

**Head teachers' perceptions and practices of school
leadership in private secondary schools in Sirajganj district,
Bangladesh**

By

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Abstract

The goal of this exploratory research project is to gather data on head teachers' leadership perceptions and practices, so that educational researchers, government officials and head teachers themselves have a better understanding of leadership and management in Bangladeshi high schools. Such data is critical for gaining a better understanding of leadership in Bangladesh and for future head teacher development and school improvement.

Leaders can play a very important role in improving teaching and learning in schools. Many Western countries are interested in the power of leadership to generate and sustain school improvement. Bangladeshi schools strive to improve, to develop effective teaching and raise the achievement of students. Much depends on the vision and practices of the head teachers who lead the schools. This study explores the leadership concepts, styles, trends and current practices of the head teachers in four Bangladeshi private secondary schools both in rural and urban areas.

Findings of this study show that Bangladeshi school leaders have vision for school improvement. They lead their schools with managerial and democratic styles of leadership. They work for professional development inside the school with a view to improve the teaching and learning process. Students' achievement is their ultimate goal. They work under pressure with their skill of handling different kinds of adverse situation like bureaucratic complex, political influence, and shortage of human and physical resources.

The methodology of this research is qualitative and the methods used for data gathering were interviews and focus group discussions. Four schools from Sirajganj, a district which is approximately one hundred kilometres away from the capital city, provided the sample. Four head teachers participated in interviews and were invited to meet together to take part in a focus group discussion about their leadership practices.

Key words: Educational leadership, education in Bangladesh, Bangladesh head teachers.

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List of Acronyms

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AHT	Assistant Head Teacher
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau Educational Information and Statistics
BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BISE	Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DEO	District Education Office
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
HSTTI	Higher Secondary Teachers' Training Institute
HT	Head Teacher
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JSC	Junior School Certificate
NAEM	National Academy for Educational Management
NCTB	National Curriculum and Text Book Board
NTRCA	National Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPO	Monthly Payment Order
SMC	School Managing Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
TQI-SEP	Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project
TTC	Teachers' Training College
USEO	Upazila Secondary Education Office

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Chapter One

Introduction

This research examines the leadership of four secondary head teachers of Sirajganj district in Bangladesh. In Bangladeshi secondary schools, management rather than leadership prevails. In fact leadership is not a discussion topic in the education sector. Rather education authorities and head teachers in schools tend to focus on issues of class size, the physical facilities and teacher supply. In my role as a teacher educator, I hold the view that it is leadership rather than management which offers a way forward to be effective schools. My study includes case study data from four head teachers in order to gain greater insight to their practices, understandings and aspirations of school leadership. Such information, I believe, has the potential to improve understanding of leadership in Bangladeshi secondary schools, and shape future actions and policies, so as to better prepare head teachers for their roles.

My interest in the topic of head teacher (principal) leadership and professional learning development stems directly from my professional role as a tertiary lecturer at a government owned Teachers' Training College in Bangladesh. As part of that role I teach Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students in the college and also conduct training sessions for secondary school teachers, assistant head teachers and head teachers.

This study examines the leadership concepts, styles, trends and current practices of the head teachers in four Bangladeshi private secondary schools in both rural and urban areas. To the best of my knowledge, little research has been done on the leadership of secondary schools of Bangladesh. This study offered an opportunity to draw findings which may lead to a better understanding of the work of head teachers and lead to enhanced school leadership and further research in the future. This kind of research could have a positive impact on the development of the secondary education sector.

This is an exploratory study of secondary school headship in Bangladesh. As there is little literature on this topic available on-line or in journals (available in NZ), I located further literature on this issue when I was in Bangladesh for data gathering.

Research Questions

Research question: How do head teachers of secondary schools in the Sirajganj district of Bangladesh work as leaders of their schools?

Sub Questions:

1. What do the head teachers understand by educational leadership?
2. What are the goals and strategies of the head teachers and how do they envision these?
3. How do head teachers work with their School Managing Committee (SMC), assistant head teachers, teachers and with the authorities?
4. How do head teachers work with the students, parents and community?

It is important to know how the head teachers view leadership concepts, approaches, models, styles and activities, and how these perceptions influence their practice.

Head teachers work within education legislation, administration guidelines and constraints of government policy. It is important to know how they work with these guidelines and constraints to create and develop their leadership vision, goals, strategies and practices.

Schools are about people. The head teachers have to work effectively with their school managing committees, their assistant head teachers, their teachers and the students in order to achieve teaching that results in positive learning outcomes for students. Schools are not an isolated part of society. The head teachers need to be working with the members of the community so that schools can meet the expectations of the people, especially the parents of the students. Head teachers can build a bridge between the school and the community to work together for the betterment of the society.

Definition of Terms

Authors and practitioners currently use a variety educational and leadership terms that are interpreted in various ways. To clarify this research project, the following terms and interpretations are used consistently throughout the document.

Head teacher

Head teachers have responsibility for leading and managing schools. Internationally head teachers are referred to as principals. As ‘head teacher’ is the common term in Bangladesh that title is used in this research.

Assistant head teacher

Assistant head teachers assist the head teachers in their day to day work. They are the deputies of the head teachers.

Private schools

Private schools are those which are established by private funding and managed by a private authority. These schools are supervised by a local authority which is called the ‘School Managing Committee (SMC)’ in Bangladesh. Most of these schools receive the teachers’ salaries from the government.

Sirajganj district

Sirajganj is the name of an administrative district in Bangladesh. It is one of the 64 districts of the country. It is 110 kilometres from the capital city of the country.

Secondary teachers

Secondary school teachers in Bangladesh are generally graduates from a university. They are recruited by the school managing committees, according to the recruitment rules of the Ministry of Education of the government.

Student outcomes

Student outcomes refer to the achievement of secondary school students in their learning. It refers not only to examination results but also the overall learning of the students.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature that informs the study and practice of school leadership from an international perspective. The chapter begins by defining school leadership. Different styles of leadership, with a brief description of each, are then investigated in terms of contemporary educational research. Following this, the concepts of 'leadership' and 'management' are compared. Then the idea of distributed leadership is investigated. Finally the influence of parental involvement on school leadership and the way leadership can affect change and school improvement is discussed, with reference to current literature.

In search of school leadership

Teaching today is increasingly complex work, requiring the highest standards of professional practice for high performance (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Teaching is the core profession which can change society. Teachers are the builders of the knowledge society. Leaders of schools can change schools and society through their strong influence. Harris and Muijs (2005) state:

Leadership can be defined as providing vision, direction and support towards a different and preferred state - suggesting change. Thus, leadership, change and school improvement are closely related. It could be said that leaders are the change makers and don't necessarily need to reside at the top of the organisation (p. 15).

Development of leadership at all levels is one of the crucial elements of school improvement. In particular, schools must be led by principals who coordinate the day-to-day work to implement the mission of their organizations. Leaders must have vision to take the school to the position that all the stakeholders expect. Leaders should inspire the teachers to make the vision a success. Cammock (2001) says:

The world needs skilful leaders who can create powerful and positive visions of the future: leaders who can engage people in support of such visions and motivate them to enact those visions for the betterment of their organisations or societies. Leadership of this kind requires tremendous skill, skill that will always be in short supply (p. 28).

If traditions and beliefs surrounding leadership are considered, it is easy to understand that leadership is vital to the effectiveness of a school (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). School effectiveness is now usually defined in terms of student outcomes (Creese & Earley, 1999). School improvement research has shown that leadership is important in producing good student outcomes (Harris, 2002). Robinson (2004) notes the changing focus of educational leadership by tracing the development of educational leadership theory and research over recent decades, observing three significant overall shifts:

1. From generic to educational leadership - recognises that educational expertise and experience are important for the many aspects of educational leadership which are specific to schools and schooling;
2. From leadership style to leadership practice - focuses on identifying the leadership practices that make a difference to teaching and learning, enabling much improved professional learning and development for educational leaders; and
3. From a heroic to a distributed conception of leadership - recognises schools as complex organisations that need leadership capacity at all levels if they are to function effectively.

Robinson argues that these shifts have significant implications for both the research and practice of educational leadership. Overall, she views these changes as having the potential to deliver both research and leadership practice which make a positive difference to the quality of teaching and learning.

Styles of leadership

Much research has been conducted on leadership in education. Researchers have investigated various approaches to leadership practice. According to the review of Leithwood and his colleagues (Coleman & Earley, 2005) there are six broad categories or styles of leadership which represent the models of leadership in educational institutions:

- Instructional leadership
- Transformational leadership
- Moral leadership
- Participative leadership

- Managerial leadership
- Contingent leadership (p.14).

When the principal's focus is on the learning of students, this approach is called *instructional or pedagogical leadership*. It is also referred to as "*learning-centred leadership*", when the focus is on good teaching, effective learning and student achievement (Coleman & Earley, 2005). In this type of leadership the main concerns of the principals are likely to be the curriculum, teaching and learning processes and monitoring of students' learning. Teachers can improve their effectiveness through the guidance of the leaders.

Transformational leadership is an approach where leaders are able to inspire their teachers with a vision that energises them and encourages them to work together towards a common good (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). In such an approach, the leaders consider the importance of others rather than their personal needs. They inspire their followers by communicating the vision of the organisation. They encourage innovation and creativity of the staff (Coleman & Earley, 2005). These practices influence the way teachers do work for their schools. Transformational leaders are thought to employ four influence processes:

- Individualised consideration: giving personal attention to individual staff so that they feel uniquely valued.
- Intellectual stimulation: encouraging creativity and new ways of thinking about old issues.
- Inspirational motivation: communicating optimism and high expectations.
- Idealised influence: providing a vision and a sense of purpose that elicit trust and respect from followers (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009).

Moral leadership is an approach that is founded on the importance of values and morality. Values play an important part in constructing leaders' mindscapes and in determining their leadership practices (Sergiovanni, 1992). This kind of leadership aims for morally justified actions and democracy in schools. To develop democratic behaviour of students and teachers, democratic values are used in the classroom (Coleman & Earley, 2005).

Participative leadership is focused on democracy in schools and on the sharing of decision making within them (Coleman & Earley, 2005). Leadership is distributed among the teachers. This helps to create a co-operative atmosphere in the schools. Schools become more democratic through the practice of participative decision making and actions. Leadership requires participation from everyone so that all members are engaged in creating a meaning and acting on that meaning (Darth and Palus, 1994, as mentioned in Bennet, Crawford and Cartwright, 2003).

Managerial leadership is a formal approach that focuses on efficient achievement of goals. This approach to leadership may also be called *transactional, technical or organisational leadership*. This style of leadership is seen as bureaucratic and hierarchical (Coleman & Earley, 2005). Everything is done in a formal way and administrative actions are dominant in this style.

In Bangladesh a managerial style of leadership, that uses power and authority to compel others to do what they are asked to do (Kimmelman, 2010) is practiced in many schools. Head teachers keep themselves busy with administration and official issues rather than focussing on issues relating directly to teaching and learning. The difference between leadership and management is discussed in the following section.

Contingent leadership stresses the variation in response of leaders to various situations. Leaders aim at increasing capacity of the organisation to respond productively to demand for change needed for development (Coleman & Earley, 2005). It places importance on responding to various situations in the schools. Principals respond effectively to solve the problems according to the needs of the specific situation.

Each leadership style has its own characteristics. What might be the most appropriate approach depends on the school context. The environment in which leaders work obviously influences leadership. Leadership is contingent on context. Hallinger & Heck (1996) state that it is “virtually meaningless to study principal leadership without reference to the school context” (p.14). Principals should be context educated; as that understanding is very important and significant for effective leadership in schools.

The styles outlined above are practised, in whole or in part, by educational leaders according to their preferences, needs and contexts. To become successful leaders in schools it is important that head teachers understand these ideas and practices in relation to their school context.

Leadership and management

While leadership is the major focus of this study, it is acknowledged that much of a head teacher's day in Bangladesh is spent on administrative and managerial activities. In this dissertation, the term *management* is primarily used to refer to the 'nuts and bolts' planning, organising, and interpersonal relationships required by head teachers on a day-to-day basis. In comparison, *leadership* is considered to be a future and change-oriented process of vision building, networking, and improvement. As Dunford et al (2000) state: "Leadership is the ability to move the school forward, whilst management is concerned with the procedures necessary to keep the school running. Leadership is concerned with the long term and strategic, management with the immediate and short term" (p. 2).

Although different, leadership and management are two essential and complementary elements for the successful operation of a school (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Southworth, 1998; Day et al., 2000). Head teachers are not expected to be only effective managers who 'do things right' but they must be leaders who 'do the right thing'. Effective management and the ability to deal with the technical (Sergiovanni, 1984) or structural (Bolman & Deal, 1991) aspects of a school's operations is thus an essential, but not sufficient, element of effective school leadership. Head teachers need to be able to balance a demand for managerial efficiency with educative and democratic leadership (Thew, 2002).

Distributed leadership

Leadership can have a powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the outcomes of the students. As Harris (2004) states,

Contemporary educational reform places a great premium upon the relationship between leadership and school improvement. International research evidence has consistently reinforced the importance of leadership in securing and sustaining improvement (p.13).

Various leadership styles are practised by educational leaders to improve their schools, but currently, distributed leadership is in vogue (Harris, 2004). 'Distributed leadership' has become a catchword for organisations in both commercial and educational contexts in the last few years and currently it receives much attention from researchers around the globe. The nature of distributed leadership is influenced by the context of a particular school. In a distributed leadership approach teachers share the responsibilities, in order to fulfil the schools' goals. A distributed model of leadership focuses on the

interactions rather than the actions (Harris, 2008). Teachers work with head teachers, without a positional appointment for the tasks, because they are highly motivated to do so and have a feeling of personal responsibility (Barrett, 1998 as cited in Storey, 2004). For school improvement and achievement of student outcomes, distributed leadership seems to be a successful approach (Harris, 2008).

