*(3). p.21-25.

HINCHCLIFFE, K. (2002) *Public Expenditures on Education in Nigeria: Issues, Estimates and Some Implications.* Washington: World Bank.

HIRSH, F. (1976) *Social Limits of Growth.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

HOSSAIN, N., SUBRAHMANIAN, R. & KABEER, N. (2002) *The Politics of Educational Expansion in Bangladesh.* IDS Working Paper 167, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

HOXBY, C. M. (2003) *School Choice and School Productivity; Could School Choice Be a Tide that Lifts All Boats?* National Bureau of Economic Research. University of Chicago Press.

HSIEH, C. T. & URQUIOLOA, M. (2006) The effects of generalized school choice on achievement and stratification: Evidence from Chile's voucher program. *Journal of Public Economics.* 90 (7). p. 1477–1503.

HUMPHREY, C. & THOMAS, H. (1986) Delegating to Schools. *Education.* p. 513-514.

HUMPHREY, C. & THOMAS, H. (1985) Giving Schools the Money. *Education.* p. 419-420.

HUMPHREY, J. (2007) 'Forty Years of Development Research: Transformations and Reformations'. *IDS Bulletin.* 38 (2). p.14-19

ISLAM, M. S. & RAHMAN, M. (2008) Challenges of Policy Formulation and Implementation of Primary Education in Bangladesh: A Conceptual Analysis. *Asian Affairs.* 30 (3). p. 40-51.

JENSEN, J. L. & RODGERS, R. (2001) Cumulating the intellectual gold of case study research. *Public administration Review.* 61(2). p. 236-246.

JIMENEZ, E. & PAQUEO, V. (1996) "Do Local Contributions Affect the Efficiency of Public Primary Schools?" *Economics of Education Review.* 15(4). p. 377-386.

KAMAT, M. S. (2008) *Education and Social Equity: With a Special Focus on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Elementary Education,* Create Pathways to Access Research Monograph.

KAYANI, M. M. (2011) Effectiveness of monitoring system at primary level in Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Social Science.* 2 (19) [Special Issue –October 2011] p. 148.

KHAN, Z. (1998) Implementation of Decentralization in Education in Pakistan: Framework, Status and the Way forward. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education.* 5(2). p. 146-169.

KIM, A. (2008) *Decentralization and the provision of public services* (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4503). Washington, DC: World Bank.

KING, E. & OZLER. B. (1998) *What's decentralization got to do with learning? The case of Nicaragua's school autonomy reform.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

KING, R. A. (1980) Weberian Perspectives and the Study of Education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education.* 7(3). p.23.

KIRCHNER,E. J.(ed.) (1999) *Decentralization and transition in the Visegrad: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

KITAEV, I. (1999) *'Private Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Re-examination of Theories and Concepts Related to its Development and Finance*, Mechanisms and Strategies of Educational Finance Series, International Institute for Educational Planning, IIEP/UNESCO: Paris (PDF)

KITWOOD, T.M. (1977) *Values in adolescent life: Towards a critical description.* Unpublished PhD dissertation, School of Research in Education, University of Bradford. Quoted in L. Cohen.

KOGAN, L. (1992) *School leader education in Sweden.* Stockholm: Skloverket.

KOHL, B. (2003) Democratizing Decentralization in Bolivia: The Law of Popular Participation, *Journal of Planning Education and Research.* 23(2). p. 153-164.

KOHLI, A. & VIVIENNE, S. (1994) *State Power and Social Forces: On political contention and accommodation in the Third World*. In: MIGDAL, J. S. (ed.) *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and transformation in the Third World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 293-326.

KUCHAPSKI, R. (1998) Accountability and the Social Good: Utilizing Manzer's Liberal Framework in Canada. *Education and Urban Society.* 30(4). p. 531-545.

KUCHAPSKI, R. (1998) *Conceptualizing accountability: A liberal framework.* In R. J. S. Macpherson (Ed.), *The politics of accountability: Educative and international perspectives,* (p. 185-196) Corwin Press: California.

KVALE, S. (1996) *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

KVALE, S. (2006) Dominance through interviews and dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry.* 12. p. 480-500.

LADD, H. F. (2002) School vouchers: A critical view. *Journal of Economic Perspectives.* 16(4), p. 3–24.

LAMMERS, J. C. & BARBOUR, J. B. (2002) *Identity, institutions, and structuration: The case of 'managed care'.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, LA.

