

An Analysis of Classroom Culture of BRAC Schools

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining the classroom practices of two types of BRAC schools, i.e., schools of non-formal primary education (NFPE) and Chandina Learning Improvement project (CLIP). To achieve the goal both the types of schools were selected purposively, and two schools from each category were observed for a week. The study found that the NFPE schools were mostly based on large group activities, and the CLIP schools were based on small group activities. The small group methods have also been introduced recently in NFPE schools on certain aspects only. Although the small group method has largely been implicated successfully in the educational process in different countries, unfortunately, it was not fully successful in BRAC schools. On the other hand, the large group process in both the types of school was found more effective compared to the small group process. Besides some other drawbacks were also found in the classroom practices of both the types of schools. These were lack of adequate explanation of the lesson, pressure to recall word by word while retrieving knowledge, inadequate level of knowledge of the teachers, absence of the culture of asking question to the teacher, gap in materials, purpose of assignments are not being served and above all gender sensitivity has not developed in BRAC schools in the proper way. Finally, it can be said that introduction of any innovative teaching method can not bring fruitful result unless the facilitators and supervisors are not skilled enough for effective implications of the methods. Thus pedagogical skills of the teachers and supervision skills of the staff should be improved through the process of effective training, supervision and management.

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INTRODUCTION

Research on effective teaching in the past decade has indicated the importance of classroom conditions that depend directly on the ability of the teachers to organise and manage their classrooms (Anderson, Evertson and Brophy, 1979). Some of these conditions include the productive use of time (Fredrick and Walberg, 1980; Stattings, 1980), student attention or involvement in focused, goal-directed learning task, opportunities for corrective feedback and engagement in instructional tasks of appropriate difficulty (Borphy and Good, 1986; Fisher et al, 1980, Medley; 1977). Amongst all other crucial factors of classroom culture classroom organisation and classroom practice are the two most significant elements. Efficiency of the teachers also plays an important role in presenting an effective classroom culture. This study offers an approach to observe classroom culture of BRAC schools in the light of classroom organisation and practice.

Khan (1995) conducted a study titled *‘Village Schools in Bangladesh: Caught between Tradition and Change’* in which she demonstrated how classroom dynamics and teacher-student interaction make an impact on the kinds of knowledge, values and attitudes that were fostered in the students. She did a comparative study between government primary school and BRAC’s NFPE School. Her observations indicated that the classroom practices of government primary schools generated and reinforced traditional values and practices such as teacher-centred approaches, absence of pre-reading activities, verbal output without instructional matter but with disciplinary problem. She further observed that knowledge retrieval is done through formal examinations and by asking only factual and literal questions to the students. Formal schools also reinforces on values like- respect for elders while at the same time not teaching them to challenge authority when needed or raising question when needed and devaluation of female. NFPE approaches on the other hand, were more on bringing about changes in practices and in values- it emphasises more on child-centred approaches, pre-reading activities, yet teachers speech is more directed towards instructional purposes rather than explaining lessons,

knowledge retrieval is done through test of recalling literal and factual questions than comprehension and it also put stress on values like, dignity of labour, awareness of class differences, gender sensitivity, discourage asking questions and so forth.

This study will concentrate on BRAC on the classroom culture of BRAC schools only. So the structure of BRAC School should be introduced in this respect.

BRAC school models

NFPE

This study will observe both the classroom cultures of NFPE and CLIP schools. BRAC launched two models in its primary education programme. The model called NFPE (Non-Formal Primary Education) is a four-year course for the children aged 8-10 years old. The second year model called BEOC (Basic Education for Older Children) is a three-year course for the children aged 11-14 years old. For both the models preference is given to the children of disadvantaged and illiterate families. The children who never been enrolled in school or dropout from school. The numbers of learners in these schools are kept limited to 30-33; around 70% of them are girls. These are the single room schools and each school has one teacher. Most of the teachers of these schools are women. At present BRAC is operating more than 34,000 NFPE schools. NFPE programme approach is more children centred and follows less authoritarian classroom practices. The teacher's manual exhorts teachers to apply the following understanding in the class room that the children should be given the opportunity to improve there comprehension instead of putting emphasis on learning by heart.