Distributed leadership emphasises the sharing of decision-making among the members of organisations. With this approach, not only leaders but also teachers and students build a participatory approach in their activities. It may be said that this style of leadership fits better with Western modes of thinking (Coleman & Earley, 2005), but it is also gaining increasing attention in developing education systems. The basic idea of distributed leadership is outlined by Yukl (2002):

An alternative perspective [to the heroic single leader], that is slowly gaining more adherents, is to define leadership as a shared process of enhancing the individual and collective capacity of people to accomplish their work effectively...instead of a heroic leader who can perform all essential leadership functions are distributed among different members of the team or organisation (p. 432).

Although a 'heroic' approach to leadership is a predominant style in many schools, many teachers do not like this style as they cannot participate in the activities and decision making needed to develop and improve their schools. In recent years, the individual-focused heroic approach to leadership has been challenged. Collaboration among colleagues in schools is increasingly valued as the way to work. Working in a team creates motivation among the members to work towards the same vision. In any organisation, expertise exists in different people. It is the responsibility of leaders to engage them where they are needed. Formal leaders try to determine the scope of work and show the capability of the teachers to achieve that within the schools. Distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation rather than seeking this only through formal leaders or their role (Harris, 2004).

The post-heroic model emphasises human relations-oriented features such as teamwork, participation, empowerment, risk-taking and little control over others. In this context, school leadership "does not command or control, but works together with others, constantly providing relevant information regarding plans and operations (Eicher, 2003 as cited in Oduro, 2006, p. 23).

Distribution is not just distributing leadership but is also putting more influence in the hands of the people who have expertise (NCSL, 2007). Careful distribution of responsibility among the members is crucial. The notion of distribution may be described as follows: “Leadership is “dispersed rather than concentrated” and does not necessarily give any particular individual or categories of persons the privilege of providing more leadership than others. Thus, the notion of distribution permeates all aspects of post heroic leadership techniques” (Oduro, 2006, p. 24).

Distributed leadership is a way of working together where all the members of the team respect each other at workplace and give opportunity to others to lead. Heroic leadership cannot satisfy the other members as it does not create scope for other members to work significantly. Distribution of leadership is not intended just to divide the workload but to motivate all the members of the staff to work together for a common goal or vision. It is also important to create opportunities for the people who have expertise. The leader must influence the experts to work for the organisation.

Parental involvement and leadership

Parental involvement has immense importance for the overall success of schools. Children come from their families to learn in schools. Parents have expectations of their children regarding their achievement. According to Arthur, Beecher, Death, Docket & Farmer (2005):

Children’s learning is situated in the social and cultural contexts of their families and communities. As children observe family and community members, participate in daily events and engage in collaborative experiences, they are learning about the processes, concepts and practices that are valued within their community. Family and community experiences include everyday activities such as shopping, going to the movies, or attending the church or mosque (p. 37).

Parents can have an active role in the activities related to their children’s education. To enhance the capability of students, parents need to have close relationships with schools. Parental involvement includes interactions between the teachers, students and parents about the day to day activities in their school. Parents need to speak to the teachers and head teachers about the advancement of their children’s education.

A school learning community should be created in which parent-teacher sharing would be enhanced. The home, school and community connection can help make learning more meaningful for students. Making such connections is a part of good pedagogy. Pedagogical leadership is needed that is committed to creating connections between schools and family (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). Where the gap between the educational cultures of home and school is wide, careful planning is needed by the head teacher to bridge this.

Leadership and Change

Educational institutions need effective leadership in order to implement positive and desirable changes. Policy makers all over the world are now determined to enhance the capacity of educational institutions for sustainable growth of knowledge and skill. To achieve this, educational leaders can play a vital role. Harris and Muijs (2005) explain:

In England and many other western countries, there has been a renewed interest in the power of leadership to generate and sustain school improvement. A premium has been placed upon the potential of school leadership to contribute to school improvement and to create the conditions in which the best teaching and learning can occur (p. 4).

Educational reforms can reshape the education systems to attain long term targets, but educational reforms are not easy to put in place. It takes a long time to bring changes in management administration, curriculum development, qualifications and assessment. Effective leadership in schools helps enable implementation of educational reforms.

Reform is necessary in order to have sustainable education systems. Fullan (2009) has suggested system reform which has six components:

1. Direction and sector engagement
2. Capacity building linked to results
3. Development of leaders at all levels
4. Manage the distracters
5. Continuous inquiry regarding results
6. Two way communication

First, direction and sector engagement involves direction from the top combined with partnership within the field (schools and district offices). It is neither top-down nor bottom-up, but rather a blended strategy. It involves an overall vision, a small number of ambitious and publicly stated goals, a guiding coalition (a leadership team at the top who work together), investment of resources, and a sense of flexibility with the field (schools and districts).

Second, instead of leading by insisting on accountability or compliance, which is currently commonplace in Bangladesh, capacity building is at the heart of the strategies. This component consists of actions that mobilize capacity, defined as new knowledge, skills and competencies.

Third, it is very important to develop leaders at all levels, for example, school leaders, district staff, and state or province department staff. All aspects of the work require strong leadership to support and propel the system.

Fourth, it is important to manage the distractions. In complex political systems, distractions are inevitable. Political pressure to recruit partisan candidates as teachers, budget allocation in favour of schools, and appointment of head teachers are all common problems in a developing country such as Bangladesh. Leaders need to face and resolve those issues with skill.

Fifth, it is important to engage in continuous evaluation and enquiry into effective practices, what can be learned from specific examples of school and district success, and how this can be spread across the system.

Finally, there should always be two-way communication between the government and the schools and district offices. This serves simultaneously to communicate the vision, to detect and respond to problems, and to mark and celebrate success.

Fullan's criteria for school reform are an ideal to which Bangladesh could aspire; however, it is a long way from current practice of school leadership. The Ministry of Education and the schools need to have a common longterm vision in order for leaders to make positive changes in education. Thoughtful investment of resources by the government and flexibility at the field level can facilitate the change process. Knowledge, skills and competencies should be the main area of concentration for accountability in educational administration. Developing leaders for the future is also very important. Leaders can learn from the current implementation process which may help them to avoid the same problems in future. It is also important to have a process of continuous evaluation to identify best practice

and to implement this in the future. Last but not the least is the necessity of effective communication between the school and the government. Effective communication would help establish a common vision for the organisation.

Leadership is a crucial component of school improvement. One style of leadership may not fit well in all contexts or for all situations. Transformational leadership, pedagogical leadership, distributed leadership, moral leadership, and managerial leadership all have a place, depending on the leader, situation and context. Effective leadership practices play an important role in school improvement and change. Although it would appear that a managerial approach to leadership is predominant in Bangladeshi secondary schools, there is little research to confirm this. The goal of this exploratory research project is to gather data on head teachers' leadership perceptions and practices, so that educational researchers, government officials and head teachers themselves have a better understanding of leadership and management in Bangladeshi high schools. Such data is critical for gaining a better understanding of leadership in Bangladesh and for future head teacher professional development and school improvement.

The literature discussed in this chapter shows that an important aspect of leadership is to provide vision, direction and support to improve schools. To effect positive changes school leaders need powerful and positive visions of the future. Leaders have different styles, which can be defined in terms of educational leadership theory. The literature also shows that leadership style and practice depends greatly on the national and local school context. It is evident that strong and effective school leadership can produce ongoing school improvement by providing direction, capacity building, teacher development, conflict management, action research and effective communication.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology, which includes a description of qualitative methodology, a brief description of the participants and setting in the study, methods for data gathering, the data analysis process, the style of presentation of findings and ethical issues involved in this study. Qualitative methodology was used for this study. Methods for collecting data were individual interviews and focus group discussion.

Qualitative Methodology

Bogdan & Biklen (1998) recognise qualitative research as an umbrella term which encompasses several research strategies that have the following characteristics:

- The data collected is descriptive and collected through sustained contact with people in their own settings.
- The research questions are framed to investigate complex phenomena and are concerned with understanding behaviour from the participants' perspectives.
- The researchers are often concerned with the process, such as how situations have developed rather than just the final outcome.
- Theories are developed constructively through an inductive analysis of data.

To investigate the perceptions and practices of leadership of head teachers in private secondary schools in Bangladesh, a qualitative research methodology is appropriate. In a qualitative study researchers proceed as if they know very little about the people. Although I have a general idea of how head teachers work, I put aside my previous assumptions as I gathered and analysed data for this study. I collected data through individual semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview with all four participants.

Qualitative research is descriptive and therefore suited to the current study because it has the potential to provide rich data which is context specific and allows the uniqueness of each head teacher's leadership to be captured (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). The main purpose

of qualitative research is to provide an in-depth narration and understanding of the human experience. It is about the day to day experience of what is happening (Lichtman, 2010).

This study is inductive, which is one of the important characteristics of qualitative methodology. There was no hypothesis to prove or disprove. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), “The process of data analysis is like a funnel: Things are open at the beginning and more directed and specific at the bottom” (p.11). I gathered and analysed the data, and formed conclusions through an inductive approach, rather than based on my previous perceptions.

Participants and setting

This research was conducted with head teachers in four secondary schools, selected from within an administrative district, Sirajganj. Two schools were from rural areas and two from urban areas. In Bangladesh there is a considerable difference between the quality of education in rural and urban schools. Most of the urban schools have qualified and trained teaching staff, good physical infrastructure, disciplined students and active involvement by parents. On the other hand, rural schools do not have sufficient skilled teaching staff, enough physical facilities or active parental involvement. Rural schools often have insufficient quality physical facilities, such as well equipped classrooms, toilet facilities, playgrounds and laboratories and so attract fewer prospective students. When they have enough money to spend on their children’s education parents like to migrate to the urban areas. In general, schools in the cities and towns are more vibrant than the rural schools. Therefore, in this study, it was important to collect data from both rural and urban areas to encompass these differences.

Below, is a brief description of the four participants in this study. To help ensure anonymity, pseudonyms have been used for the participants.

Rahim

Rahim is the head teacher of Sunflower Girls’ High School, an urban school with 550 students. He began his career as a high school teacher. In 1985 he joined his present school as assistant teacher. He was promoted to assistant head teacher at the end of 1993 in the same school. He was appointed as a head teacher of Sunflower High School in 2010. He has a

Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics. He used to teach mathematics, physics and chemistry in the school. He is 48 years old.

Hasan

Hasan is the head teacher of Bright Sun High School, a rural school with approximately 800 students. This school is a co-education school. Hasan began his teaching career in 1966 as an assistant teacher in another rural school. He worked as an assistant head teacher in the same school for twelve years. He was appointed as the head teacher of his present school in 1978. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education from a government Teachers' Training College. He used to teach English in the school. He is 66 years old.

Karim

Karim is the head teacher of New Sun Girls' High School, which is a rural school with 1500 students. He started his career as a teacher in 1980 in the same school. He has a Bachelor of Commerce, and also completed a Bachelor of Education from the Bangladesh Open University (1985-87). He was appointed as acting head teacher in this school in 1996 after the death of the last head teacher. In 1997 he was appointed as the head teacher. New Sun Girls' High School has 13 regular teachers and five casual teachers. The regular teachers receive their salary from the government while the casual teachers are paid from the school fund.

Shahid

Shahid is the head teacher of Milestone High School, an urban school with 600 students. It has 11 full time teachers. This is a very old school with tradition and historical background. Shahid is proud of his school for its name and fame in the area. Shahid started his career as a teacher 1973 in the same school. He has a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Education degree from government Teachers' Training College. He used to teach mathematics, chemistry and biology in the school. He received a promotion as assistant head teacher in 1997 and was appointed as a head teacher in 2004.

Context

The context of this study is Bangladesh. It is a developing country with a large population of 140.23 million. It has one of the largest education systems in the world. Most of the people live in rural areas. There are 18,756 private secondary schools all over the country. Secondary students range from Year Six to Year Ten (age 11 to 15). In Bangladesh the Ministry of Education is responsible for the overall management of the secondary education. The Ministry of Education has offices at the district level to implement its policies and the agenda of the government.

After completing five years of compulsory primary education (set by the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh) students go to secondary school. At this level of study students learn various subjects such as language, mathematics, science, social science, geography, arts and religion. The National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) formulates curriculum and publishes text books for secondary school students. After completing Year Ten students go to higher secondary school. There are some schools which have a higher secondary section.

Bangladeshi secondary students sit two public examinations, namely Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Secondary School Certificate (SSC). These examinations, which are administered by the country's central Ministry of Education, are very significant for students, parents and teachers. When enrolling at college and university, student merit is evaluated on the basis of these results. The reputation of secondary schools is also largely based on the results of these examinations. Therefore the head teachers want the best possible results for their students in these two examinations.

Bangladeshi private secondary schools are locally managed by a School Managing Committee. This committee consists of thirteen members.

Formation structure of the SMC:

Chairman	x1 (Selected by the other members)
Teacher representative	x2
Female teacher representative	x1 (Reserved for the female teachers)
Parents' representative	x4
Female parents' representative	x1 (Reserved for the female)
Founder member	x1

Donor member	x1
Patron of learning	x1 (Person interested in education)
Member Secretary (Ex-officio)	x1 (Head teacher)

Gaining access to head teachers

Before approaching the participants (in schools) I gained permission from the District Education Officer (DEO). I worked in the district level and sub-district level (Upazilla) to collect my data. In Upazilla level (part of a district), there are officers called Upazilla Secondary Education Officer (USEO) who are responsible for taking care of secondary schools at Upazilla level. I took written permission from the officers to interview the school head teacher (see appendix D). In Bangladesh, researchers are respected by teachers as well as by the community. I was therefore welcomed into the schools and was able to quickly build a rapport with the head teachers.