LAMMERS, J. C., BARBOUR, J. & DUGGAN, A. (2003) Organizational forms of the provision of health care: An institutional perspective. In Thompson, T., Dorsey, A., Miller, K. & Parrot, R. (eds.) *Handbook of Health Communication* (p. 319-345). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

LAUGLO, J. (2007) Factors behind Decentralization in Education Systems: A Comparative Perspective with Special Reference to Norway. *Compare.* 20(1). p. 21-39.

LAUGLO, J. (1995) Forms of Decentralization and their Implications for Education. *Comparative Education.* 31(1). p. 15-30.

LAYMAN, T. (2003) *Intergovernmental relations and service delivery in South Africa: A ten year review* [Commissioned by the Presidency of South Africa].

LEITHWOOD, K. (2006) *Successful School Leadership What It Is and How It Influences Pupil Learning. Department of Education and Skills.* University of Nottingham.

LEITHWOOD, K., LOUIS, K., ANDERSON, S. & WAHLSTROM, K. (2004) *How leadership influences student learning,* New York, Wallace Foundation.

LEITHWOOD, K. & MENZIES, T. (1998) A review of research concerning the implementation of site-based management. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement.* 9 (3). p. 233-285.

LEITHWOOD, K. & RIEHL, C. (2005) *What we know about successful school leadership.* National College for School Leadership.

LEITHWOOD, K. & SEASHORE-LOUIS, K. (2012) *Linking leadership to student learning.* San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.

LEU, E. (2005) *The Role of Teachers, Schools, and Communities in Quality Education: A Review of the Literature.* Washington, DC: AED, Global Education Center.

LEVACIC, R. (1995) *Local management of schools: analysis and practice,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

LEVITAS, T. & HERCZYNSKI, J. (2001) *Decentralization, local governments, and education reform in post-communist Poland.* Paper prepared for the Open Society Institute's Local Government Initiative Program. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.

LEVITT, D. & JOHN A. (2012) *"The Behavior list Goes to School: Leveraging Behavioral Economics to Improve Educational Performance."* NBER Working Paper No. 18165.

LEWIN, K. M. & SAYED, Y. (2005) *Non-Government Secondary Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the Evidence in South Africa and Malawi.* London: DFID.

LEWIN, K. M. (2007) Improving Access, Equity and Transitions in Education, Create Pathways to Access Research Monograph No. 1.

LEWIN, K.M. (1995) *Education and Development; The Issues and the Evidence.* London: Overseas Development Administration.

LINCOLN, Y. S. & GUBA, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

LINCOLN, Y. S. & TIERNEY, W. G. (2004) Qualitative research and institutional review boards. *Qualitative Inquiry.* 10 (2). p. 219–234.

LISTER, S. & BETLEY, M. (1999) *Approaches to Decentralization in Developing Countries. Good Practice in Public Expenditure Management*. United Kingdom: Oxford Press.

LITRACK, J. (1998) *Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries.* The World Bank.

LITVACK, J. (2000) *Decentralization and Hard Budget Constraints*. APSA-CP Newsletter11 (1), Winter: 23-28.London and New York: Macmillan and St Martin's.

LITVACK, J., AHMAD, J. & BIRD, R. (1998) Rethinking decentralization in developing countries(Sector Studies Series No. 21492). Washington, DC: World Bank. Lora, E. (Ed.).

LUDEKI, C. (2004) The State and Rural Development: Transcending the Centralization Decentralization Debate. *Regional Development Dialogue*. 25(1). p.18-32.

MALEN, B. & OGAWA, R. T. (1988) "Professional-Patron Influence on Site-Based Governance Councils: A Confounding Case Study." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis.* 10(4). p. 251-270.

MALEN, B., OGAWA, R. & KRANZ, J. (1990) *What do we know about site based management: A case study of the literature - a call for research*. In CLUN, W. & WHITE, J. (eds.) *Choice and Control in American Education.* London: Falmer Press.

WITTE, J. (eds.) *Choice and Control in American Education*. London: Falmer Press.

MALEN, B., OGAWA, R. T. & KRANZ, J. (1990) "Site-Based Management: Unfulfilled Promises." *The School Administrator.* 47(2). p. 53-56.

MANOR, J. (1999) *The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization.* Washington, DC: The World Bank.

MANOR, J. (1983) *Transfer and Transformation: Political Institutions in the New Commonwealth* (ed. with LYON, P.), Leicester and Salem, New Hampshire, Leicester University Press.

MAXWELL, J. A. (1992) *Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research.*

MCCULLOCH, N. & MALESKY, E. (2011) *Does Local Governance Enhance District Growth in Indonesia*. 2011IDS.