CLIP

CLIP (Chandina learning improvement project) is a new experimental project of BRAC's NFPE programme, which was developed to improve the teaching method of NFPE schools. The project covers three teams namely Chandina, Barura, and Debidar. At this moment there are 100-second year and 62 third year schools under this project. As far as the students are

concerned, this programme is organised as a more child-centred, participatory education system in class-rooms; aims to create a suitable learning situation for them; to help both the children and the teachers to develop the skills of creative thinking; to help the children in their overall development. It is an innovative project. It has developed new methods, techniques and materials by keeping learners in mind as the focal point of the teaching-learning process.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study was to document the classroom culture of both NFPE and CLIP schools.

The specific objectives were to,

- a. Compare the classroom organisation of NFPE and CLIP schools (Small and large group activities)
- b. Follow up the classroom practices for example, method of explaining lessons, way of knowledge retrieval, practice of creative thinking, culture of asking questions to the teachers, knowledge level of the teachers, materials related issues, issues related to assignments and gender sensitivity.

Rational of the study

- i. This study will capture and document the efforts of each programme to disseminate primary education. In doing so, it is further hoped that this study would be able to evaluate the extent of execution of planned goals and their outcome.
- ii. Planners would get information on the changes they are creating in the culture of the learners through their education system.

Limitations of the study

Classroom culture is a wide issue, where lots of events happen. It is quite difficult to observe each and everything happening in a classroom. On the other hand each school was observed for a week, so if these schools were observed for more than a week there would be a possibility to

have some additional information and also to get a less artificial picture.

METHODOLOGY

This is a case study on NFPE and CLIP schools of BRAC. The methodology has been used in this study is participatory observation. Observation involves detailed description and analysis of an individual case (Becker, 1968). Case studies conducted by way of observation attempt to describe comprehensively and exhaustively phenomena in terms of a research problem (Danny L. Jorgensen, 1989). It is generally assumed that verbal content of interpersonal interactions is the most important issue. However it is important to recognise that a great deal of what is important to observe is unspoken. This particular aspect of observation method is very valuable for this study, because “ *there are some subtle behaviours that provide significant clues to what people are thinking and feeling... some of the most basic aspects of behaviour are readily observable and recordable.*”(Whyte, 1984). Therefore, in examining a classroom where lots of interaction goes on between a teacher and the students, and where behaviour of each individual give important information about the classroom culture, observation is one of the most efficient methods. Using a checklist collected data. Two types of school were observed in this study. These were NFPE and CLIP school of BRAC. Two schools from each type were studied and each school was observed for a week.

FINDINGS

As has been mentioned earlier that the main focus in this study was to document the classroom culture of two types of BRAC schools. The classroom culture of BRAC schools will be discussed in this study under the broad heading of classroom management and classroom practices.

Classroom Organization:

Since both the NFPE and CLIP schools are administered, managed and implemented by BRAC, basic strategy of the projects are more or less similar except the method of classroom organisation and some process of classroom practices. However, a major distinction between the classroom organisations of the two types of projects is 'small group activities' and 'large group activities'. CLIP schools are mostly based on small group activities whereas NFPE schools are based on large group activities.

Small group

Small group work refers to academic tasks and activities undertaken by a group of pupils, which involves some degree of discussions, reflection and collaboration. The optimum size for small group work for most type of tasks is probably about five, although small group work can be undertaken by groups as small as two (Waterhouse, 1983).

Witaker (1984) has listed the value of such work. It creates climate in which pupils can work with a sense of security and self-confidence, facilitates the growth of understanding by offering the optimum opportunity for pupils to talk relatively with each other and promotes a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect.

Classroom practices of CLIP schools are mostly based on this method while the system has recently been introduced in the NFPE, yet in certain aspects only. In CLIP schools the classroom organisation is like firstly, teacher is supposed to give the concept on specific issue or lesson in large group, then will judge the concept of the group leaders. After that will ask to divide the class in five small groups. Here students are supposed to read and have discussion on the lesson, academic tasks and activities will also be done; that is within this small group learners are expected to achieve the learning outcome with the help of group leaders as well as other

group members. Teachers are supposed to give their input by moving around from one group to another. Teachers again ask them to sit in large group and then evaluate the students achievement.