Methods

The term ‘data’ means the information researchers collect from the place they are studying. These form the basis for analysis. Data include the materials which are actively recorded by the person doing the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In my study I used semi-structured interviews, and a focus group discussion to gain my data.

Interview

Interviews are the most common form of data collection in qualitative research (Lichtman, 2010). Interviews are the most effective tool for my data collection process as my goal was to learn what my interviewees thought, believed and felt about school leadership and their roles as head teachers.

An in-depth interview using semi-structured interviewing techniques was used. Mutch (2005) defines the semi-structured interview as “an interview where a set of guiding questions is used but where the interview is open to changes along the way” (p. 225). She notes that qualitative interviews are usually semi-structured or unstructured and are conducted one-to-one in order to gain in-depth understanding from participant perspectives. Similarly, Kvale (1996) argues the aim of an interview is to gain open, nuanced descriptions

of different aspects of the subjects' life worlds; it is essential that the interviewer exhibits openness to new and unexpected phenomena rather than have pre-formulated questions and ready-made categories for analysis. The semi-structured interviews gave the interviewees the freedom focus on the dimensions they thought were important. I tried to keep the discussion on track so that the interview remained focused on the topic at hand (see Appendix G for interview questions).

I interviewed four head teachers from four different schools from a district of Bangladesh, at a time that suited them. The interviews were after the normal school day ends (4.00 p.m.), so as not to interrupt the usual work of the head teachers.

After a few days I conducted a focus group interview with the four head teachers. A focus group interview provides an opportunity for participants to interact with each other and share each other's thoughts. It is not necessary or expected that the group will reach consensus in their discussion (Lichtman, 2010). As interviewer, I raised the issues. The questions for focus group interview were related to, and developed from, the leadership perceptions and practices discussed in the individual interviews (see appendix H for focus group interview questions).

Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) explain, "by data analysis, we mean the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to enable you to come up with findings" (p.159). To analyse data I organized and broke it into manageable units, coded it, and then synthesized the material. Analysis and interpretation of data was an ongoing part of my data collection. A large amount of data was collected but I gradually narrowed this to what was relevant to the research questions. In qualitative research, it is not the numbers that make the data valid but rather the logical integration of data from different sources and different methods of analysis into a single, consistent interpretation (Bryan, 1984 as cited in Davidson & Tolich, 1999).

Through the process of data analysis I moved from raw data to meaningful concepts. Lichtman (2010) calls this the three Cs of analysis: from Coding to Categorizing to Concepts. According to Lichtman (2010) "coding conversation and text into meaningful chunks is a challenging task" (p. 197). Lichtman (2010) has broken down this process into six steps:

Step 1: Initial coding. Going from the responses to some central idea of the responses.

Step 2: Revisiting initial coding.

Step 3: Developing an initial list of categories or central ideas.

Step 4: Modifying your initial list based on additional rereading.

Step 5: Revisiting your categories and subcategories.

Step 6: Moving from categories to concepts (themes), (p.198).

When organising my codes into concepts, I focused on the data that was informative and directly related to my research questions. As my initial thoughts might have proved superficial or inappropriate, I reorganized, rewrote and rethought my categories several times before developing my final concepts or themes.

Trustworthiness

There has been extensive debate in regard to the extent to which the traditional canons of qualitative research – validity and reliability – apply to interpretive, qualitative research. As early as 1985, Lincoln and Guba (p. 288) advocated the use of “credibility”, “transferability”, “dependability” and “conformability” as alternatives for internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, respectively. No matter what terms are used, however, Lincoln & Guba (1999) emphasise that, “the basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an enquirer persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an enquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (p. 398). To establish the ‘trustworthiness’ of a study Lincoln & Guba (1999) suggest certain techniques should be followed. These techniques, as used in this study, can be summarised as follows:

- “Triangulation” was achieved through use of a variety of data gathering and analysis methods, thus enabling issues and understanding to be viewed from a variety of perspectives, and convergence, contradictions and irregularities established.
- Independent verification of the research process was gained from two supervisors and several colleagues.

- “Member checking” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was undertaken to gain participant views of the accuracy and credibility of the data, and resulting understandings;
- Rich description of the context, participants, and meanings is provided, to allow readers to make decisions regarding the credibility and transferability of findings.
- The thesis itself provides an audit trail that describes in detail how data were collected, how categories, and later concepts, were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the enquiry.

As Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, (2001) argue, “As researchers, we make political decisions, consciously or unconsciously, when deciding whom we want to ask to speak about what and when we figure out how to do the asking, observing, or measuring”. I was, therefore, very careful in making decisions regarding the research methodology and methods, so that I maximised the trustworthiness of the study.

Ethical issues

Researchers, particularly qualitative researchers, work with human beings so it is very important to maintain ethical considerations while conducting research. Qualitative researchers have the opportunity to do in-depth interviews with the participants. Lichtman (2010) describes the situation saying, “you know that much of qualitative research involves interactions with individuals. As a consequence of developing rapport with participants and getting them to trust you, you may find they open up to you in very personal ways. When this happens, you face an ethical challenge” (p. 52).

As a beginning researcher I assumed that I might face this type of challenge while conducting my study in Bangladeshi private high schools. Normally, in Bangladesh, head teachers are controlled by higher authorities. They feel insecure if they think their information may be made available to a higher authority. In this case I assured them that the information given in the interview or conversation would only be used for the purpose of research, and I would do all I could to ensure their anonymity.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998) there are two issues which dominate the official guidelines for ethics in research. These issues are:

1. Informants enter research projects voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and dangers and obligations that are involved.
2. Informants are not exposed to risks that are greater than the gains they might derive (p. 48).

As I undertook my qualitative research under the auspices of the College of Education, University of Canterbury, I complied with the rules and regulations of the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC). First I sought approval from the ERHEC for my research involving human participants, to ensure it complied with the guidelines provided. According to the ERHEC Principles and Guidelines (2009) there are five primary principles underlying the guidelines:

- Informed and voluntary consent
- Respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality
- Limitation of deception
- Minimisation of risk
- Obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi (p. 1)

I took account of these principles while doing my project. The final guideline, obligation under the Treaty of Waitangi, was not applicable for me because this research work was conducted in Bangladesh. I informed the participants about the nature of the research so that they could make an informed decision to participate. Participants were also made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that they could also withdraw the information they had provided earlier. Participants were not induced against their will to take part in the study. Privacy and confidentiality have been maintained and all the documents kept safely. (A copy of the letter to the participants is attached in the appendix E).

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of this study, in relation to the key themes developed from the data, which illustrate and explain four head teachers' perceptions and practices in regard to leadership in their schools. The main themes developed from the interviews are: concepts of leadership; styles of leadership; training for leadership; developing a vision for schools; the head teacher's relationships with: the assistant head teacher, the teachers, the students, the parents and community; the bureaucracy; and the School Managing Committee, and political influence in schools. The participants were also asked to speak about the dream they have for their schools. The research questions, ideas and opinions of the head teachers are organised into these themes.

Concept of leadership

When the head teachers were asked about their perceptions of leadership, all participants spoke of leadership involving working together with others to create a congenial atmosphere for education.

When asked about his understanding of leadership Shahid stated:

To me, leadership means to work with students, teachers, parents and managing committee members to go ahead for the development of school, for making the environment of the school good. I put emphasis on working together with the people who are related to the school.

Hasan thinks that leadership is a very important and complex issue for the school. To him leadership refers to the work of the head teacher, as he believes that success depends on the performance of the head teacher. As he explained:

A school is a social organisation by which education is spread over an area and betterment of the organisation depends on the head teacher. If the head teacher leads the school properly then the local people, government, and the nation can reach the target.

When asked about his understanding of leadership, Rahim also put importance on the performance of the head of the school. He made his point by saying:

If anyone asks about the standard of the school, the answer is 'as the head teacher'. Everything depends on the leadership quality of the head teacher. It depends on the head of the school, how he is operating, how everything will go ahead, how he controls his staff. Maximum depends on the head.

Karim explained that in order to lead well the main thing is to be connected with the community and to understand the problems of the people. As he said:

There are near about 1500 students and 20 staff members in my school. I have the parents of the students, and local leaders. I have to coordinate with all of them and meet their demands. I think one who is a good head teacher can do his job with skill. There may be many problems in front of me to run the school. Not only the problems of the students' learning, but also political problems, financial problems, coordination problems might need to be solved.

While the head teachers believed they were ultimately responsible for the success of the school, they felt it was important to work with the stakeholders of the school to achieve their goals. All head teachers expressed the view that a 'good school' means 'a good head of the school', but they also acknowledged that this involved working successfully with many other stakeholders.

Styles of leadership

When the head teachers discussed the style of leadership they use in their schools they stressed that they work together with the teachers of the school. They incorporate both managerial and a democratic styles of leadership. By 'democratic style' of leadership they mean that they work together with others, including discussing matters with the teachers before taking decisions. By leading their schools in a managerial style, they refer to valuing the effective management of activities in the school. Regarding the managerial style of leadership Shahid stated that:

Among different types of leadership like democratic, autocratic and managerial leadership, I give importance to managerial leadership because we can lead the institution perfectly by good management, - manage everything systematically.

Hasan believes that he is a democratic leader. He thinks that working together is a good approach for good governance. He said:

I never work alone. I work with others. I am the head teacher. There are many teachers under my supervision. I do not think that they are my subordinates. They are knowledgeable persons. I evaluate their knowledge and skill. I value their suggestions while making decision.

Rahim reported that he works with a combination of managerial and democratic styles of leadership. He explained his position by saying:

Basically I lead the school in a democratic way. But sometimes I follow the managerial process also. Generally I work together with the teachers. I also communicate and seek cooperation from the members of the school managing committee.

Karim is also a supporter of a democratic approach to leadership within the school administration and management. He does not like to work in an autocratic style. When asked about his style of leading the school, he said:

I do not agree with autocratic leadership at all. I do not like to work alone. I love to work with others. I discuss with the teachers, students, staff and the members of the SMC to lead the school. I work in both the democratic and managerial style.

Most of the head teachers from the four schools described their leadership style as a combination of democratic and managerial styles. While realising that the ultimate responsibility as school leader rests with them, they see the importance of discussing school matters with the teachers and other stakeholders before making decisions. They use a managerial style to ensure the school is run in a systematic way, and a democratic style because they see the need to work together with other stakeholders to achieve the schools goals.

Person to follow (guru)

The participants were asked whether they follow any leader or whether they have an influential person in their life, who has motivated their work as a school leader. Hasan answered that he was influenced by the head teacher from his student life in secondary school. He was also motivated by his father. He stated: “My father was a knowledgeable person. I was influenced by the words of my father regarding leadership”. Shahid had one head teacher in his school by who motivated him in regard to headship as he described:

I joined this school in 1973. At that time the head teacher was Mr. Ashraf. He was a good head teacher. He was a man of strict principles. He used to follow the managerial style in leading the school. He was a successful head of the school. I follow his style of leadership.

Two head teachers in this study were influenced by their previous head teachers. They followed their seniors to lead the school. In some cases family members also influenced them in their work as a leader.

Leadership Training

The head teachers were asked about their leadership training. Three of them have had leadership training from government organisations, for example, the Government Teachers' Training College (TTC). They attended a 21 day professional training course which was run by the Ministry of Education. However, one of them has not had any leadership training:

I have no specific leadership training, but I learnt about leadership when I did my B.Ed. degree from Teachers' Training College. I attended some co-curricular activities at the time of my study and got chance to lead the trainees.

Shahid could not remember about the leadership training he had. He states: "Sorry! I cannot remember about any leadership training. I will tell you later". Rahim had his training from Rajshahi Teachers' Training College. He said:

I attended an administrative training after I was appointed as a head teacher. It was a 21 day long training at the teachers' training college. I learnt many things about leading the school. I also learnt how we can make teaching and learning more successful. There were discussions about administrative matters. There was a session on 'gender' also. All of the topics regarding school operations were there. It was funded by the TQI-SEP project of the Ministry of Education.

Karim got his leadership training from several organisations. He explained:

I have had leadership training. To be a good head teacher I must have the training. Basically I got training on 'educational administration' at the time of my B.Ed. course at teachers' training college. I also got training from NAEM, TTC, DEO office and under different education project from government and non-government organisations.

Most of the school leaders received leadership training in their B.Ed. training course, which is one of the requirements to be appointed as a head teacher. Although their training

for the role of head teacher has been limited, they think that training is very important in order for head teachers to be effective and efficient.

Vision for school

The head teachers were asked about their dream or vision for their school. All of them said that they want to improve the school. They want to change their schools and upgrade the quality of education through academic and infrastructure development. Hasan described his dream as: “My target is to build a good school. I want to present a good school for the people of the area. I want to make my school as an ideal school of the area”.

When asked what he means by ‘ideal school’, he said:

I want my school to be a result oriented school. Every year we have several public examinations (JSC and SSC). I want good results from the students in these examinations. Besides academic result I want that students to be taught moral character. I want my students to develop as ideal people in their future lives. I think that education without morality is just a ‘paper certificate’. I want to make them ‘full fledged human beings’ in my school.

Rahim wants his school to be ‘number one’ in his area: “Head teachers have dreams for their schools. I have also a dream. My dream is to take my school to such a position that other schools of the town will follow it”.

Karim described his dream in this way:

My dream is to make this school one of the best schools in the district. Not only traditional bookish knowledge, I want my students to learn technology and culture. Present government has declared to build up the country as ‘Digital Bangladesh’. I wish for my students to be the ‘digital citizens’ of ‘digital Bangladesh’ in the future.