MCCULLOCH, G. (2004) *Documentary Research: In Education History and Social Sciences*. Routledge.

MCDOWELL, D. (1980) The Impact of the National Policy on Education on Indigenous Education in Nigeria. *International Review of Education.* 26(1). p. 49-63.

MCEWAN, P. J., URQUIOLA, M. & VEGAS, E. (2008) School choice, stratification, and information on school performance: Lessons from Chile. *Economic.* p. 1–42.

MCGINN, N. & STREET, S. (1986) "Educational decentralization: Weak state or strong state?". *Comparative Education Review.* 30(4). p. 471-490.

MCGINN, M. & WELSH, T. (1999) Decentralization of education: why, when, what and how.

MEISBURGER, T. (2012) *Strengthening Democracy in Bangladesh.* The Asia Foundation.

MERRIAM S. B. (2001) Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. 20(5). p. 405-416.

MERRIAM, S. B. (1998) *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher.

MIGDAL, J. S., ATUL, K. & VIVIENNE, S. (1994) *State Power and Social Forces : Domination and Transformation in the Third World*. London: Cambridge University Press.

MIGDAL, J. S., ATUL, K. & VIVIENNE, S. (1994) *State Power and Social Forces : Domination and Transformation in the Third World*. London: Cambridge University Press.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (2004) *Development of Education: National Report of Bangladesh.* Bangladesh Government Press.

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY & MASS EDUCATION (2011) *RNGPS Registration Ordinance.* Bangladesh; Government of Bangladesh.

MOE-UNICEF (2009) Situation assessment and analysis of children and Women in Bangladesh. UNICEF, Bangladesh.

MOOKHERJEE, D. (2001) *Combating the crisis in government accountability: A review of recent international experience.* Institute for Economic Development Working Paper. Boston, Mass.: Boston University.

MORGAN, I. (2000) Parent Participation in School Governance in Australia. Scottish School Board Association Conference Held in Glasgow. http://www.schoolboard-

MORGAN, K. (2007) 'The polycentric state: New spaces of empowerment and engagement?' *Regional Studies.* 41(9), p. 1237-1251.

MPKOSA, C. & NDARUHUTSE. S. (2008) *Managing Teachers: The centrality of teacher management to quality education. Lessons from developing countries,* CFBT and VSO Publication.

MUKUNDAN, M.V. (2003a) *Democratic Decentralization and Primary Education: A Comparison of Continuity and Change in Two Districts of Kerala (India).* Asia Pacific Education Review, 4 (1).

MUKUNDAN, M.V. (2003b) *The Control of Education: A Multilevel Analysis of Continuity and Change in Two Districts of Kerala, India.* PhD thesis, The University of Hong Kong.

MULKEEN, A. (2010) *Teachers in Anglophone Africa: Issues in Teacher Supply, Training, and Management.* World Bank: Washington, DC

MULKEEN, A. (2007) *Recruiting, Retaining, and Retraining Secondary School Teachers and Principals in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

MULLINS, D. R. (2004) *Accountability and Coordination in a Decentralized Context: Institutional, Fiscal and Governance Issues.* American University, Washington, D.C.

MURPHY, J. (1994) *Transformational change and the evolving role of the principal: Early empirical evidence.* In MURPHY, J. & LOUIS, K.S. (EDS) Reshaping the principalship: Insights from transformational reform efforts. Thousand Oaks, CA. Corwain Press, Inc.

MURPHY, J. (2005) *Connecting teacher leadership and school improvement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

MURPHY, J. & HALLINGER, P. (1992) The principal ship in the era of transformation. *Journal of Educational Administration.* 30 (3). p. 77-88

MUTIZWA-MANGIZA, N.D. (2006) Decentralization and District Development Planning in Zimbabwe. *Public Administration and Development.* 10(4). p. 423-435.

MUTTALIB, M.A. & KHAN, M.A. (1982) *Theory of Local Government* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

NAIDOO, J. & KHAN, F. (2006) *Implementing Educational Decentralization.* UNESCO.

NAIDOO, J. P. (2002) *Education decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa—espoused theories and theories in use*. Orlando, Florida: Paper presented at the 46th annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR EDUCATION AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (2007) *Elementary Education in India: Progress Towards UEE.* Flash Statistics. New Delhi: NUEPA.

NAVARRO, J.C. & GONZALEZ, P. (ed.) (2005) *Private Education and Public Policy in Latin America.* Washington, D.C: PREAL.