This method is considered one of the most popular learner-centred education methods. It is also considered as a methodology of knowledge creating education, which consists of knowing how to provide solution to questions, which never before have been posed by the participants. In this method all the learners ought to be equally involved at all stages, because, as Carmen (1996) noted; “ *genuine learning does not occur unless learners are actively involved in what is actively learned through praxis.*” This is a kind of discussion group in which adult literacy education takes place, which is referred to as ‘engaging dialogue’ because it’s aim is that each member of the group tries to communicate to the others, how s/he perceives things, and through sharing one another perceptions all reach new insights (Otosson, 1978:39). Paulo Freire conceives the same idea about dialogue, which implies a horizontal relationship between persons involving in educational activities. He (Freire, 1972:65) noted; “*without dialogue, there is no communication and without communication there can be no education.*”

There are two main types of small group work: where the pupils are given a specific task to achieve; and where the pupils are asked to explore an issue through discussion. The second type of small group work is absent in clip schools. Students are not given any chance to discuss with certain issues among themselves or with the teacher. In this sense it was observed that the purpose of small group was not being served in clip schools because in clip schools students only read books by rotations, copy things from the board and memorise the lessons within the group which could be also done by sitting in large group. The purpose of small group that is discussing content or substance within the group, exchange views, solves each other’s problems etc. through dialogue was absent. The students were found just to read and learn things within the group and then evaluate each other’s learning that is whether his or her peer could learn the thing by heart. Here teachers’ input is crucial regarding conceptual clearance since group leaders are not mature enough to provide this type of support to his or her peer.

Although, CLIP project is based on this method, unfortunately, it was observed that the purpose of small group system is not served that effectively due to lack of adequate classroom organisation skills of the facilitators. As under the method, several groups (5groups) are working at the same time and the teacher has to cover every group. It was found that the teachers take too much time in a group, which proves that teachers have limited skill in time management. As a consequence, the learners of other groups lose their attention – thus they were found gossiping or playing with each other. The scenario was similar in one of the NFPE schools.

Within the framework of small group method, a group leader is selected from each group to facilitate the peer group tutoring, which involves one pupil helping or teaching another on one to one basis (Allen, 1976; Morgan and foot, 1985). In CLIP schools leaders are supposed to be selected by rotation from each group for a week. He or she would help the peers of his/her group by solving their problem and also will transmit the concept that the teacher is trying to give them. But in Clip schools no evidence of rotation was found. Through some informal interview with the students it was evident that the group leaders don't rotate. On the other hand, teachers found to ask questions and correct the copies of the group leaders mainly so that later he or she will be able to teach her or his peers. But this somehow, reflects some kind of discrimination, which may upset or discourage the other students. Though the method demands equal assistance since teacher are supposed to move around and give effective feedback to all the students. It was felt that teachers of clip schools could not realise the concept of small group activities, they were found more relaxed in the class and they were found taking care of the group leaders mostly not all the students. This type of attitude also promotes developing more lags behind students.

For some reasons the use of more able pupils helping less able pupils within the same class appears to have been less successful than the use of older pupils, in part perhaps because a classmate as tutor may serve to highlight one's sense of failure and lower status (Kyriacou, 1990). In fact, this type of problem was also observed in clip schools. It was frequently evident

that the group leader bits her group members. On the other hand, as because he or she is a student too, s/he does not have the ability to follow which member of her group is a lag behind student or who should be taken care of and what support he or she needs. As a consequence of some remains always lag behind and also suffer from a sense of failure and relatively lower status.

On the other hand, performance of another NFPE school was quite good. Here concept giving, reading, evaluation, (pair, chain drill, games method)- all are done in large group. Only some particular tasks are given to do in small groups. Although, small group activities in the NFPE schools were organised for a short time on a particular tasks, it was not monotonous and the learners were found much attentive. Besides reading and doing different exercises within the group, students were asking questions to each other from the text. Teacher was skilled enough in time management, large group activity management and also in realising and serving the purpose of small group activity to some extent. Though the discussion problem and role of leaders were seen as problem here too.

Studies of group work (e.g. Kerry and Sands, 1984) have indicated that it is more successful where the teachers shows skill in handling and understanding groups, gives a positive lead before the group work begins, and follows up the group work by pooling the discussion and giving feedback on the work produced. Developing skills of the students, a substantial period of teacher support and guidance is necessary before pupils can show what they are capable of. Yet in clip schools it was found that the teachers as facilitator were not that skilled in handling and understanding the purpose of small groups to make the program successful. As a result despite being a very effective program CLIP schools are not able to work that successfully.