All the head teachers want the best academic results from their students. They desire intellectual and moral growth of their students. They also intend to provide technological education to the students. It seems that they have realised the necessity of information and communication technology (ICT) learning for the students. This goal is consistent with the current goal of the government of Bangladesh, who state in their election manifesto that they will build a ‘digital Bangladesh’.

Head teacher and assistant head teacher

The head teachers were asked how they work with the assistant head teachers. Three of the head teachers did not have an assistant at this time and these positions had been vacant for a long time. One head teacher, Rahim, had recently been promoted to head teacher from assistant head teacher. He has 16 years experience of assistantship but he had no assistant at the time of the interviews. The school managing committee had appointed a senior teacher to act as his deputy. He stated:

SMC has appointed a senior teacher by verbal order to act for the assistant head teacher. He does the duty which I delegate to him. As he is not a fully fledged head teacher he is not responsible for all the duties. He only does what I want him to do but he does not do anything from his own will.

After joining as the head teacher of the school Shahid also did not have a deputy. He said about the recruitment of his deputy:

I have tried several times to recruit an assistant head teacher for my school, but for unavoidable reasons I could not do it. One of the senior teachers, who is acting as my deputy at this moment, is not sincere enough to act. He has a 'damn care' (do not care for anybody) type behaviour.

Hasan thinks that like the head teacher, the assistant head teacher is also a leader of the school. After the head teacher he is the person responsible for care of the school. He helps the head teacher in many ways. Hasan described how his deputy helps:

I delegate some work to my deputy to help me. He prepares the class routines, maintain the stop gap (relief teacher) routine, preparing examination schedule and moderating question papers. He discuss with me before preparing these things. We work for each other by mutual cooperation. I honour him; I love him as a head teacher. If I do not honour him he would not work properly. It would be my loss if I do not get cooperation from my deputy.

Karim is also suffering from not having a deputy. For a long time he has not had an assistant head teacher for his school. The last assistant head teacher went to another school and since then the post has been vacant. He disclosed crucial information to why he was not able to recruit a new assistant head teacher. He said: "It has not been possible to recruit a new assistant head teacher because of conflict among the members of the SMC and divisions among the teachers".

Karim has found a way to let teachers work as assistants. He selects two or three teachers from the senior teachers to work with him as assistant head teachers. He has

discussions with the assistant head teachers and involves them in decision making. They help him in many ways like preparing class routines, managing the sessions of the absent teachers, and preparing question papers for examinations.

Head teacher and the teachers

All the head teachers were happy with their teaching staff. They believe that they work closely with their teachers. The head teachers were asked about the ways they work with their teachers. All the head teachers said that they supervise the teachers through observation of their teaching. Shahid states: “I do staff meeting once a week. I observe the classes of the teachers. I try to ensure whether they teach in modern methods of teaching. I advise them accordingly after the observations”.

Hasan works in a slightly different way from Shahid. He makes some time everyday to observe teachers’ classes. He takes confidential notes while observing the sessions. In the afternoon all the teachers meet together to discuss the teaching and learning activities of the day. He also meets with the teachers on the last day of the week (Thursday). Hasan explained about the meeting as:

We sit together for analysing our work of the week in the meeting. We discuss how we can improve our teaching. As a head teacher I never find faults with the teachers. I just advise them how they can improve more as classroom teachers. I think that I am not a master of all the subjects. I feel that they know more than me in some issues. I suggest them to read some article related to their professional development.

Hasan believes: “A real teacher should remain a student throughout his life. Therefore I want my teachers to study for their professional development”.

Rahim has taken some different initiatives to encourage the teachers with their professional development. He has declared prizes for the teachers for their good work. Teachers are entitled to take casual leave for 20 days a year. The teacher who takes the least casual leave in a year gets the prize. On the other hand the teacher who uses effective teaching materials in the classroom teaching gets the ‘best teaching award’ from the school authority. Furthermore a ‘best performing teacher’ award is given to a teacher each year whose performance is considered the best overall. He believes, “if we take these steps for the teachers they would be encouraged for better future performance and ultimately the students would be benefited from it”.

When Karim was asked about his working relationship with the teachers he reacted differently. He raised the issue of sincerity of the assistant teachers of the school. He expressed his concern:

I have to say there is a problem regarding the sincerity of the assistant teachers. This is an unfortunate matter. The teachers are getting salary at the rate of Tk.11,000/- per month. When I joined as an assistant teacher I used to draw a salary of Tk.130/- per month. The salary has been increased a lot. Those who are drawing Tk.11,000/- now are not doing their duties accordingly. They are much aware of their rights and benefits but not committed to doing their job properly.

Karim also said that when the head teacher tries to ensure accountability of the teachers it creates a psychological conflict with them. He also observes the classes and meets with the teachers twice a month to discuss the professional development works.

The head teachers in this study reported that they work as the team leader in their schools. They supervise the activities of the teachers in a friendly way. As the leaders of the schools they discuss matters with the teachers before making decisions. The head teachers expect a positive approach and commitment to the profession from the teachers. To ensure accountability, the leaders of the schools keep themselves involved in academic and administrative matters so that they can do the best for the school.

Head teachers and students

All the head teachers in this study said that they are friendly to the students. They believe that students are their first concern. Concerning his responsibility towards students as the head of the school, Shahid said:

We have assembly before going to the classes. I attend the assembly every day and speak something to the students in a big group. Besides I go to their classes and talk to them. I ask them if they have any demand, and complaints. I discuss with them for the possible solution. I advise them regarding their activities, dress up, behaviour.

He also expressed his confidence in his friendly relationship with the students:

I always behave well and friendly with the pupils. Both the boys and girls can talk to me frankly. Students share their problems with me which they cannot or would not like to share with other teachers at all. I try to solve those problems by discussing with the teaching staff.

Hasan said that he is very helpful to the students. He thinks that students are the heart of the school. He described how he takes care of students:

My students can tell me frankly about their problems. Suppose, a student is not able to pay his school fees and if he/she tells me that, I do contact with the parents and discuss how school authority can help them. If any student is misguided, I think that it is our duty to bring him back to the track. I believe that every student has potential inside them and it is our duty to find it out.

Rahim is also caring of the students. He thinks that he loves the students as a father loves his children. When asked how he takes care of the students, he stated:

I make some time to visit each class to talk to the students about their problems. I ask them whether they are enjoying the lectures of the teachers. If they tell me about any specific teacher problem I try to solve the issue as soon as possible.

Karim thinks that he has a spiritual relationship with his students. He expressed his belief as:

From class six to class ten I have a good spiritual relation with all the students. They all obey my words, listen attentively what I say. To the students, sometimes I am an administrator, sometimes their father, sometimes their friend.

All the head teachers were concerned about their students and take good care of them. The head teachers make some time to go to the students to know they are getting on at school. They think that students can speak frankly to them. They believe that they represent themselves in different roles in different situations – like a friend, a guardian, a guide or an administrator. The head teachers try their best to attend to the students' needs.

Head teachers and Bureaucracy

Bangladesh is a developing country with a population of 140 million. It has so many schools that the government is under huge pressure to finance and control them. To manage this number of schools the government has a wide network of offices all over the country. Private secondary schools are mostly financed from the government budget. Therefore government education offices have control over the schools. One issue explored in this research is the relationship between the education offices and school heads. The head teachers said that they follow the government instructions in the organisation of the school. Hasan explained the relationship between the two parties as:

Different government institutions are working to implement the 'government formula'. We execute their orders with honour. We try to work smoothly with them so that no 'deadlock' is created. If I do not maintain the chain of command my school will suffer. We want to do the government work in a regular manner. If we have any problem, we discuss them openly with the officer.

Hasan seems to be more technical and tactful with the government offices. He thinks that it is not possible to enjoy one hundred percent freedom in his work, as he has to comply with the government directions and orders. He explained clearly how he works with the government offices: "To me it is skilful work to maintain good liaison with the government offices. It is my duty to go ahead with the school by maintaining liaison with the education offices".

Karim said that the critical problem the head teachers face is how to work with the government offices. He said there is political pressure on him to implement their agenda. The ruling party have their influence on the government offices. He stated: "In this situation the head teacher cannot take his decision freely. He has to bow his head to the political pressure. The teachers feel distress at that time".

The head teachers express their concern over the official procedures of work. The education related offices issue letters to collect information from the school time to time. Most of the time the school authorities do not receive these in time and they are often given a very short time to submit the information. The education office creates pressure to receive the information back from the school. Karim explained:

Government education offices ask for information within a very short period of time. Even they give us one working day to submit a lot of data which is very hard for us. Another problem is that they write letters to us for the same information again and again although we have submitted that information earlier in both hard copy and soft copy. This practice must be stopped.

The head teachers accept the necessity of supervision by the government authorities, as the Ministry of Education pays the salary of the teachers, but sometimes they are disturbed by the authoritative behaviour of the government officers. The approach of the government authorities also limits the head teachers' freedom to make decisions regarding what they see as best for their schools.

Head teachers and the School Managing Committee

The School Managing Committee (SMC) is the highest authority in the school to make decisions on different issues related to the school. Each School Managing Committee consists of thirteen members. Shahid, a head teacher of an urban school, explained his experience of SMC as:

The chairman of the managing committee of my school is a government officer. He is very busy most of the time. When we want to meet him for our purpose he might be very busy. Sometimes we do not find him in good mood as he does much administrative works of the locality. Some officers are good; they help us in all regard. But we get some officers as the chairman of the managing committee who think themselves as a 'high level bureaucrat'. They underestimate us and do not like to cooperate fully with us. They try to avoid us. Sometimes they like to do the regular SMC meeting in their office; not in the school premises.

Most of the head teachers want the SMC members who represent the parents or local community to be educated, as they believe that if the members are not educated they cannot contribute fully in the area of education. The head teachers reported that in the rural areas illiterate people sometimes become members of the SMC and that they have difficulty understanding and deciding on matters related to school management. Hasan emphasized the issue as:

This is a very important issue. To advise the graduate head teachers the SMC members must be educated. Otherwise there are clashes between the head teacher and the members. This hampers the progress of the school. I think there should be a criterion of minimum educational qualifications for the members of the committee.

Hasan also thinks that in a democratic society anybody can be elected to a SMC position if they are popular with the people. However, he questions how an uneducated person can contribute fully to SMC if he/she does not understand what is happening inside the school. Rahim's experience with SMC is different from Hasan's. He had some positive experiences regarding the SMC. He thinks that the situation is not the same in all the schools. He stated:

In all the schools the situation is not the same. If the members are aware enough and have mutual respect then discussion among the members of the committee can solve all the issues. If the head teacher is skilled enough to run the school then SMC members will not poke their nose all the time.

Rahim, however, also thinks that it would be better if educated people were elected as the members of the committee. He also raised the issue of political influence on school management. According to Rahim:

In 75 percent of cases it has political influence to select members for the school managing committee. People who have liaison with the ruling party they lobby to be the member of the committee. This practice should be stopped.

The head teachers explained that there are two types of members in the SMC: government officers and political leaders. The government officers are from the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Administration. They are very busy with their work as local administrators, so they cannot make enough time to work for the schools. Moreover, they have a bureaucratic mindset which is not acceptable to the head teachers. Political leaders want to be the members of the SMC in order to have an authoritative role in the community. The process of selection or election should be fair so that those who can make a positive contribution to the school development have a chance to be elected.

Head teacher and political influence

The four head teachers shared their experience about the effect of political influence over their work in the school. At the focus group interview this issue was discussed widely. Karim was outspoken about political interference in his school. He described political interference as our 'national disease', but personally accepts that this is the current reality and as a head teacher he has to make the most of this situation. He said:

As long as we live in a country and we have political parties we have to face political pressure or political activities. We have to face these matters with our knowledge, wisdom, experience and tactics. A skilful head teacher has to face the difficulty and go ahead.

Karim also expressed his concern over political pressure and said with anxiety that this is our 'fate' as a developing nation. He thinks that a 'weak head teacher' bows his head easily to political influence. On the other hand a 'brave' head teacher runs into conflict if he questions the authorities. But a 'tactful' head teacher manages the situation tactfully and goes ahead with his target.

Rahim thinks that SMC is the place where political involvement takes place. He said:

It is important to keep the managing committee free from political involvement. Partisan people try to be the member of the committee in most cases. People from the ruling party are always interested to be the member of SMC. This is a bad practice. This should be stopped.

People who have political ambition try to be involved in the School Managing Committee to demonstrate their influence in society. Head teachers believe that the selection for members of the managing committee should be fair so that the best people are appointed and they can work smoothly as a team.

Parental involvement and the school

In the focus group discussion on parental involvement, it was clear that there is a gap between rural and urban schools regarding parental awareness. The head teachers agreed and explained that parental awareness and education is one of the reasons behind this difference. Rahim, a head teacher working in the urban area, said:

Parents of the urban areas are comparatively more aware than the rural areas. The students of the urban areas work in a congenial atmosphere. The SMC is consists of aware parents and leaders in the urban schools. Therefore we get good output from that.

He also added that in both the rural and urban areas there are some strong schools and some weak schools.

Hasan, who is a head teacher from a rural school, explained the advantage that being well educated gives urban parents. He said:

The parents of the urban schools are educated and they are enlightened. Undoubtedly their environment for education is enlightened. Their children are growing in a good atmosphere. So they are getting the opportunity to show their potential. I think this is the root cause of the difference.

The head teachers were asked how they could increase the level of awareness of the parents. Shahid said:

I think we can arrange meetings for the parents and teachers to encourage them in the care of their children. We can discuss with them about the ways by which their children can be benefited from their role as aware parents.