NOVELLI, M. (2013) *The new geopolitics of educational aid.* In: Majhanovich, Suzanne and Geo-JaJa, Macleans A (eds.) Economics, Aid and Education. Sense, Rotterdam, Netherlands, pp. 29-45. ISBN 9789462093652.

NOVELLI, M. (2009) *New perspectives: globalisation, education and violent conflict – in memory of Jackie Kirk.* Globalisation, Societies and Education, 7 (4). pp. 379-382. ISSN 1476-7724.

NOVELLI, M. & LOPES CARDOZO, M. T. A. (2008), '"Conflict, education and the global south: New critical directions"'. International Journal of Educational Development, 28, (4), 473–88.

OSTROM, E., L. (1993) *Institutional Incentives and Sustainable Development: Infrastructure Policies in Perspective.* Oxford: West View Press.

OYUGI, W. O. (2000) Decentralization for Good Governance and Development: The Unending Debate, *Regional Development Dialogue,* Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 3-21.

PADILLA, P. L. (1992) *Central-local government relationship.* Southeast Asia Studies Program. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

PARRY, T. R. (1997) Achieving the balance in decentralization: A case study of education decentralization in Chile. *World Development,* 25(2), 211–225.

PATRINOS, H. A. & ARIASINGAM, D. L. (1997) *Decentralization of Education: Demand-Side Financing*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

PATRINOS, H. A. & ARIASINGAM, D. L. (1997) *Decentralization of Education.*Washington: The World Bank D.C.

PLANK, D. N. & SYKES, G. (2003) *Choosing Choice: School Choice in International Perspective*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.
Poor. Washington. D.C: World Bank & Oxford University Press.

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS LLP (2007) *Independent Study into School Leadership.* Department for Education and Skills, Nottingham.

PRITCHETT, L. & PANDE, V. (2006) *Making primary education work for India's rural poor: A proposal for effective decentralization* (Paper No. 95). Social Development Papers, South Asia Series. Washington, DC: World Bank.

PRUD'HOMME, R. (1995) *The dangers of decentralization.* World Bank Research Observer. 10 (2). p. 201–220.

PRYOR, J. (2005) Can Community Participation Mobilize Social Capital for Improvement of Rural Schooling? *Compare.* 35 (2). p. 193-203.

RASOOL, N. & MORLEY, L. (2000) School Effectiveness and the Displacement of Equity Discourses in Education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education.* 3(3). p. 237-258.

RICHARDS, J., PLATT, J. & WEBER, H. (1985) *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. London: Longman.

ROBERTS K. M. (2005) Decentralization in Uganda: Prospects for Improved Service Delivery. *Africa Development.* 33(4). p. 83–95.

ROBINSON, M. (2007a) *Introduction: Decentralization Service Delivery? Evidence and Policy Implications*. IDS Bulletin. 38(1). p. 1-6.

ROBINSON, M. (2007b) *'Does Decentralization Improve Equity and Efficiency in Public Service Delivery Provision?',* IDS Bulletin. 38(1). Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, UK.

RONDINELLI, D. A.   (1981) "Government Decentralization in Comparative Perspective Theory and Practice in Developing Countries." *International Review of Administrative Sciences.* 47. p.133-45.

RONDINELLI, D. A. & NELLIS, J. R. (1986) Assessing Decentralization Policies in Developing Countries: The Case for Cautious Optimism. *Development Policy Review.* 4. p. 3-23.

RONDINELLI, D. A., MCCULLOUGH, J. S. & JOHNSON, D. R. W. (1989) "Analyzing Decentralization Policies in Developing Countries: A Political Economy Framework." *Development and Change.* 20. p.57-87.

RONDINELLI, D. A., NELLIS, J. R. & CHEEMA, G. S. (1983) *Decentralization in developing counties: A review of recent experiences* (World Bank Staff Working Paper 581). Washington, DC: World Bank.

RONDINELLI, D., MCCULLOUGH, J. & JOHNSON, R. (1989) Analyzing Decentralization Policies in Developing Countries : A Political Economy Framework. *Development and Change*. 20. p. 57-87.

RONDINELLI, D.A., NELLIS, J.R. & CHEEMA, G.S. (1984) *Decentralization in Developing Countries*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

ROSE, P. (2007) *Supporting Non-state Providers in Basic Education Service Delivery.* Create Pathways To Access Research Monograph.

ROSE, P. (2005) Privatization and Decentralization of Schooling in Malawi: Default or Design? *Compare.* 35(2). p. 153-165.

ROSE, P. (2006) *Education and Chronic Poverty.* London: DFID.