Large group activities

Large group system is another method of classroom management in both the types of BRAC schools, which facilitates two-way communications between the teachers and the students. As NFPE schools are mostly based on large group system, these schools are not that much

students. On the other hand students were memorising of the word ----- as ----- which itself is a hard word for the students of second year. So, the materials should be developed in such a way, so that the students can get the meaning easily as well as have knowledge about different shades of meanings.

Another material related problem was found in Radio Interactive Instruction Programme of BRAC. It is followed only in non-clip schools. It was found that the instruction of the tape was so fast that it became hard for the both the teachers and the students to cope up with it. Most of the instructions were in English, so sometimes the students could not understand what they were actually asked to do. More over, sometimes it was found that the contents do not match with the chart or picture. For example, the cassette says 'Children, look at the chart ---- a cat is sitting on the wall' where as there was no picture according to the voice. There are other similar examples, such as, voice says ' the boy is thin' where as the picture was of a girl and there was sentence saying 'the rat is back' but the picture was of a white rat. In this programme it is essential for the teacher to practice her activities with the tape to make the class effective yet due to shortage of battery teachers can not do it.

Knowledge retrieval

Education is about the acquisition of knowledge and about learning together. The act of knowing and acquiring knowledge (learning) is not a solitary but an eminently social act, education and learning imply a dialogical process, an exchange of knowledge (Carmen, 1995:65). From this quotation it is realised that education is process of gaining knowledge which can not be acquired by memorising the lesson. Practice of memorising lessons rather than understanding is a substantial problem for most of the BRAC schools. As a general practice, the learners are given more than enough time either in small group or in large group, to read the lessons several times in which they memorise the lessons.

In BRAC schools knowledge retrieval is done through questioning the students frequently and through monthly evaluation. It was observed that when students were asked to tell the substance

of a story, students started telling the whole story line by line. That is both in clip and non-clip schools the practice of telling substance in their own language has not developed yet.

Students can not tell the stories in their own language. They always try to learn it by heart and tell the story line by line for which when they can not remember the next line they just stop. Yet it was observed that if they are given chance to read the story minutely only twice, they are able to recall it in their own language. That means the whole trouble is in the system where there is a tendency to read things several times with the intention to memorise it. Students of non-clip schools also tell the stories in bookish language though they can recall it better than the students of clip schools can.

It was a normal seen that if any one fails to answer he or she will stand still until the teacher ask her to sit. Biting and teasing the students was a normal issue. As for example it was found that teacher was teasing a student for her physical disability or for her illiterate parents.

It was appeared that the teachers create a sort of pressure to the students to recall each and every word from the book. For example, if a student forgets to recall a name of a vegetable, he or she is pressurised to recall that specific name. This process encourages or creates pressure to learn the lesson by heart. Khan observed, "Teachers are reluctant to give any credit for answers that may be, partially correct, evince displeasure at dissonant answers even if they reveal an element of creativity and prefer adherence to what has been explicitly taught in class rather than allow students to experiment and explore on their own".

There is a tendency among the students to use bookish language while answering questions. May be the reason behind this is the process of asking questions. That is as the teachers ask question in bookish language students also answers in the same manner. Khan said, “ *teachers ask for answers in student’s own language but never insists upon that or rarely do they expect it.*”

Creativity

Students are more or less good at creative writings but a tendency was observed that they want to write on the same topic that he or she usually writes. For example some students were found to quarrel against each other to write on the same topic that is they have a fear in writing on new topic.

Teachers do not ask the students to explain the substance of a poem or story by themselves rather she writes it on the board and ask them to copy and learn it. So the scope of exploring the creativity of the students is being obstructed. In clip schools it appeared that while doing make sentences teachers make sentences by their own, in fact most of the time they pick up sentences from the book and teach it to the group leader, then the group leaders teach her or his members. Thus through this process students are being deprived to show their creativity. Khan (1995) mentioned that generally, *the focus of most lessons is on the mechanics of literacy- on pronunciation, spelling, punctuation, copying- rather than original writing, creative use of words, development of analytical skills and reasoning ability.*

Culture of asking questions

Practice of teaching and learning through two-way question-answer method is a very effective method of learning. In both the type of BRAC schools the culture of asking questions to the teacher was absent. It was observed that though the students couldn't get the teacher and as a consequence some students were copying from others, yet they were not asking any question to the teacher. It was observed both in clip and non-clip schools. Even while giving lesson on any topic teachers do not ask the students whether they have any problem in understanding or not. Khan mentioned " *They are socialized in such a way that they never question or dispute principles presented in the text- the book can never be wrong or be open to alternative interpretations. The child is taught to respect elders and never to question those who hold higher status.*" May be this is the reason of why despite of having problems they do not ask questions but it was expected that BRAC schools will be the place where this type of traditional classroom culture will be demolished.