The focus group discussion data suggests that there is a significant difference between the schools of rural and urban areas, and that the education level of the urban parents is an

important factor in explaining this difference. The head teachers admitted that they often do not get useful and timely responses from the parents in the rural areas. They explained that it would be helpful for head teachers to meet with the parents to discuss issues related to the academic achievement and development of their children so that the parents could better understand the benefit of being involved in their children's education.

Recruitment of teachers

Recruitment of teachers was another important issue, which was spontaneously raised and discussed by the participants in the focus group interview. They raised this issue in relation to a number of questions and confessed that this is important to them as they struggle to lead the schools without sufficient well qualified teachers. Karim, who is a head teacher of a rural school, thinks that rural schools are not gaining the coveted academic results they would like for their students because of a lack of resources, including well qualified teachers. He is concerned about not having quality teachers in his school. He described the situation:

It has not been possible to keep the standard of education up in my school for lack of quality teachers. There are many teachers who are teaching in the school for fifteen or twenty years but they do not have enough skill to teach well.

He thinks that quality teachers are very important to increase the quality of education. He also expressed his happiness about the present government's initiative to recruit quality teachers. He said:

The present government has introduced the 'Teachers' Registration Examination' which is a very good initiative. It has built a way to get quality teachers. The graduates who want to be a school teacher he must pass this examination and get a registration certificate from the government which would be shown at the time of application for the job of a teacher.

All the head teachers spoke about the salary structure for the teachers. They think that the salary structure should be upgraded so that capable people are attracted to the teaching profession. Rahim said:

To upgrade the social dignity of teachers it is very important to increase the financial benefit of them. The present salary is not sufficient for school teachers to live their life. Teachers go for private teaching in their home or in the coaching centre to meet up the deficit of their income.

Karim expressed deep concerned about the recruitment of his deputy. The post of the assistant head teacher has been vacant for a long time. Internal conflict among teachers in the school was described as a barrier for recruiting a new assistant head teacher. He said:

For a long time there is no assistant head teacher in my school. We could not appoint new person in this position after the previous assistant head teacher joined another school. It was not possible to recruit for that position due to conflict among the members of the SMC and division among the teachers who want to be promoted to this position.

He also disclosed that a lack of staff is a great problem for his school, as the government staffing quotas do not meet the needs of his school. He mentioned:

I have only twelve teachers who are getting the monthly payment order (MPO). This number of teachers is not sufficient for a school of 1500 students. This is a big problem for us. I have already discussed the issue with the education officer, the minister and different offices. Besides the twelve regular teachers, we have seven contractual teachers who are being paid from the school fund. To ensure quality education government should increase the number of teachers according to the number of students.

The interviews showed recruitment of qualified teachers to be a very important issue for schools. Furthermore, clashes among SMC members and teachers can hamper the recruitment process. Schools with a large number of students are suffering from not having sufficient qualified teachers. As a result of this teacher shortage, the head teachers felt even more obliged to abide by the government rules and regulations, as the government pays the salaries of the teachers.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study explores how secondary school head teachers perceive the concept of leadership, how they work as leaders of the school community, how they manage their day-to-day activities, and how they work with teachers, students, parents and their School Managing Committees. In this chapter the results from the data gathering are discussed in relation to the research questions.

Concept and styles of leadership

Among many contemporary educators, there is a belief about the gap between theory and practice. Students, trainees, teachers and head teachers often say, “What you are teaching us here at the university is ok, but it is just theory. It won’t work in the real world” (Howley & Howley, 2007). Both theory and practice make a difference to the goals and daily life of a school leader. Head teachers lead their schools on the basis of their previous education and professional experience. Participants in this study were interviewed to gain a greater understanding of their theoretical knowledge and current practice as head teachers in their schools. By investigating their perceptions of leadership practices and styles, we can better understand their theoretical foundations and current practices.

The experienced head teachers in this study believe that leadership involves working together with all the stakeholders of the school to achieve common goals. Such goals include good academic achievement by the students, meeting the demands of the parents, and building good working relationships with the local education administration authority. The school culture is a big concern of the head teachers as they believe that without a positive school culture they cannot reach their goals. The head teachers reported practising both democratic and autocratic leadership styles in their schools. It is interesting to note that when asked specifically about other types of leadership, such as transformational, transactional, and contingent leadership, their responses did not coincide with the current definitions in the

educational leadership literature. Notman & Henry (2009) found a similar kind of response from the participants of a case study in New Zealand.

The participants in this study viewed the school as a social organisation and held that society demands good outputs from schools. To them, the head teacher is the main person who can lead the organisation to meet the demands of the local people, the government and the nation. One of them stated that 'a good school' means 'a good head teacher'. He places importance on the responsibilities of the head teacher. The position of the head teacher is very significant as he/she leads the organisation.

Bangladeshi school leaders try to be engaged with the wider society, in fact, the cultural context compels them to be involved with the community. The high level of community involvement by some head teachers can also be to the detriment of their work in the school. Sometimes they cross the boundary of their assigned duties. Sometimes they involve themselves with community activities to satisfy people's expectations. For example, Karim, who is a head teacher of a rural school, loves to work for the community. He thinks that he is not only the leader of the school but also the leader of the society. He leads a big school (considering the number of students) with a mindset of working for the people. He does much work for the community as well as his school duties. He goes to community meetings to resolve issues such as political clashes and land disputes among the villagers. As stated by Harris (2008) school leadership is culture-related, context-associated and context-specific. Bangladesh is an over populated country with many problems in the community. Educated people have an informal leadership role to help solve the local problems. The head teachers also play an important role in the community to keep harmony and establish a peaceful atmosphere in the society.

The head teachers in this study reported using a combination of managerial and democratic styles of leadership to lead their schools. They place importance on the effective management of the school activities. They do not have theoretical knowledge about the different styles of leadership, for example, transformational leadership, pedagogical leadership, contingent leadership, participative leadership and moral leadership. Their perspectives centre on managerial and democratic styles of leadership. By the term 'managerial leadership' they mean to manage everything properly, with timely action and attention to routine work, which seems to be transactional, technical and organisational leadership. Their practices also include elements of bureaucratic and hierarchical leadership styles. Coleman & Early, (2005) stated that this kind of institution puts emphasis on

structures and procedures. In managerial leadership the school leaders prefer to be engaged in activities more closely related to the 'technical core' of the schooling-instruction, curriculum, and evaluation (Duke, 1987). The participants in this study lead their schools in such a way as to ensure attendance of the students and teachers, promote classroom teaching that results in good public examination results, and foster rapport with the government.

While describing elements of managerial leadership, the participants also reported being democratic in how they lead their schools. They explained 'democratic style' as working with all the stakeholders to run the school and discussing matters with the teachers and the members of the school managing committee before making important decisions. Such a focus on the sharing of decision making indicates a 'participative' style of leadership (Coleman & Earley, 2005). They believe that schools are a place of 'mutual interest' for all the stakeholders, which is a positive sign for practising democracy in their work. Democratic practice makes the environment collaborative and leaders' receive support from the stakeholders, which is significant. It also creates an opportunity for the teachers to learn from the head teacher by sharing views among themselves. Participation of the stakeholders help to create a common vision for the school, which is very important.

One participant, Hasan, does not view his work as managerial. He described leading his school in a participative way. He likes to work with other stakeholders of the school. He said that he discusses issues with the teachers before making decisions. To him, teachers are knowledgeable people; they know many things which he may not know, and he wants to access that knowledge. In his school teachers' comments and suggestions are taken into consideration. He also encourages innovation and creativity among the teachers. This provides a kind of intellectual stimulation. Coleman & Earley (2005) identified intellectual stimulation as one of the four processes of 'transformational' leaders. Others have been identified as "idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individual consideration".

To the head teachers, the two words 'democratic' and 'autocratic' are very familiar. They know these terms and can use them to describe their style of work. Normally in a developing country such as Bangladesh, administration is popularly known as democratic or autocratic. When officers work with other people, discuss with colleagues, take suggestions from the seniors and juniors, they are called 'democratic'. On the other hand, those who do not like to work with others, do not discuss matters with colleagues, do not take suggestions from seniors and juniors are called 'autocratic' administrators. Bangladesh was a British colony in the nineteenth century and British administration of the times established the basic

style of administration. Current Bangladesh general administration is still driven by the old style of 'administration' and some schools have not yet moved beyond this.

Person to follow (guru)

When asked, the head teachers noted that they were influenced by a 'guru' (leader for learning), who motivated them to learn how to lead. The head teachers modelled themselves on their seniors and their predecessors. One of the head teachers was influenced by his father. He felt that his father was his 'guru' in learning leadership. Although his father was not a head teacher, he taught him the basics of leadership. Other head teachers were influenced by their predecessors. Shahid mentioned the name of a head teacher whom he respected and who had influenced his views of leadership. He mentioned that he liked the style of leadership of that head teacher, a moderate person, who was sometimes very strict and sometimes flexible. Two of the head teachers also said that they were influenced by the head teachers of their schools in their student life.

Training for School Leadership

It is now widely accepted that teachers and head teachers need pre-service, in-service and continuing professional development throughout their careers (Bush & Jackson, 2002). The head teachers in this study realise the importance of training for leadership. They received their leadership training from different sources. Bangladesh has a countrywide training network for the school leaders. The government provides some ongoing training for secondary teachers and head teachers. The head teachers in this study received their basic training from their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program from the Teachers' Training Colleges (TTCs). There are courses on 'educational administration and management' in this program. All of the head teachers have a B.Ed. degree as this is the basic requirement for teaching in Bangladesh. Hasan recalled his training experience at the time of doing B.Ed and stated that he learned many leadership techniques through arranging and attending different types of programmes in the TTC.

Although Teachers Training Colleges are the main source of leadership training, there are other government institutions such as the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), Higher Secondary Teachers' Training Institutes (HSTTIs) and District Education Offices (DEO) that arrange leadership training for the heads of the schools in Bangladesh. There are also some education projects run by the Ministry of Education, including the 'Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP)'. This project is for the development of the secondary level teachers and head teachers. The head teachers attend this 21 day training course in HSTTIs as residential trainees, which gives them some time to reflect, without interruption, on their job in the school. Although the head teachers receive different training from different organisations, there is a lack of coordination among the organisations. Moreover, there is no integrated curriculum policy for the training programmes.

In these training programmes the head teachers learn about different aspects of leadership, government education policy, how to teach well, supervision of the teachers and other administrative rules and regulations that apply to schools. The government concentrates on training, re-skilling and certification of the heads. The problem is that the training focuses mostly on management rather than leadership. The training organisations need to have a greater focus on visionary leadership, so that head teachers can develop long term goals of their schools, which would create scope for further improvement of their schools.

Training organisations in Bangladesh need to be more effective and need a greater awareness and understanding of current theory, research and best-practice in school leadership. Coleman and Earley (2005, p. 23) describe some common trends of training programs conducted in different countries:

- The acknowledgement that leadership is not confined to the principal of the school
- The development of more integration of leadership programmes across careers
- The use of many types of learning including virtual learning environments
- Development programs for teams
- Using experienced principals as trainers
- Recognising that schools are learning organisations
- The need for leadership centres

For the above trends to be taken into consideration in Bangladesh there would need to be a massive reform of head teacher training and development.

Vision for school

An essential requirement of leadership is vision (Duke, 1987). The term 'vision' has become prominent in the literature on leadership. The school leaders who took part in this study did not show a clear understanding of the term 'vision'. Duke (1987) describes a practical example of how school leaders respond to the questions about 'vision':

When asked, "What is your vision for this school – your long range goals and expectations?", more effective principals listed a variety of goals related to meeting the learning needs of all students, helping teachers adjust to changing school populations, raising test scores, and the like. Less-effective principals "usually responded with a long pause and then a non-specific statement, such as, 'We have a good school and a good faculty, and I want us to keep it that way'...In short, the less-effective principals had no vision for their schools; they focused on maintaining tranquillity in here and now" (p. 51).

There were similar responses from the head teachers in this study. They expressed few long term goals. They confined their expectations to 'a result oriented school'. School leaders should focus on the quality of education in a broad sense. If school leaders in Bangladesh are to provide quality education they need to focus on more than good academic achievement. They also need to consider a curriculum that develops in students a strong foundation of positive attitude towards life, good moral values and life skills. If the results of the public examination become the only criteria for 'best performance', students are unlikely to learn about the many other aspects of life which are very significant for them personally and for the future of Bangladeshi society.

Formulating a vision and communicating it to the stakeholders of the school provides a framework for making decisions (Farina & Kotch, 2008). The participants of this study want to have positive change in their schools. They have dreams for their schools, but, as described above, their thinking regarding the future of the school was mostly oriented to good results in public examinations. In Bangladesh people want good academic results from their children. All parents and head teachers want their school to be in the top position for public examination results. Moreover, the education authorities (MoE, BISE, and DEO) rank the secondary schools according to the results of the public examinations. There is competition among the head teachers to be in the top position. All the participants said that they want to be first in their district.

The participants also want to develop their schools as 'ideal schools' of the area. People from the local area want their children to be admitted to the best school. The head

teachers want to meet the expectations of the local people. Ideal schools are expected to have sufficient physical infrastructure, expert teaching staff and good discipline of the students.

Another goal of many educators is to develop information and communication technology (ICT) in schools. Karim said that he wants to produce ICT capable graduates in his school. In this age of digitalisation and globalisation, the government and head teachers, such as Karim, do not want their schools to fall behind the rest of the world. Karim put much importance in introducing ICT as a subject in his school. He sees ICT education as one of the most effective ways to produce an IT-educated generation for the future. The present government has declared it aims to build up the country as 'digital Bangladesh'. Similarly, Karim has a vision and long-term goal of producing students with digital knowledge and skills so that they can contribute to the nation and lead the nation to further development. He wants to develop information and communication technology in his school so that future generations in Bangladesh can play their part in a rapidly changing, global world.