RUGH, A. & BOSSERT, H. (1998) *Involving communities: participation in the delivery of education programs.* Washington, DC: Creative Associates International.

SAMMONS, P., HILLMAN, J. & MORTIMER, P. (1995) *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A Review of School Effectiveness Research.* Office for Standard in Education and Institute of Education, London.

SAMOFF, J. (2001) *Scaling-up by Focusing Down: Creating Space to Expand Education Reform.* Paris: Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

SAYED, Y. (2005) Decentralization and the Construction of Inclusion Education Policy in South Africa. *Compare.* 35(2). p. 115-125.

SAYED, Y. (1997) 'Democratizing Education Governance in South Africa'. *Economic and Political Weekly.* 11(15). p. 722-731.

SAYED, Y. (1999) Discourses of the policy of educational decentralization in South Africa since 1994: An examination of the South African Schools Act. *Compare.* 29. p. 141-152.

SAYED, Y. (2002) Democratizing Education in a decentralized system: South African policy and practice. *Compare.* 32 (1). p. 35-46.

SAYED, Y. (2003) *Decentralization and Promotion of Education Equity: Incompatible Bedfellow.* Brighton, Institute of Development Studies.

SAYED, Y. (2008) *Education decentralization in South Africa: Equity and participation in the governance of schools.* Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009.

SAYED, Y. & CARRIM, N. (1977) Democracy, participation and equity in educational governance in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education.* 17(3). p. 91-100.

SAYED, Y. & SOUDIEN, C. (2005) Decentralization and the Construction of Inclusion Education Policy in South Africa. *Compare.* 35(2). p. 115-125.

SAYED, Y. SOUDIEN, C. & CARRIM, N. (2003) "Discourses of Exclusion and Inclusion in the South? Limits and Possibilities", In *Journal of Education and Change.* 14(3). p. 231-248.

SCHON, D (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* Jossey Bass.

SCHON, D. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* San Francisco; Jossey Bass.

SCHOSTAK (2006) *Interviewing and representation in qualitative research projects.* McGraw-Hill International, Berkshire, UK.

SCOTT, D. & USHER. R. (1999) *Researching education – data, methods and theory in educational enquiry.* London and New York: Cassell.

SHAH, A. & THOMPSON, T. (2004) *Implementing decentralized local governance: A treacherous road with potholes, detours, and road closures* (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3353). Washington, DC: World Bank.

SHANNON, G. S. & BYLSMA, P. (2007) *The nine characteristics of high-performing schools: A research-based resource for schools and districts to assist with improving student learning.* Olympia, WA: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

SHARMA, C. K. (2005) *When does decentralization deliver? The dilemma of design.* MPRA Paper (No. 250).

SIDDIQUI, K. (1994) *Local Government in South Asia: A Comparative Study*, University Press Limited.

SIDDIQUI, K. (2000) *Local Governance in Bangladesh: Leading Issues and Major Challenges.* University Press Limited.

SMITH, J. K. (1985) Quantitative versus qualitative research: An attempt to clarify the issue. *Education Researcher.* 12(3). p. 6-13.

SMITH, R. (2002) *The primary Head teacher's handbook: the essential guide for primary heads.* London: Kogan Page.

SOBHAN, R. (2002) *The evolving political economy of Bangladesh in the age of globalization.* BIDS Public Lecture.

SOBHAN, R. (2004) *"The Political Economy of Aid" In Revisiting Foreign Aid: A Review of Bangladesh's Development 2003.* Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and The University Press Limited (UPL).

SOUDIEN, C. & SAYED, Y. (2003) "Integrating South African Schools? Some Preliminary Findings." In *IDS Bulletin.* 34(1). p. 29-42.

SPROULL, L.S. & ZUBROW, D. (1981a) Performance information in school systems: Perspectives from organizational theory. *Educational Administration Quarterly.* 17(3). p. 61-79.

SPROULL, L.S. & ZUBROW, D. (1981b) *Standardized testing from the administrative perspective: State in the Third World.* Macmillan, London.

STAFF REPORTER (2014) 'Home Ministry asks Islamic Foundation for info on writers of madrasa textbooks' Dhaka. *Dhaka Tribune.*

STANLEY, L. & WISE, S. (1993) *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research,* London: Routledge.

STEIN, E. (eds.) (2006) *The politics of policies: Economic and social progress in Latin America, 2006 Report.* Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank; and Cambridge, MA: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University.

TAN, J., AGNES, S. & ALAIN, M. (2001) *Enhancing Human Development in the HIPC/PRSP Context: Progress in the Africa Region during 2000.* The World Bank.