Method of explaining lessons

The essential elements of teachers ability is to explain what, how and why to pupils, involve taking account of the pupil's current knowledge and understanding in hand and the nature of the type of explanation appropriate and using a combination of explanation, questioning, example giving and learning activity to facilitate the knowledge and understanding required (Kyriacou, 1986, Wragg and Wood, 1984 a).

In BRAC schools it was found that the teachers repeat things over and over to ensure retention by the students. As for example, it was found that a teacher while introducing a poem tells the name of the poem by herself at least twenty times and asks to memorise the name of the poem which is totally meaning less. These times could be used in explaining things. For some unknown reason in both type of schools it was observed that teachers only read books line by line but do not explain it, on the other hand they are wasting times in unnecessary things. Khan said that *'actual time devoted to teaching that is explaining, expanding, simplifying- amounts to very little'*.

It was observed that the teachers of clip schools don't teach the mathematical logic to the students which obstruct them to solve mathematical problems. While solving mathematical problems they don't understand whether they should do addition or subtraction or multiplication. As for example, when an evaluation test was taken it was found that out of 32 students 16 could do the sum and among them 5 did wrong calculation. On the other hand the other 16 students couldn't even get the logic.

In non-clip schools it was observed that mathematical logic are taught very nicely and its effect was found in the work of the students. After an evaluation it was observed that except three all of them could get the logic and do the sum correctly. Students can understand when they should

do addition, subtraction or multiplication. In this case the cause of difference between the clip and non-clip school may be the lack of mathematical training of the teachers as in both types of school both bad school and good schools were taken as sample and both the clip schools did bad while both the non-clip schools showed good performance.

It was observed that the teachers at first read the topic loudly in front of the students, then she ask them to read and after that she asks question from that lesson but do not give any effort to analyse the meaning. As a result there may be some new concepts for the students, which remains always unknown to them. For example meaning of capital, *map*, *Bay of Bengal* are unknown to them, yet they are being taught only the sentence like '*Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh*'.

As students are learning things by following the sound only, without knowing the words and their meanings, they were pronouncing the sentence '*who are she*' (instead of '*who is she*') as '*wa she*'. So actually they are learning neither the pronunciation nor the meaning. Even when they were reading 'This is Abu ,This is Mina' meanings of these sentences were not being taught. Gradually word stock of the students will increase and if they do not know the meanings of the words, they will not be able to remember these words. This will happen also because they don't practice English in their daily life. It was also seen that students wrote the Bengali pronunciation of A, B, C, D and apple, bag, cat etc. in their books. That means they feel comfortable with Bengali words and meanings. Yet in this system they are not being taught the Bengali meaning.

Issues related to assignments

It was sadly observed that the teachers of clip schools are not at all serious about home works. In fact they only gives right sign without seeing the slate or homework copies for which students are learning wrong things. For example students writes sentences like, '*National flag is jack fruit*', Meaning of '*martyred*' is '*to fight against others*' while teacher gave right sign. Students bring home works according to their will. It was found that most of the students bring

assignments on A-Z or 1-50 though they were students of class III and it was also observed that same student do the same home work every day. When the teacher was asked about the reason she replied that *'it is not important that on which topic they do their assignments rather it is more important that they are regular about their assignments'*. If a student of class III practice things of class I, it is not at all useful for him or her because the purpose of doing home work is practising things that are done newly in the class, so that it will be easier for a student to cope up with. So in this system the purpose of homework is not at all being served.

Issues related to gender balance

As in our country female enrolment rate is low on the other hand drop-out rate is high, so schools should take necessary steps in providing knowledge on gender equity. In this purpose BRAC should take the initiative as women are given priority in BRAC' s education programme. Yet in certain aspects some kind of imbalance was observed in BRAC schools which must be carefully driven out.