Head teacher and Assistant Head Teacher

Assistant head teachers are the deputy leaders of the school. The head teachers work closely with the assistant head teachers. When the head teacher is absent, the assistant head teacher deputises as the acting head of the school. Therefore, it is very important to have an effective working relationship between these two people. Out of four head teachers interviewed, three of them did not have an assistant head teacher in their school at the time of this study. Although they did not have an assistant, they reported that an assistant head teacher is very important for the smooth operation of the school, because the assistant head teachers support the head teachers in doing the day to day work of the school. .

In Bangladesh senior teachers are usually promoted to the post of assistant head teacher within the school or sometimes they are recruited from outside the school. In Bangladeshi private secondary schools the head teachers generally delegate certain responsibilities to their deputies, such as preparing class timetables, examination timetables, examination papers and the management of relieving teachers. In some cases the head teachers do not have a good relationship with their assistant. Shahid said that his assistant does not co-operate with him whole heartedly and that this situation is not healthy for the school. To improve the school there should be a team spirit among the staff members. The

head teachers and assistant head teachers need to work closely together so that other members of the school can have confidence in them to work as a team.

In the hierarchy of the school administration, the assistant head teacher is the second person to lead the school. Therefore, becoming an assistant head teacher is a vital step for teachers who aspire to be head teachers. Karim and Shahid, two participants in this study, have been suffering from not having assistant head teachers in their schools. They said that there is competitiveness among the teachers to be the assistant head teachers of the school and that this sometimes creates an unhealthy situation as they lobby for the promotion. Sometimes the school managing committee does not play a fair role in appointing the deputy and this can result in further clashes. The timely appointment of assistant head teachers in the vacant post can inspire the senior teachers to work with confidence.

Head teachers and teachers

In Bangladeshi secondary schools the teachers report to the head teachers on their teaching responsibilities. Head teachers supervise them and advise them so that they can work competently. All the head teachers in this study said that they have a good professional relationship and good communication with their teachers. They meet the teachers formally at staff meetings, where they discuss ongoing programs, future planning and different types of activities for the students. The head teachers also try to find the solutions to problems by discussing them with their staff.

The head teachers help the teachers with their professional development. According to Mullen (2009), although the teachers are knowledgeable about content and curriculum innovations, they are not proficient in implementation of them. The school leaders help the teachers to implement the curriculum innovations. The head teachers in this study observe the classroom teaching of the teachers regularly and take notes about the teaching style and content knowledge of particular teachers. They discuss the issue individually with teachers at the break time. The head teachers, as experienced teachers, provide the teachers with suggestions and advise them how to teach in a satisfactory way. Generally, the teachers respect their seniors' advice on how to develop as more competent teachers. Slavin & Madden (cited in Harris and Chrispeels, 2006) found extensive classroom follow-up, coaching and group discussion effective for staff development. The head teachers in this study regularly observe the teaching learning process in the classroom; they arrange follow-

up meetings and group discussion to develop professional learning among the teachers. Leaders may undertake multiple roles, depending on their positions and expertise, and can ensure the learning of the teachers.

The head teachers (Rahim and Karim) arrange staff meetings every week to discuss the teachers' activities and performance in the last week and decide on new activities for the coming week. In addition, they arrange discussion meetings for the teachers once a month. Leaders who establish a dialogue with their community help to develop a clear understanding of individual strength that supports professional growth of all members (Farina & Kotch, 2008). Rahim selects a senior teacher a week, before the monthly meeting, and asks him or her to speak on an aspect of teaching, for example, participatory method, students' concentration, classroom discipline, or teaching techniques. The teachers and head teacher listen and give their personal opinion and there is an opportunity to ask questions of the speaker related to the topic of discussion. In this way they learn from each other within the school. Professional learning in this way continues throughout the year. This kind of activity develops the ability of the teachers to form professional relationships within the school. This is one of the conditions that facilitate and sustain effective teaching and learning as mentioned by Hopkins et al. (1997) as cited by Harris (2002).

In Bangladesh head teachers are given the responsibility of supervising classroom teaching by the Ministry of Education. The government implements different education projects throughout the year, including some specific teaching methods which should be practised in the classroom. The head teachers are advised by the MoE to supervise and report on the implementation of the new methods. In recent years a MoE project named 'Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP)' has been introduced to promote new ideas for classroom teaching. This project has introduced a new teaching technique where the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a lecturer in the classroom. The teachers in the secondary schools have started practising this technique, called 'participative approach of teaching and learning', in their classrooms. The head teachers in this study viewed this method positively and have supervised the implementation of this new approach to teaching in their schools. This has resulted in teachers using a variety of teaching methods to make the subject matter more understandable to the pupils. The use of a variety of teaching methods recognises the fact that pupils have different learning styles (Horne & Brown, 1997).

Hasan respects the relationship between the head teachers and teachers. To him, it is not possible for a head teacher to implement the ongoing development process for the school

without the cooperation of the teachers. He believes that teachers are knowledgeable people, who may have innovative ideas which would be beneficial to the school. The head teachers in this study all mention the importance of team work. To work in a team the head teachers and the teachers should have mutual respect and understanding. The team leaders need to communicate the common goals (building vision) to the other members of the team so that all of them can have a common feeling about their profession (NCSL, 2007). Sharing of ideas among the staff members is another way to have good relationship.

Teachers are encouraged to work with their full energy and enthusiasm. Rahim took some measures to keep the motivation of the teachers up by offering prizes for good performance in the schools. This works as 'reinforcement' for the teachers. Hattie (2003) found the need for a focus on encouraging excellent teachers in his study. There is a shortage of teachers in the private secondary schools in Bangladesh and every teacher has to take a large number of sessions every day. As it is very hard to manage classes of an absent teacher, the head teachers want their teachers to be present every working day. In this situation it is very important to keep teachers' motivation up so they can feel valued in the school.

The head teachers sometimes are not satisfied with the performance of the teachers. Karim, a head teacher of a girls' high school from a rural area, spoke about his dissatisfaction with the performance of the assistant teachers of his school. The teachers are not well qualified for teaching effectively and moreover they are not motivated enough to do their duties for the improvement of teaching capacity. Cammock (2001) identified the third element of leadership responsibility as a 'willingness to serve'. We live in a time when many of us are more aware of our rights than we are about our responsibilities. Karim stated that the teachers are not satisfied with their status and always complaining about their lower salary rates compared to other sectors. He criticized the attitude of the teachers. He compared this with the salary which he used to get many years ago. He acknowledges the difference in salary and thinks that the teachers should be satisfied with what they get and work competently for the school. Head teachers are concerned about the salary and benefits of the teachers and they suggest considering revision of teachers salaries and benefits.

The head teachers are aware of their duty to ensure accountability of the teachers. They are the authority to ensure teachers' presence in the workplace, their competence in teaching and their appropriate behaviour with the students. Head teachers face difficulties in ensuring the accountability of the teachers. Karim said that when he wants to establish proper discipline for the teachers that this creates psychological conflict with them. He also added

that teachers are aware of their rights, they want good salaries and benefits from the management of the schools but on the other hand they are unmotivated to do their duties effectively. From this critical situation it has been understood that some teachers do not have commitment towards their profession. To improve this situation the head teachers need to be more collaborative and build up a good relationship with the teachers. The school leaders can motivate the teachers by communicating the long term goals of the school. Teachers need a professional mindset to work in the school.

Head teachers and the students

All the head teachers in this study said that they have a very good relationship with their students. They believe that they are responsible for the betterment of the students. The students are their main concern. They argued that the students are the heart of a school. The head teachers reported regular contact with the students, such as speaking to them every morning at assembly. They try to inspire the students to do good work for their personal development and for society. Although head teachers are very busy in the school, they try to make time to go to classes to meet the students and listen to their problems. Harris (2002) found similar results in her research, where the head teachers generated a high level of commitment in others through their openness, honesty and the quality of their interpersonal relationships.

Hasan reported that he deals with matters relating to the students himself. Students can tell him of any problem regarding their study, personal or financial matters. Nearly 50 percent of the people of Bangladesh live below the poverty line and many students are not able to pay their educational expenses, including examination fees. The head teacher talks to the students in such cases and also contacts the guardians to discuss how he can solve the issue. Sometimes the head teacher manages funding from the 'school poor fund' and helps the poor students to continue their studies. Bangladeshi head teachers need to pay attention to social welfare matters such as this, which are beyond their main duties.

There are some misguided and unsuccessful students in every school. Some students are not attentive to their studies and are unsuccessful in the examinations. They need special care from the school to continue their studies. One of the head teachers, Hasan, never treats such students as failures. He thinks that every student has the potential to succeed and teachers need to find that potential. There are also a few students who are misguided by peers

and addicted to different kinds of drugs. These students need special attention from the teachers and head teacher. Hasan suggested that the head teachers can play an important role in bringing these students back to school by supporting teachers to look after such students. Head teachers are responsible for development of teachers' skills and knowledge to meet the needs of all students.

Head teachers and bureaucracy

Bangladeshi private secondary schools are controlled by the Ministry of Education. The government has a big network for financing and administering secondary schools. The MoE is the apex policy making institution of the government regarding administration and development of the secondary education sector. The MoE formulates policies and programs for the development of secondary education. It also formulates laws, rules and regulations for the management and administration of secondary education sector and its institutions for the country. There are several attached bodies responsible for the supervision and management of formal education in secondary schools. Bangladesh has not yet been able to move beyond the colonial system of administration which was inherited from the British, so most offices have a bureaucratic style of administration.

As the government is paying the salaries of the private secondary school teachers, it is necessary for them to monitor the activities of the schools. The head teachers are the main contact for the government officers to monitor the schools. The participants of this study accept the government authority for supervising their activities. Hasan stated that the head teachers try to maintain the 'chain of command'. If they do not maintain the chain of command they might 'suffer' by not getting cooperation from the government offices. They need to conform to government protocol to receive staff salaries and other benefits such as students' books and funding for new building. As a head teacher, Hasan believes he needs to maintain a good relationship with the education office at a local level.

The head teachers are aware of their duties and responsibilities towards the government. They know that it is a bureaucratic system and that to implement the policies of the government they have to comply with the rules and regulations. Hasan thinks that it is not possible to have one hundred percent freedom in his work as he has to comply with the government policies. He sees a need to be 'technical and tactful' with the government

officers. He reported that the school's work goes more smoothly if the principal does not argue with the government officers.

Political pressure from the local political parties is another critical problem that the head teachers face. Sometimes the local education office is compelled to make decisions under pressure from the partisan leaders of the ruling party. Local elected political leaders sometimes try to manipulate the decisions of the government officers which create dissatisfaction among the teachers and head teachers and local people.

Government education offices seek different types of information regarding secondary education from the schools. For example, Karim said that he had supplied the information related to the school year of establishment, total land, list of assets in both hard copy and soft copy, but the education office continued to ask for the same information. The head teachers would like to concentrate on the academic matters rather than on repetitive administrative matters. They feel disturbed when the education offices create extra work for them.

The head teachers in this study also reported that they are sometime disturbed by the authoritative behaviour of the bureaucrats. One of the participants explained that although some government officers underestimate the head teachers, not all the officers are the same. There are some officers who are more cooperative with them. In the context of Bangladesh it is very common for BCS officers to think of themselves as 'big officers'. They are concerned about their hierarchical dignity and do not exhibit 'friendly' behaviour to the people under their supervision.

Head teachers and the School Managing Committee

The SMC is responsible for making important decisions regarding the management and direction of the schools. It approves the financial plan of the schools, recruits the teachers, approves the leave of the teachers and helps the head teachers to solve critical problems. Head teachers are the secretaries of the managing committees, ex-officio.

Shahid is a head teacher of an urban school. His school is large and one of the oldest academic institutions in the locality. The chairman of the SMC of his school is the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the district. The Deputy Commissioner is the highest ranked officer of the district and is very busy with administrative matters. He is often not available to come to the school to chair the meetings of the SMC. Most of the time the meeting is held at his own

office, which is not a good thing for the school. The head teacher thinks that the meeting should be held in the school premise as it carries extra value for the stakeholders. He also suggested that high level government officers should not be the chairman of the committee. Moreover, the bureaucrats underestimate the head teachers. Shahid said that the bureaucrats think of themselves as very 'high level people' which creates a barrier for effective communication among the committee members.

Regulations regarding the chairman of the SMC have been changed by the present government. According to the new regulations the chairman should be elected from the people, not the bureaucrats, but they might be included in the committee as chairman in some special cases where government can depute them for a period.

Another issue raised by the head teachers is concern with the educational qualifications of the members of the SMC. There are five parent members to be elected from the parents of the students. If there are not more than five people interested in being members of the committee then there is not an election. They want educated people on the committee who are capable of understanding education related matters so that they can contribute to the school. In reality some of the members are elected (or selected) to the committee for some other reasons. Sometimes a member could be an illiterate person who could contribute to the school financially. A similar situation was found by researchers in Papua New Guinea (Cheng & Ming, 1995), where a person who was a member of the governing body was illiterate and also one of the major owners of the land on which the school stood.

Head teachers and political influence

Schools are social organisations and many people are associated with them. Political theorists do not see power, conflict, coalitions or bargaining as either a problem or a sign that something is amiss (Bennett, Crawford & Cartwright, 2003). In Bangladesh there is a shortage of resources, huge competition for jobs, title and prestige, therefore conflict is natural, inevitable and not necessarily bad. The school leaders use different strategies and tactics to maintain normalcy in the school. They sometimes act flexibly to make decisions so that unnecessary problems are not created, and sometimes they go to the elected political leaders to seek a solution for a critical problem that they are unable to solve. Karim, one of the participants of this study, emphasised the context of the school. As a school leader, he

realises that ‘political pressure’ or ‘political influence’ is a reality in Bangladesh and for this reason he does not see it as a ‘big problem’. He is confident about his capacity as a strong leader to overcome this situation. His view is that:

As long as we live in a country and we have political parties we have to face political pressure or political activities. We have to face these matters with our knowledge, wisdom, experience and tactics. A skilful head teacher has to face the difficulty and go ahead.

