

# **Understanding the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh**

by

**Emerson Chakma**

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***Declaration***

I certify that this thesis titled: ***Understanding the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh*** does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Emerson Chakma

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***Dedicated to:***

My beloved and respected mother Kitta Mukhi Chakma and father Bira Ranjan Chakma.

Without their dedication and hard work, it would not be possible for me to come to this position.

## *Glossary*

AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information and Statistics
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
DD	Deputy Director
DEO	District Education Officer
DG	Director General
DPE	Department of Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDC	Hill District Council
HSC	Higher Secondary certificate
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-government Organisation
PECE	Primary Education Completion Examination
PEDP-4	Primary Education Development Program-4
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

SMC	School Managing Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
UEA	Upazila Education Administration
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
URC	Upazila Resource Centre

## ***Abstract***

This study explores the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh through the understandings and experiences of individuals who are directly associated with CHT primary education. The study also investigates how the participants understand and construct the concept of quality primary education in the context of the CHT and what they imagine to be future possibilities for primary education. In recent years, Bangladesh has achieved tremendous success in students' enrolment at the primary level, but there is a big concern with the quality of primary education. Being the most underprivileged, culturally diverse, and remote area in the country, this situation is deplorable in the CHT. Hence, it is very important to investigate the issues and factors responsible for low-quality primary education in this region. This research interviewed five people including one Upazila Education Officer (UEO), one head teacher, one NGO staff, one president of a School Managing Committee (SMC), and one guardian (father of a primary school-going child). The understandings and experiences of individuals at different levels uncover many issues and challenges that hamper the quality of primary education in the CHT. A qualitative exploratory research method was employed to explore the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT. To collect data from the research participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted over the telephone. To analyse data, a phenomenological approach was applied by developing crafted stories from the interviews.

The research findings suggest that quality education occurs when there are available facilities in schools such as electricity facilities, adequate and qualified teachers, good communication, proper monitoring, and the use of modern teaching methods and materials. Quality education is related to knowledge, skills, and views that contribute to the society and nation and help to achieve quality living standards as well as increases awareness and

patriotism about the history and culture. The concept of quality depends on context, and it may vary from one place to another. However, the quality of primary education in the CHT is poor and lower than in other parts of the country. The quality of primary education in the CHT is largely impacted by the centralised education system, lack of available facilities, lack of focus on the local context and realities, corruption in the teacher's recruitment, poverty, poor infrastructure and remoteness of the area, language barriers, absence of proper monitoring, lack of modern teaching methods and materials, and shortage of adequate and qualified teachers. Moreover, parents and community are not conscious and do not have involvement with the educational process and the SMCs are not effective. However, to improve the quality of primary education, the CHT requires policy and planning that responds to the local contexts and realities.

# **1 Introduction**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

Education is the basis for the progress of any society. The progress of a nation can be secured through educating its citizens. According to Mary Anderson, “education gives a child a better chance for a full, healthy and secure life” (as cited in Novakova, 2010, p. 5). Primary education is the most important part of humans’ life because it creates the ground and foundation of the future for the children. The higher the quality of education the better the contribution to the values, attitudes, and behaviour of the learners (Adams, 1993). As children are the most important asset for the future of any society, providing them quality education at the primary level is of crucial importance to build a strong foundation (Ahmed & Nath, 2004), because quality education has dynamic impacts on productivity, and the social and economic development of a country (Latif, Choudhary, & Hammayun, 2015).

Over the last few years, Bangladesh has achieved tremendous success in primary school enrolment (Kono, Sawada, & Shonchoy, 2017), but the quality remains a big concern. This situation is more deplorable in the CHT, which is one of the underprivileged regions in Bangladesh where 10 language-speaking 11 indigenous communities live and also the mainstream Bengali people (Barkat et al., 2009). In CHT, the educational status of indigenous children is very concerning (N. Chakma & Maitrot, 2016) and the rate of dropout is very high (Begum et al., 2019). It has been observed that due to the low quality of education, most of the students in the CHT cannot acquire the required skills and knowledge after completing their grades at the primary level. They drop out either before or after

completing primary education. It has been found that 65% of students drop out without completing primary education and 19% after completing primary education in the CHT (Barkat et al., 2009). Alam and Jahan (2007) found one-third of the students in Bangladesh remain functionally illiterate even after completing grade-5. In the CHT, the situation is far worse, but there is no CHT-based study that can provide information on why the quality of primary education in the CHT is very low. However, to achieve the target of SDG-4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 (Ahmed & Rahaman, 2016), it is vital to undertake policy and planning identifying the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT which this study intends to do. This study uses the lenses of individuals who are associated at various levels in primary education through one-on-one semi-structured telephone interviews. This chapter discusses the study background, personal narrative, problem statement, significance and objectives of the study, research questions, research gap, limitations and delimitations, and ethics.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Recently, Bangladesh has made major progress in the access and enrolment of children in primary education including gender parity (Nath & Chowdhury, 2009). Bangladesh has also made commitments to fulfill SDG target 4 which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (Kono et al., 2017). However, despite significant progress being made, ensuring quality education still remains a challenge for Bangladesh. There are many remote areas in the country where out-of-school children, dropouts, and low levels of literacy and numeracy are high. The CHT is one such area where the difficulty in achieving quality primary education impacts Bangladesh's total educational achievement in primary education.