In both type of schools a tendency was observed among the boy students to seat together in a class. In clip schools it was observed that groups were formed on the basis of gender that is boys and girls students formed separate groups. When the teachers were asked about the reason they replied that we do not have any specific instruction about forming groups. This type of sitting arrangements also effects on the mentality of the students. That is why when the teacher tried to change the seat of a boy who was fighting with another boy beside him, this boy refused to seat beside a girl. Yet classroom is the place where he should get the knowledge of equity, which is not happening in BRAC schools.

In fact, teachers have bias conception too. After the school was finished when we asked students to come out from the class to have a snap, teacher asked the girl students to go out later after the boys. As she was asked about the reason of such comment, she replied that other wise the girls would get heart if they go along with the boys. This type of conception may have influence on the mind of the students too. It was seen that girl students make sentences with the

word fight 'It's bad to fight' or 'I don't fight' whereas boy students write sentences like 'I will fight' or 'I will fight against the enemy'. May be those type of comments of the teacher unconsciously insists boy and girl students to think differently which reflects in their sentence making.

School supervision

Supervision of schools is one of the management supports for improving teacher's pedagogical skills. Supervision effects directly in classroom organisation and practice. As the procedure of BRAC schools supervision the supervisors visit each school twice a week, and approximately 40 minutes in each school. Their works related to classroom supervision include: examining teacher's and learner's attendance, evaluating learners progress on lesson and examining whether teachers follow the instructions given by the program personnel. But no effort is given for developing pedagogical support.

From the experience of classroom observation, the researchers realised that the supervisors played an active role in the classroom. Their approach was seemed to be more authoritarian than participatory. Since the supervisors are only concerned about attendance and marks of the students written in the registrar book.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The education program of BRAC is widely known and recognized both within and outside the country. Though both NFPE and CLIP projects are running successfully yet there are some general problems in both types of schools which should be sought out and solved in order to make the programs more effective. On the other hand, a gap was observed between program and its implementation, specifically in CLIP project which can be solved only by frequent and longtime visit of the program as this project is still in its initial stage.

As the quality of school depends extremely on the skills of the facilitators or the teachers, it is very essential to give them good training. Since the educational background of the teachers are not that high they need some extra training especially on English, math and extra knowledge related to different lessons. Knowledge related to different lessons is needed as because it was observed that teachers due to lack of proper knowledge on that topic students are given wrong information which is very harmful. It should be mentioned here that the purpose of the small group is not being served may be as because they do not have proper training on this system.

In depth and frequent observation is needed especially for innovative projects like CLIP and IRI. This type of observations is needed to realise the shortcomings and the gap between program and it's implications. Other wise despite of being an excellent program it will not work that effectively. So, immediate steps should be taken to reduce the gap among program, management and teachers. It is assumed that NFPE is working more effectively as there is a close understanding among the concerning people of each level.

It was observed that the supervisors play a sort of active role such as evaluate the students, check the note book of the teachers but it was felt that they should play a sort of passive role that is follow up how do the teacher deliver the lesson, how do the students response and many other things related to the classroom. Perhaps this will help them to identify gaps or problems and later on there will be a chance to share it with the programme in order to solve it.

The system of too much repetition should be reduced whereas practice of explaining and discussing lessons should be increased. This will help to reduce the tendency of the students to memorise things.

Practice of asking questions in a horizontal manner may be introduced in both types of schools. So that students will be able to be make themselves clear about their understanding and the teachers will also have an idea about whether her students could catch her or not.

To make the small group system more effective the practice of reading, memorising and copying things may be reduced, while practice of discussing lesson, asking quiz type questions to each other and also some sort of team assignment may be practised, which they will do through discussion among themselves. This will help them to increase their creativity and also make them more confident about their knowledge.

Teachers should be given knowledge on gender issues. This will make them conscious about equal participation of both boys and girls in the class and will also be able to give the students an idea of equity. This will also help them to avoid doing gender-based comments, which keeps a negative effect on the students mind.

More care should be given on assignments. If it is not checked carefully students will learn wrong things, which will effect in their future life badly. On the other as in clip schools there is no hard and fast rule on the topic of assignments, the purpose of homework is not being served.

Teachers should be given instructions to not to use bookish language otherwise it will not be possible to stop the students speaking in bookish language because this tendency of the students leads them to memorise the lesson line by line without understanding it.