To overcome this situation Karim suggested being ‘tactful’ while working with the political figures of the community.

Parental involvement and the head teachers

A strong home-school connection leads to improved student achievement, but too often it has been seen that initiatives from the school have never been taken up by parents (Farina & Kotch, 2008). The participants of this study reported that parental involvement with the school is very important for achieving school improvement. There should be strong links between schools and parents. Parents should know what is going on in the school where their children are studying. They need to know the ongoing progress of the school curriculum. They need to know about the achievement of their children. The head teachers can also convey their vision and mission regarding the school to the parents which would make the environment more sustainable for improvement (Harris, Power & Goodall, 2009).

One of the participants uses modern technology such as mobile phones to communicate with the parents. He said that mobile phone technology has made communication easier. The school collects the mobile phone numbers of the parents of all students. The parents are requested to come to school by phone if the school thinks a visit is necessary. The head teacher thinks that use of the mobile phone is more effective than sending letters to the parents. This is consistent with findings in developed countries, where some schools have seen remarkable results from new technological approaches, such as mobile phone technology (Harris, Power & Goodall, 2009).

The head teachers in this study think that level of the awareness of the parents in the urban schools differs from that of rural schools. The principals reported that rural parents often do not feel interested or they do not think it is necessary to get in touch with the schools. As other researchers have found, involving parents in their children’s education is

very hard but it is crucial for the improvement of student achievement (Farina & Kotch, 2008).

The findings of this study suggest that parents in urban areas are comparatively more aware of their responsibilities regarding the school and their children's education. One reason given for greater participation by urban parents is that in general the parents in the urban area are better educated, and know that they have to keep in touch with the school to ensure a better future for their children. The head teachers reported that the urban parents are interested in coming to the school and talk to them about their children's progress.

When the participants of this study were asked about how they could increase the level of awareness of the parents from rural areas, they suggested arranging meetings of the parents with the head teachers and teachers on the school premises. In Bangladesh there are formal meetings with the parents called 'parents gathering'. In some schools this takes place every three months and in some every six months. The participants put emphasis on the frequency of the meetings and stated that parents need to collaborate with the teachers to improve the academic performance of the students.

It is difficult in the context of Bangladesh to change the attitudes of rural parents towards schools. Most of the people in the rural areas are very poor. They lead very busy lives to earn their livelihood and some people are too exhausted to be involved with the school. In this situation it is very hard to create a positive attitude towards schools. This situation can be changed if the head teachers spend time and are patient in directing and motivating parents (Cheung & Ming, 1995). Involving parents in decision making in the schools and forming parent-teacher organizations can help to increase the participation of the parents in school works.

Recruitment of teachers and the head teachers

Some of the participants raised the issue of the difficulty of recruiting teachers for their schools. The head teachers reported struggling to lead the school and gain good academic results without sufficient teachers.

The number of the teachers in the private secondary schools is fixed by the Ministry of Education, as it pays the salary of the teachers and other staff. The school authority applies to the MoE for permission to recruit new teachers. In most cases the government officers take

a long time to process the files. Sometimes the government stops issuing any permission for new recruitment because of not receiving enough funds from the Ministry of Finance. It is a major problem for the head teachers to run the school well with an acute shortage of teachers.

Karim discussed his own problem regarding teacher recruitment. His school has been suffering for a long time from not having the allocated number of teaching staff. There are only twelve teachers for fifteen hundred students in his school. There are several sections in each class to make space for the new students every year. His school is situated at the centre point of the Upazila (sub-district), therefore, there is a great demand from the local people to get their children admitted to the school. The school is also renowned for its good academic results in the public examination. The head teacher suggests that there should be separate staffing patterns (number of teaching staff) for the big, renowned and high-demand schools. The government should formulate special regulations so that these schools can recruit more teachers.

Also, as stated earlier, another very important issue raised by the participants is the difficulty of recruiting assistant head teachers for their schools. The post of assistant head teacher can be filled by promoting someone from the existing teachers or candidates can be recruited from outside. Both of these processes have problems. If the SMC wants to offer promotion from the senior teachers there is lobbying from the teachers which creates internal clashes amongst them. On the other hand, if the authority wants to recruit from fresh candidates there is lobbying and nepotism from different sections of the community, especially from the political parties. Political leaders from the locality want their own partisan candidates to be recruited for the post. In this situation the head teachers and the SMCs sometimes stop the process to avoid clashes and hassle. Sometimes conflicting parties go to court for a solution to this kind of problem. Then it takes a long time to come to a decision.

All four school leaders are concerned about the quality of education. They think that they could lead the school with more enthusiasm if they could ensure quality teachers for their schools. The quality of education of a school depends on the quality of the teaching staff. The quality of teachers can be ensured by recruiting qualified and experienced teachers. In Bangladeshi private schools there are some practical problems which hinder the recruitment quality teachers. The head teachers raised the issue of teachers' salary and benefits. They said that the present salary structure is not satisfactory. Teachers need to do extra jobs, such as private tuition, to earn their livelihood. Thornton (2006) found the economic position of teachers (including head teachers) has a de-motivating effect on them.

The head teachers said that it would not be possible to recruit capable teachers for secondary schools because the present salary structure does not attract graduates for this profession. Graduates are attracted to the jobs which ensure better salary and scope for promotion in the organisation. In Bangladesh, graduates go for the commercial jobs and regard the teaching profession as the last option. However, research shows that the talented graduates in the school improve the quality of education (Fullan, 2006). The school leaders want to upgrade the profession both in terms of professional status and salary. Evans (1999) found that good professional status and salary motivates teachers and makes them happier in their work. The participating head teachers suggested that if the government declared the job of the teachers as 'first class gazetted officer' and give them adequate salary then capable candidates would come to this profession.

The head teachers praised the government for their establishment of 'Non-government Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA)'. This office was established by the present government to ensure the capability of the candidates for teaching in the non-government high schools. This authority publishes a circular seeking candidate to apply to sit an examination to prove their ability to teach in the schools. Before establishing this authority any graduate could apply for teaching jobs, as there was no system of examining the quality of the education of the candidate. Since the establishment of this authority it has become possible to certify graduates who are educationally sound and capable of teaching in private secondary schools. However, this alone is not enough to ensure the quality of teachers. Schools need teachers who are committed to work for the development of education, who are interested in applying new techniques and curriculum innovation.

The recruitment of sufficient capable teachers is critical for the improvement of the quality of education in Bangladesh. The government should formulate fresh policies for the recruitment of teachers in private secondary schools and the teacher recruitment process should be handed over to the district level education office.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter begins by discussing the limitations of this study that need to be considered for future research. There are then concluding remarks on this thesis topic followed by the implications of this research in the context of Bangladesh secondary school leadership. It summarises the key themes that emerged from the study which impact on school leadership. The chapter concludes with five recommendations for school leadership in Bangladesh.

Limitations

As with all research, there were some limitations to this study. The first limitation of this study is the number of participants. As there were only four participants in this study the findings and conclusions cannot be generalised to all the head teachers in Bangladesh.

The second limitation is the time given to the individual interviews and focus group discussion. It is possible that more data could have been gathered if the interview time had been lengthened. At times it was also difficult for the interviewer to ensure that the participants focused on the questions at hand.

The third limitation is that the participants were very busy with their daily tasks and therefore may not have given the interview their full attention. During the interviews, two interviewees showed that they were still worried about their day-to-day school matters.

The fourth limitation for this study is that there is very little research literature relating to leadership of private secondary schools in Bangladesh. As a result, the majority of the literature referenced in this thesis is from other international sources.

The final limitation is the translation of the interview findings. The interviews were conducted in Bengali and translated into English for writing this thesis. It was often difficult to translate the Bengali words used by the participants regarding leadership into meaningful English.

Despite these limitations I believe the study has been generally successful and has provided me with the opportunity to consider my own practice in ways that I hope will ultimately benefit some head teachers and aspiring school leaders.

Conclusions

Perception of what leadership is, and what form it should take, vary from person to person, school to school, and country to country. The participants in this study, four head teachers in Bangladesh, said that they think that leadership is a critical element for school success, development and improvement. To them leadership means to manage the activities of the school efficiently, and to work effectively with teachers, students, parents, community leaders and education administration. They believe that a capable head teacher can contribute greatly to school improvement. To them a good head teacher equates to a good school. To them a good school means to have good results in internal (school) and public examinations. The head teachers in this study had a common long-term goal, which was to improve their position for the examination results, and be renowned as a high achieving school in the district. All of the head teachers focused much of their time and effort, and that of their teachers, on maximising student achievement.

The head teachers lead the schools using a mix of democratic and managerial leadership styles. Wherever possible they work together with the stakeholders of the school, such as teachers, students, parents, community leaders and government officers. They also strive to manage the school efficiently and effectively. They see the need to work with others in order to have a smoothly running school and to achieve the best possible results for their students' in the public examinations.

The practice of distributed leadership was not observed in the case studies to any extent. The head teachers do delegate some of their daily duties to assistant teachers and senior teachers to ease pressure on their own work loads, but these are not leadership elements in this task allocation.

A positive working relationship with others is critical. The head teachers work closely with teachers, students, parents, and members of the community who all look to them for leadership. In working with all the stakeholders of the school, the path is not always smooth as they have to negotiate differences of opinion and attitudes. Conflict in schools is a reality; leaders can keep the optimal level of conflict through the use of conflict management techniques. Employing problem-solving techniques to integrate interests of all parties can result in achieving mutually satisfying outcomes.

The assistant head teachers play an important role in working in a collaborative way with the head teachers. The relationship between head teachers and their assistant head teachers is significant. In Bangladeshi schools the hierarchical bureaucracy puts the head teacher at the top of the ladder. Sometimes there is conflict between the head teacher and second in command, which must be resolved for schools to function effectively.

Unfortunately there were no permanent assistant head teachers in the three of the four schools in this study. These vacant posts of deputy need to be filled as soon as possible to reduce pressure of work on the head teachers. Furthermore the relationship between the head teacher and the assistant head teacher needs to be collaborative and professional; otherwise it may hamper the smooth operation of school rather than support its development and improvement.

In Bangladesh the key task of teachers is to teach the prescribed curriculum. The head and assistant head teachers aim to support and work with the teachers so that they are motivated to work towards the common goals of the school. The head teachers direct, supervise and provide feedback to the teachers. Sometimes head teachers are disappointed by the activities of the teachers, noting that the teachers are not committed to their responsibilities. To motivate the teachers the leaders need to provide opportunities and training for 'teacher leadership' and professional development to enhance their teaching practice. The teachers need guidance in reflecting on their practice. The shortage of teachers in Bangladeshi schools is a major concern of head teachers. More teachers need to be appointed if new teaching methods are to be implemented and the needs of all students met based on teacher to students ratio.

Students are the main focus and concern of the schools. Everybody in the school works for the ultimate betterment of the students. The head teachers are in a position to motivate students, as students respect them as the leaders of the schools. All the participants of the study said that they have a friendly relationship with the students. They believe that their students have faith in them and that the students speak frankly with them about their problems. Head teachers communicate with the students in the daily assemblies, which take place in the school yard and they go to the classroom and talk to them. They look after the unsuccessful and weak students especially to help them overcome difficulties with their learning. Head teachers are aware of the examination results of the individual students, as it is important to the schools as well as to the parents and community.

This study shows that parental involvement is significant to support the head teachers in leading the schools to achieve their vision, including improving the results in examinations. The head teachers believe that the education of parents is essential for enhancing the learning and development of students. The head teachers want parents feel included in the schools and to communicate with the teachers so that they are informed about what is happening in the schools. Parents can contribute to the schooling of their children by attending meetings with teachers and providing feedback about their children. The results of this study suggest that parents from the urban areas are more aware of the value of parent involvement in education than those from the rural areas. In the urban areas people are comparatively more educated and therefore they are more aware of their role in educating their children. Enlightened parents can contribute to the education of their children by keeping themselves informed about the school, teachers, curriculum and their children's performance.

The School Managing Committees play a significant role in governing their schools. The head teachers are key members of these committees. They aim to take an effective role on the committee so that they can guide the ongoing development of the schools. The participants of this study often deal with difficult situations, which require them to negotiate a pathway through political and other conflicts between the members of the committee. One of the participants suggested that 'tactfulness' is a necessary skill for head teachers in these situations, As Bangladesh is a developing country he believes that it is normal to have political complications among the SMC members and that head teachers need to overcome this by applying wisdom and skill.

Bureaucracy is the overriding style of educational administration in Bangladesh. The head teachers face bureaucratic harassment in running their schools, as government-directed education administrators control the management of the schools. The educational decision making processes often take a long time, hindering the development and improvement of schools. Schools suffer from a shortage of capable teachers, insufficient physical infrastructure and lack of other resources such as furniture, teaching materials, and computers. Private schools depend mainly on government funding for their teacher salaries, development initiatives and professional development. Sometimes the government officials behave with the school leaders in such a way that they feel under-valued. Furthermore, government officials are sometimes made the chairperson of the SMC, which delays the decision making process even more, as they are very busy with other administrative jobs.

Implications of this study

This study explored the leadership perception and practices of the head teachers of four private schools in Bangladesh. The head teachers disclosed their ideas about leadership, their style of leading schools, activities in their schools, and their relationships with colleagues, students and community leaders.