TEMPLE, B. (1997) A marriage of convenience: Combining methods of research on advice giving for over-the-counter medication. *Health Care Analysis. 5.* p. 168-171.

TEMPLE, B. (1998) A fair trial? Judging quality in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology.* 1(3). p. 205-215.

TIKLY, L. & BARRETT, A. M. (2013) *'Education Quality and Social Justice in the Global South: Challenges for policy, practice and research'.* Routledge.

TIKLY, L. & BARRETT A. M. (2007) *Education Quality; Research priorities and approaches in the global era.* Bristol: University of Bristol.

TIKLY, L. & BARRETT A. M. (forthcoming) "*Social justice, Capabilities and the quality of education in low income countries.*" International Journal of Educational Development.(31).

TIKLY, L. & BARRETT, A. M. (forthcoming) "Social justice, Capabilities and the quality of education in low income countries." *International Journal of Educational Development.(31).*

TURNER, M. H. (1997) *Governance, Administration and Development: Making the State Work.* London: MacMillan.

DFID (2013) The Role of Decentralisation/Devolution in Improving Development Outcomes at the Local Level: Review of the Literature and Selected Cases. Local Development International LLC. Brooklyn, New York. USA.

UNDG (2010) *Achieving Universal Primary Education.* Theme paper for MDG 2.

UNDP (1990) *UNDP Human Development Report 1990.* New York: Oxford Press.

UNESCO (2006) *Basic Education Studies in Bangladesh 2004-2005.* University of Maryland.

UNESCO, (2005) *Decentralization in Education: National Policies and Practices,* Education Policies and Strategies 7, Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (2008) *EFA Global Monitoring Report.*

UNESCO (2009) *EFA Global Monitoring Report.*

UNICEF (2005) *State of the Word's Children 2005.*

UNICEF (2009) *Annual Report2009.*

UNTERHALTER, E., ROSS, J. & ALAM, M. (2003) A Fragile Dialogue? Research and Primary Education Policy Formation in Bangladesh, 1971-2001. *Compare.* 33(1). p 85-99.

van ZANTEN, A. (2006) Competition and facility operations School : Lessons of a European survey. *French Review of Education ,* VI. 156, 9-17.

VERGER, A., NOVELLI, M. & ALTINYELKEN, H.K. (2012) *Global Education Policy and International Development: New Agendas, Issues and Policies.* Continuum, London: 3-32.

VOLANSKY, A. (1999) *The dialectic between decentralization and centralization.* In Peled, E. (ed.) Ministry of Education Jubilee Publication. Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publications (in Hebrew).

VOLANSKY, A. (2003) *From Experiment to Educational Policy: The Transition to School-Based Management in Israeli Schools.* In Volansky, & A. and Friedman, I.A. (eds.) School-Based Management: An International Perspective (p. 217-232). Jerusalem: Ministry of Education,

VOLANSKY, A. & FRIEDMAN, I. A. (2003) *School-based management: An International Perspective*. Israel: Ministry of Education.

WADE, R. (1997) *"How Infrastructure Agencies Motivate Staff: Canal Irrigation in India and the Republic of Korea."* In Infrastructure Strategies in East Asia, Ashoka.

WALCOTT (1990) *Qualitative inquiry in research. The continuing debate.* Teachers College Press, New York.

WANZARE, Z. & DACOSTA, J. L. (2000) Supervision and Staff Development: Overview of the literature. *NASSP Bulletin.* 84(618). p.47-54 .

WARNER, M .E. (2001) "State Policy Under Devolution: Redistribution and Centralization." *National Tax Journal.* 4(3). p. 541-556.

WARREN C.A.B. (ed.) (2010) *Discovering qualitative methods: field research, interviews and analysis*. Oxford University Press, New York.

WARREN, M. R. (2005) Communities and schools: A new view of urban education reform. *Harvard Educational Review.* 75(2). p.133-173.

WARREN, M. R. (2010) *Community organizing for education reform.* In M.Orr & J. Rogers (eds.) Public engagement for public education. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

WARREN, M. R., HONG, S., RUBIN, C. H. & UY, P. S. (2009) *Beyond the bake sale: A community-based, relational approach to parent engagement in schools.* Teachers College Record, 111(9), 2209-2254. Washington DC: The World Bank.

WEILER, H. N. (1990) Decentralization in educational governance: An exercise in contradiction? In Granheim, M., Kogan, M. & Lundgren, M. (eds.) *Evaluation as policymaking: Introduction evaluation into a national decentralized educational system.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

WEINSTEIN, C. S. (1989) Teacher education students' preconceptions of teaching. Journal of Teacher Education. 39. p. 53-60.