At last it can be said that as BRAC is planning to expand such an excellent programme like CLIP in other NFPE schools, a closer look should be given on the shortcomings or gap in its implication. As the success of CLIP schools is based on the high pedagogical skill of the teachers to manage the small group activities, so before expanding this programme it should be kept in mind that the teachers as well as the supervisors of this project need a very effective and frequent training specially as because the level of education of BRAC teachers is low.

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Developing creativity

Developing creativity among the learners is a process of knowledge creation (Carmen, 1995:). The process includes in BRAC schools is writing and oral practices. The learner's performance of all kinds of schools in creative writing was found more or less satisfactory but a tendency was found among some of them that they tried to write on most common topics which were written regularly. For example, some learners were found to quarrel among themselves to write on the same topic that is they have a fear in writing on new topics.

The teachers in BRAC schools, specifically, when they teach poem do not ask the learners to tell the substance rather she write it on the board and ask them to copy. In such a way the scope of exploring the creativity of the students was being obstructed. In clip schools it was appeared that while making sentences, the teachers themselves did it. In fact, most often they pick up sentences from the books and teach it to the group leaders, then the group leaders teach their members. Thus, through this process the learners were deprived to show their creativity. Khan (1995) mentioned that generally, the focus of most lessons is on the mechanics of literacy- on pronunciation, spelling, punctuation, copying- rather than original writing, creative use of words, development of analytical skills and reasoning ability.

Culture of asking questions

Practice of asking question generally ensures two way communications between learners and teachers, and it is considered as the precondition for effective education. Unfortunately, the practice of asking questions was not found in any of the selected schools. The drawback was observed in both the clip and non-clip schools. While giving lesson on any topic teachers often did not ask the learners whether they have any problem to understand or any word that they find difficult. Khan mentioned " *they are socialized in such a way that they never question or dispute principles presented in the text- the book can never be wrong or be open to*

alternative interpretations." If this is the fact, it was expected that BRAC school will be the place where this type of traditional classroom culture will be demolished.

Materials related problem

Teaching materials and its effective implication in the area of education are the most important aspects for the success of all kinds of educational programmes. As has been mentioned earlier of this paper that the BRAC's education programme are mostly material based. In this part of the study some problems with the materials of Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programme will be discussed. The programme was introduced in some BRAC schools on an experimental basis to teach English. The materials of the programme include a tape recorder, some cassettes on different lessons, and other printed materials such as; chart book having different pictures. It was observed both the teachers and the students sometimes could not follow the cassette as it was too fast for them. The instructions, which were in English sometimes the learners and also the teachers, could not understand what actually they were asked to do. Besides these, sometimes contents did not match with the charts and pictures. For example, cassette said '*the boy is thin*' and '*the rat is black*' whereas the pictures were of a girl and of white rat. Sometimes even the pictures were missing. For example, when cassette said "*children look a black cat sits on the wall*" but the chart having the picture was not available. It was informed by the teachers that they could not do practice at their homes because of adequate battery is not supplied by the programme.

Issues related to assignments

As a general practice, the learners of BRAC schools are given both the written and reading assignments as the classroom and home tasks. It was observed that the procedure of checking the written assignments in clip and non-clip schools was different in many respects. In the non-clip schools all kinds of home and classroom assignments for the learners were found to checked minutely by the teachers. On the other hand, the teachers in clip schools gave only

tick/right mark specially on the assignments as creative writings¹. They did not check the assignments. This practice is done for as the programme personnel told that to developing writing skill of the learners, but it was found that a lot of mistakes were done by the learners which were not noticed at all. Although this rule was to be followed only for the creative writings, the teachers were found to do it on the other assignments which were supposed to be checked minutely. Consequently, lots of mistakes were done by the learners. Evidently they wrote sentences like, "Jack fruit is the national flag of Bangladesh), (who fight against others) as the meaning of (martyred).

Another finding related to creative writing that majority of the learners did not write according to their level, i.e., they tended to write the easier tasks (A-Z or 1-50) although they were the learners of higher grades (grade II and III). It was also observed that some learners did the same home work every day. In response to the question why the learners write the same thing every day, a teacher of a clip school told *'it is not important which things they will write as their assignments rather a regular writing practice is more important.'*

¹ creative writing is a written task for the learners according to their wish .