At present there are very few published studies of educational leadership in Bangladesh. The current study of head teachers' perceptions and practices of leadership in four case study schools provides a valuable initial insight into the issues facing educational leaders in Bangladesh. Further studies in a wide range of schools are needed to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of school leadership issues and practices in Bangladesh. In order to improve educational leadership in Bangladesh, and ultimately enhance the learning and development of students, more research, and the discussion of such findings by researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders is needed.

Further research would help reveal issues related to head teachers' relationships with teachers, assistant head teachers, government officials and community leaders. It would also help the professionals understand the existing practice and initiate further development options.

The current study shows that while head teachers in Bangladesh have developed the skills to cope in a difficult situation on a day-to-day basis, they have a limited understanding of leadership concepts and recent leadership research. Furthermore, although there is some training for head teachers, only some head teachers receive this training, and the training that is available is not coordinated in a coherent way. Head teachers' leadership skill and expertise could be upgraded by providing a coordinated training program, based on current research and 'best practice'. Training organisations for teachers' training could use the findings of this study, and further studies, to formulate a new training curriculum for the head teachers. The success of such a program would also require ongoing study and professional development for those developing and delivering the program.

Recommendations

This study concludes with five recommendations:

First, head teachers need professional development throughout their careers. One way of achieving this would be for head teachers to form professional learning clusters in their

area. This would enable them to share their experiences with each other and support each other in learning about teaching innovations and applying them in their own schools. To enhance student learning and development head teachers need to have a broader vision of quality education. They need to consider how they could develop good citizens for the nation, who could lead their community and country in the future. They need to move beyond what appears to be their current sole focus of examination results and school rankings.

Second, newly appointed head teachers need professional development training so that they can develop a greater understanding of the latest developments in educational leadership and management. Newly recruited head teachers need to receive coordinated leadership training, from training organisations such as TTCs at the very beginning of their leadership journey. Head teachers then need ongoing professional development throughout their careers.

Third, research is needed in order to better understand the current practices, issues and training needs of head teachers in private secondary schools in Bangladesh. It is important to know the issues they face and the knowledge, understanding and skills they need so that a comprehensive, coordinated and effective leadership program can be developed for teachers throughout Bangladesh.

Fourth, further research is needed to investigate how political involvement affects the work of head teachers and the operation of their schools.

Finally, further research is needed to investigate the nature of home-school partnerships and how these can be used to enhance student achievement and development.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate how school leaders lead their school. The perspectives and practice of four head teachers were explored to understand their perception of leadership. Bangladeshi school leaders work under various adverse situations with their wisdom and professional skill to overcome the problems. They work under pressure in an environment where community is less involved with schools. School managing committee can help the head teachers to work effectively with the participation of the community people. There were some findings that would help aspiring school leaders to be cautious about making decisions in leading schools. Further research is recommended to explore other issues such as head teachers' training needs, parental involvement in the school, and political influence on school leadership.

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University of Canterbury (2009, July). *Educational research human ethics committee: principles and guidelines*, Christchurch: Author.

Appendices

Appendix A: Registration of thesis from College of Education

College of Education
Education Postgraduate Office
Tel: +64 3 366 7001 ext. 4877



24 January 2010

Sheikh Mohammad Ali
Masters of Education Research Student
School of Educational Studies and Human Development

Dear Sheikh

I am pleased to advise that the Dean of Education has approved the registration of your EDEM691 Research Proposal.

The registration date is: 17 January 2011.

Your topic for research is: How school leaders work in the private secondary schools of Sirajgang district, Bangladesh: Head teachers' perceptions and practices

Your supervisory team is:

Senior Supervisor – Dr. Barry Brooker
Co-Supervisor – Jan Daley

Please note that your progress report will be due 1 May 2011
A reminder will be sent to you before this date

The final submission date for your thesis is: 30 September 2011

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Everatt', written over a horizontal line.

Professor John Everatt
Masters Coordinator
College of Education

CC HOS ESHD, Dr. Barry Brooker

Appendix B: Ethical approval from Human Ethics Committee

Human Ethics Committee

Tel: +64 3 364 2241, Fax: +64 3 364 2856, Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz



Ref: 2010/86/ERHEC

18 February 2011

Sheikh Mohammad Ali
College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Sheikh Mohammad

Thank you for providing the revised documents in support of your application to the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. I am very pleased to inform you that your research proposal "How school leaders work in the private secondary schools of Sirajganj district, Bangladesh: head teachers' perceptions and practices" has been granted ethical approval.

Please note that should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

Yours sincerely


DP Nicola Surtees
Chair
Educational Research HEC

"Please note that Ethical Approval relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval or clearance by the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research."

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. www.canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix C: Letter from DSHE, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Shikha Bhaban, Dhaka-1000

The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC)
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

Subject: Permission for the Bangladeshi Teacher Educators studying for Master of Education at the University of Canterbury to conduct research on Bangladesh Education.

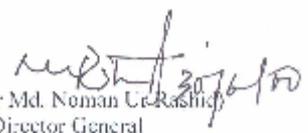
Dear Sir/Madam

The following 14 Bangladeshi Teacher Educators studying Master of Education at the University of Canterbury are hereby given permission to conduct research in the education sector of Bangladesh as a part of their Master of Education program.

Sl.No	Name and Designation
1	Mollez Mohammad Haroon- Ar-Rasheed, OSD (Lecturer, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2	Tania Afroon Khan, OSD (Lecturer, Guidance & Counseling), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
3	Niger Sulama, OSD (Lecturer, Bangla), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
4	Md. Arif Huj Kabir (Lecturer, Sociology), IER, Dhaka University (on Education Leave)
5	Mohammad Ali, OSD (Assistant Professor, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
6	Md. Anwarul Arafin Chowdhury, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
7	Md. Saliyet Alam, OSD (Assistant Professor, Physics), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
8	Nazma Purvin, OSD (Lecturer, Mental Hygiene), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
9	Muhammad Manbulur Rahman, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
10	Abu Nayeem Mohammad Shauddin (Lecturer, Educational Administration), IER, Dhaka University (on Education Leave)
11	Ranjit Poddar, OSD (Assistant Professor, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
12	Sanjay Kumar Mazumder, OSD (Lecturer, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
13	Mst. Shaila Bano, OSD (Lecturer, Physics), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
14	Shaikh Mohammad Ali, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh

It will be ensured that the researchers have their consent of participation before they start their research; guarantee confidentiality of data and individuals; avoid unnecessary deception; pose no risk to any participants; and their behaviour consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

If any complications arise at any stage of the research, the ERHEC is advised to contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email:nazrul@tqi-sep.org).


(Professor Md. Noman U. Rashid)
Director General

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Shikha Bhaban, Dhaka-1000

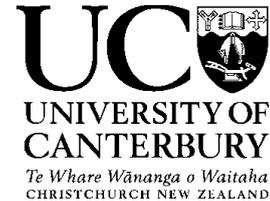
Appendix D: Letter to District Education Officer

Telephone: +64 3 364 2987 Ext. 4189(NZ), +8801730187534(BD)

Email: sheikh.ali@pg.canterbury.ac.nz, smakaiser@yahoo.com

Date:

Project: How school leaders work in the private secondary schools of Sirajganj district, Bangladesh:
Head teachers' perceptions and practices.



A letter of Information to the District Education Officer (DEO)

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Sheikh Mohammad Ali (Lecturer, Officer on Special Duty, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Bangladesh), currently studying Masters of Education, at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, undertaking the stated project as part of my Master of Education degree. I will be working under the supervision of Dr. Barry Brooker, Associate Dean and Jan Daley, Senior Lecturer, College of Education, University of Canterbury.

The aim of the project is to examine the leadership perceptions and practices of four private secondary school head teachers of Sirajganj district.

Head teachers will be provided with probable interview questions before hand so that they have time to think about the topic to give detailed information about the topic. I will hold a preliminary discussion with the head teachers so that I can clarify everything with them and answer questions, if they have any.

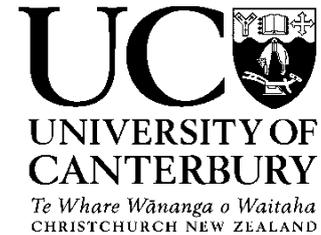
The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed. After I have transcribed the interviews, I will send them to the head teacher(s) so that they can check, add, delete, and give me feedback on accuracy. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms of the schools and the head teachers will be used in all reporting of the project. Above all, participation in the project is voluntary and any participant can withdraw at any time for any reason.

Therefore, I am seeking your approval to conduct the research in the selected schools. If you have any complaints about the research process, you may contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org); or the chair of the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC), University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

With kind regards

Sheikh Mohammad Ali

Appendix E: Letter to participants of the study



Telephone: +64 3 364 2987 Ext. 4189(NZ), +8801730187534(BD)

Email: sheikh.ali@pg.canterbury.ac.nz, smakaiser@yahoo.com

Date:

Project: How school leaders work in the private secondary schools of Sirajganj district, Bangladesh:
Head teachers' perceptions and practices.

A letter of Information to the participating head teachers

Dear Participant

I am Sheikh Mohammad Ali (Lecturer, Officer on Special Duty, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Bangladesh), currently studying Masters of Education, at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, undertaking the stated project as part of my Master of Education degree. I will be working under the supervision of Dr. Barry Brooker, Associate Dean and Jan Daley, Senior Lecturer, College of Education, University of Canterbury.

The aim of the project is to examine the leadership perceptions and practices of four private secondary school head teachers of Sirajganj district.

I will conduct a semi-structured interview for around 30-45 minutes and a focus group discussion for an hour.

You will be provided with probable interview questions before-hand so that you have time for thinking in order to give detailed information about the topic. I would like to hold a preliminary discussion session with you so that I can clarify everything in details and answer questions, if you have any.

I hope that the national and international leadership community will be benefited from your experiences. The interviews will be audio-taped so that I can listen to them several times in order to transcribe them correctly. Transcribed interviews will be provided to you so that you can check, add, delete, and give me feedback on accuracy.

In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms for you and the school will be used in all reporting of the project.

Participation in the project is voluntary and you may withdraw at any stage of the study.

If you have any complaints about the research process, you may contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org); or the Chair of the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC), University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

With kind regards

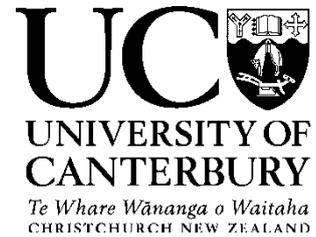
Sheikh Mohammad Ali

Appendix F: Consent form for participants

Telephone: +64 3 364 2987 Ext. 4189(NZ), +8801730187534(BD)

Email: sheikh.ali@pg.canterbury.ac.nz, smakaiser@yahoo.com

Date:



Project: How school leaders work in the private secondary schools of Sirajganj district, Bangladesh:
Head teachers' perceptions and practices.

Consent Form for Head Teachers

I have been given a full explanation of the project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions about it. I understand what will be required of me if I agree to take part in the project and I also know that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw myself at any stage of the research without any penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions I will provide, will be kept confidential to the researcher and to the people directly related to the study in a way that I will not be identified in any published and reported writing; and data collected for this study will be kept under lock and key in a secured place for five years after completion of the study. It will then be destroyed.

I understand that I will be sent a report on the findings of the study to my email/postal address given below. If I require further information, I can contact the researcher, Mr Sheikh Mohammad Ali, and if I have any complaints, I can contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email: nazrul@tqi-sep.org) or the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC).

By signing below, I agree to take part in this research project.

Name :

Date :

Signature :

Cell/ Phone Number :

Email/Postal Address :

Please return this completed consent form to ----- in the envelope provided by 15/01/2011.

Appendix G: Interview questions

Interview Questions for individual interview with the head teachers

1. What do you understand by 'leadership' in the context of your school?

Probing questions:

- What theoretical approaches do you draw on?
- Who has influenced your understanding of leadership?
- What style of leadership do you practise?
- What leadership training have you had?

2. What is your vision for your school?

Probing questions:

- What are the goals of your school?
- What improvements you would like to make?

3. What are the main leadership activities of your job?

Probing questions:

- How do you plan and prioritize your tasks?
- What kind of annual planning do you have for your school?

4. How do you work with the authorities? (Ministry of Education (MoE), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) District Education Officer (DEO) and Upazilla Education Officer (USEO).

Probing questions:

- How much freedom do you have as a head teacher?

- How do you implement directives from the authority?
- How do you deal with complaints?
- How do you deal with problems or conflicting opinion?

5. How do you work with your assistant head teacher?

Probing questions:

- How does your assistant head teacher assist you in your daily work?
- What kind of delegation of work load do you practise in the school?
- What kind of communication and consultation do you have with your assistant head teacher?

6. How do you work with your teachers?

Probing questions:

- What directives and guidelines do you provide for your teachers?
- How do you provide feedback to the teachers for their improvement?
- What do you do for the professional development of the teachers?

7. How do you work with your students?

Probing questions:

- What are your responsibilities to your students?
- How do you solve the issues related to the students' problems?
- What opportunities do you have to interact with students?

8. How do you work with the parents and school community?

Probing questions:

- How do you communicate with parents?
- How do you ensure the community's participation in the school?
- What kind of programs do you have to encourage parents to collaborate with the school?

Appendix H: Questions for Focus group interview

Questions for the focus group interview with the head teachers:

1. What are your thoughts and concerns regarding the gap between the rural and urban schools?
2. What are the reasons why rural parents do not get involved with their children's schools?
3. What do you suggest could improve the involvement of parents with schools in the rural areas?
4. What is typical of the relationships between the head teachers and the school managing committees?
5. What do you suggest could be done to attract capable and competent members to the school management committees?
6. What do you think is the impact of political manipulation in the schools?
7. What needs to happen so that teaching can be regarded as an attractive profession in the community?