WELSH, T. & MCGINN, N. (1998) *Decentralization of Education: What and How?* Paris: IIEP.

WERLIN, H. (1992) *Linking decentralization and centralization: A critique of the new development administration*. Paris: IIEP.

WEST-BURNHAM, J. (2009) *Developing outstanding leaders: professional life histories of outstanding head teachers.* National College of School Leadership, UK.

WHITACRE, P. (1997) *Education Decentralization in Africa as Viewed through the Literature and USAID Projects.* Washington DC: Academy for Educational Development, Inc. USAID/AFR/SD PN-ACA-366.

WIELER, H. N. (1990) Comparative perspective on educational decentralization: An exercise in contradiction? *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis.* 12(4). p.433-448.

WILLIAMS, J. D. (1993) "Reform in Educational Decision-making." *The Forum for Advancing Basic Education and Literacy.* 2(3). p. 5-7.

WILLIAMS, R.C. & BANK, A.(1984) Assessing instructional information systems in two districts: The search for impact. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis.* 6(3). p. 267-282.

WILLIAMS, V. (2003) *Innovative Concepts for Effective School Cultures: Earned Leadership and Elective Contributorship. School-Based Management an International Perspective.* State of Israel Ministry of Education.

WINKLER, D. & ALEC, G. (ed.) (2000) *Education Decentralization in Latin America: The Effects on the Quality of Schooling*, #59, LCSHD Paper Series, The World Bank.

WINKLER, D. (1989) *Decentralization in education: An economic perspective.* Washington, DC: The World Bank.

WINKLER, D. (2004) *Strengthening Accountability in Public Education (EQUIP2 Policy Brief).* Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

WINKLER, D. (2005) *Understanding Decentralization (EQUIP2 Policy Brief).* Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

WINKLER, D. (ed.) (1989) *Decentralization in Education: An Economic Perspective*. Population and Human Resources Department Paper. Washington, DC: World Bank.

WINKLER, D. & ROUNDS, T. (1996) "Education reform in Chile: municipal and private sector response to decentralization and school choice". *Economics of Education Review.* 15(4). p. 365-376.

WINKLER, D. & GERSHBERG, A. (2003) *Education decentralization in Africa: A review of recent policy and practice.* The World Bank.

WINTER, G. (2000) *A comparative discussion of the notion of validity in qualitative and quantitative research. The Qualitative Report.* 4 (3&4).

WISE, A.E., DARLING-HAMMOND, L. & BERRY B. (ed.) (1987) *Effective Teacher Selection: From Recruitment to Retention.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

WOLCOTT, H.F. (ed.) (1994) *Transforming Qualitative Data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

WOLCOTT, H.F. (ed.) (2001) *Writing up qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

WOLFF, L., NAVARRO, J.C. & GONZALEZ, P. (2005) *Private Education and Public Policy in Latin America.* Washington, D.C: PREAL.

WORLD BANK (1996) *Economic and Sector Work and Result on the Ground.* Operations Policy Department, Washington DC.

WORLD BANK (1999) *Education in Bangladesh: A Country Sector Review.*

WORLD BANK (1999) *Education in Bangladesh: A Country Sector Review*.

WORLD BANK (2000) Bangladesh Education Sector Review.

WORLD BANK (2003) *Annual Report 2003.* Washington DC.

WORLD BANK (2013) *Bangladesh Education Sector Review: Seeding Fertile Ground: Education That Works for Bangladesh.* Human Development Sector, South Asia Region.

YANAGIHARA, T. & SAMBOMMATSU, S. (1997) *East Asian Development Experience: Economic System Approach and its Applicability.* Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies.

YIN, R. K. & HEALD, K. A. (1975) Using the Case Survey Method to Analyze Policy Studies. *Administrative Science Quarterly.*20. p. 371–382.

YIN, R. K. (1981) "The Case Study Crisis: Some Answers," *Administrative Science Quarterly.* (26). p. 58-65.

YIN, R. K. (1981) "The Case Study as a Serious Research Strategy," *Knowledge.* 2. p. 97-114.

YIN, R. K. (1999) "Enhancing the Quality of Case Studies in Health Services Research," *Health Services Research.* 34(5). p. 1209-1224.

YIN, R. K. (2002) *Case Study Research, Design and Methods (3rd ed.).* Newbury Park, Sage Publications.

YIN, R. K. (ed.) (2009) *Case study research: Design and methods.* SAGE Publications.

YIN, R. K. & HEALD, K. A. (1975) "Using The Case Survey Method To Analyse Policy Studies," *Administrative Science Quarterly.* (20). p. 371-381.

ZAHARIA, P. & IRINA, B. (2009) Decentralization and Local Autonomy- Local Public Management Defining Principles. *Annales Universitatis Apuleusis Oeconomica.* 11(2).

ZEICHNER, K. & GORE, J. (1990) *Teacher Socialization.* In Houston, W. R. (ed.) *A handbook for Teacher Education*. McMillan.

ZEICHNER, K. (1988) *Understanding the character and quality of the academic and professional components of teacher education* (Research Rep. No. 88-1). East Lansing: Michigan State University, National Center for Research on Teacher Education.

ZIETLIN, A. (2011) *Is the Open Method of Coordination an Alternative to the Community Method*: In DEHOUSSE, R. (ed.) (2011) *The Community Method: Obstinate or Obsolete?* , Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 135-47.

Annexes

Topic Guidelines for the Administrators

This guideline was intended for: Senior education administrators within the Ministry, and Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) at the central, divisional, district and sub-district (upazila) levels for RNGPS and Senior Bangladesh Madrassa Education Board (BMEB) officials.

a) What is your idea and experience about education decentralization?
b) To what extent do you directly interact with school level operators? Describe your experience.
c) Mainly which education administrators are directly accountable to you? To whom are you directly accountable?
d) What is your understanding about the school level actors about their professional competency?
e) What is your perception about school level actors about their honesty and professional integrity?
f) To what extent according to your understanding the school level actors are able to perform independently under decentralized management arrangement?
g) To what extent are you accountable to the school level actors? Please explain.
h) To what extent are the school level actors accountable to you? Please explain.
i) Do you think that it is possible to carryout policy dialogue with the school level actors? If yes, why, if not why not?

Topic Guidelines for School Level Actors

This guideline was intended for: Head teachers, Teachers and SMC members of RNGPS and Madrassas.

1. Understanding of decentralization

a) How do you understand decentralization?
b) Please state your preference for the following decentralization types;
   i. Transfer of power from the central authority to the sub-units of administration under the jurisdiction of the center (to be further explained by bringing practical examples relevant to the experiences of the respondents).
   ii. Transfer of power from the central authority to the units of administration not directly under the remit of the center.
   iii. Transfer of power from the central authority to the autonomous sub-units of government not directly accountable to the center.

c) What are your opinions about the following policy statements related to decentralization:
d)
   i. The current primary education system ought to be further decentralized.
   ii. SMCs ought to be furthered empowered
   iii. The role of women needs to be further strengthened in the management of schools.
   iv. The role of communities ought to be further strengthened in the planning and management activity for school improvement.
   v. In order to facilitate funding primary education foundations ought to be established at upazila level for levying taxes.
   vi. The Prime responsibility of primary education ought to be under the state.
   vii. All school types within primary education system ought to come under control of the state.
   viii.

2. SMCs

a) How do you perceive the overall role of SMCs?
b) Did you receive any training/orientation concerning your role? If yes, to what extent the training/orientation has been useful?
c) To what extent you have a say in the selection of SMC members?

d) To what extent the parents and community members with representation in the SMCs are actively involved in the affairs of school?
e) To what extent the day to day affairs of SMCs are dictated by the administrators?
f) To what extent such day to day interventions help or hinder the functioning of SMCs?
g) To what extent have you been able to mobilize local resources for the welfare of the school?
h) To what extent you have been able to make school management accountable for the delivery of education?
i) To what extent are you willing and able to interact with community?

3. Provision of Training

a) What is your role in the entire training process? Please explain.
b) Is the training making positive contribution of teaching learning process? If yes, how? If not, why so?
c) Do you receive regular feedback on your actual application of training particularly in the classrooms?
d) Do you think that you have sufficient say in making training meaningful? If yes why or if not, then why?

4. M&E System

a) How does the central state authority deliver its monitoring inputs?
b) What kind of measures it has taken recently to strengthen the current monitoring system?
c) To what extent the monitoring inputs help teaching purposes or practices?
d) To what extent accountability of the various stakeholders are facilitated via monitoring process? Please explain.
e) In what ways the monitoring inputs help or hinder your day to day activities in the school?

5. Madrasssa-specific questions

a) What role BMAB plays in carrying out monitoring tasks?
b) What role the madrassa level actors play in implementing monitoring process?
c) What are the processes that help or hinder monitoring processes?