In terms of development metrics including education, the CHT is the most deprived and disadvantaged region in Bangladesh (Barkat et al., 2009) and always remains below the national average in most of the social development indices including primary and adult literacy in Bangladesh (UNICEF, 2019). The rate of illiteracy in the CHT is very high. Indigenous children face different types of adversities and deprivation since their childhood. They suffer from language barriers, remoteness, lack of adequate schools and qualified teachers, poverty, cultural adversity, and low socioeconomic status (Durnnian, 2007). Existing literature identified over-centralisation of the education system, corruption, and lack of adequate opportunities for teachers and learners, political commitment, community and parental engagement, and monitoring-supervision process hamper effective teaching and learning in primary education in CHT (Hossain, 2017; Prodhan, 2016). However, this study is an effort to deepen the understanding of various issues and challenges that are hindering the achievement of quality primary education in the CHT.

### **1.3 Personal Narrative**

Being a member of the ‘Chakma’ community, one of the indigenous communities in the CHT, I experienced and observed all types of difficulties in the CHT educational context both as a student and teacher. When I started my schooling in a remote primary school, I had to walk 5-6 kilometres every day through hilly paths and forests. And the school had no benches and chairs for teachers and students. All the children had to bring empty sacks made from jute to use as floor mats on the mud for sitting. There was no good school building with facilities such as electricity, pure drinking water, and sanitation. There was no proper road to school. As the education medium is Bangla (national language), I faced difficulties with studying at a very early age as my mother tongue is ‘Chakma’. When I was a grade-5 student, I observed that most of my classmates who did not have parental support for study at home could not read and write Bangla properly. Currently, I work as a lecturer in a government

college in the CHT and many of my students of grades XI & XII cannot write a sentence in Bangla properly due to the weak foundation at primary and secondary level education. Hence, many students failed in the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) examination. After my joining in 2013, I observed that our college never had more than 50% passing rate in the HSC exam. This is because of low-quality education in previous stages, especially at the primary level. Hence, students with a weak foundation cannot cope with the study load at the HSC level. Before joining as a lecturer, I also worked as an assistant teacher in a remote primary school for around 2 years. The primary school where I worked, did not have a good infrastructure with sitting arrangements, electricity, drinking water, and sanitation facilities. The school also did not have a playground for children. Hence, teachers do not want to stay in the work there. As an education professional and a member of underprivileged society, I realised that without ensuring quality education at the primary level in the CHT it is impossible to advance the CHT communities. I believe that undertaking culturally and contextually sensitive policy and implementation identifying actual realities and issues will improve the quality of primary education. My own personal observation of the realities and issues of the CHT education system has inspired and motivated me to contribute to CHT primary education and undertake this research.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

The CHT is located in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh consists of three hill districts: Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban. The CHT comprises one-tenth of the country where most parts of it are hilly areas. The estimated population is around 1.6 million and half of the population is of indigenous background. Each ethnic group has distinct culture, language, traditions, and justice systems and the rest of the population is mainstream Bengali (Barkat et al., 2009; UNICEF, 2019). Considering the geography and demography, this region is very different from other parts of Bangladesh and one of the most diversified

regions in the world in terms of ethnicity, culture, and religion (Tripura, 2020). This region is shaped by very rugged, steep, and mountainous terrain. The development of the CHT has been excluded largely due to the 25-year civil war which was resolved in 1997 with the signing of the CHT peace accord, yet the region is still politically unstable. The life of the CHT children begins with significant disadvantages (UNICEF, 2019). Poverty in CHT is almost 1.6 times higher than in other parts of the country (N. Chakma & Maitrot, 2016).

The quality of primary education depends on various factors like teaching methods and materials, educational planning, national curriculum, infrastructure, socio-economic background of students, teachers training and facilities, quality teachers pedagogical management, and classroom environment, etc. Alam and Jahan (2007) found that in Bangladesh 30% of primary educators completed only higher secondary while 20% completed only secondary school, and the teachers do not have pedagogy-related training. Even 12.3% of teachers do not have professional training at all. According to them, lack of teachers, big class size, higher teacher-student ratio, infrastructural problems, lack of water and sanitation facilities, and deficit of leadership knowledge among the educators act as barriers in achieving quality primary education in Bangladesh. Most of the school-level factors such as parents and community are not aware of the education of their children, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) are not active which degrades the quality of primary education (Alam & Jahan, 2007).

Although, unlike in other parts of Bangladesh, the CHT's primary education has been decentralised to the district level through the three Hill District Councils, but it is still controlled by the national education policy. The centralised national education policy does not fit the local needs as there is no adjustment and inclusion of the local needs and cultural diversity of the people of CHT in the policy (Novakova, 2010). This inappropriate education policy and strategy are contributed by a lack of proper assessment and understanding of the

conditions of the CHT. And, undertaking education policies and programs for the CHT depending on national priorities that are based on a one-size-fits-all approach cannot fulfill the needs of the local population (Novakova, 2010). In order to understand current realities and challenges to the quality of primary education in the CHT, how the CHT people understand the concept of quality primary education, and what actually is needed to be done to ensure quality primary education in the region, are the focus of my research.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

There are a lot of studies that have focused on various issues of the primary education sector of Bangladesh, but no significant study has explored the quality issues especially on the CHT of Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh is giving a lot of effort to improve quality primary education along with increasing enrolment. However, leaving the primary education of the CHT untouched, it cannot achieve quality primary education for all as the CHT is completely distinctive from other parts of the country which is often overlooked by the education professionals, policymakers, and researchers. Hence, this research is very significant for the CHT and the country. This study will uncover the actual realities that are happening in the primary education of the CHT and help to find out the possibilities of what kind of education might be suitable in this area. Unlike any other study, this study collected primary data from people involved in primary education in the CHT. The study includes participants' perspectives and understanding of the current realities of primary education in this culturally diverse region. This study also presents the possible solution to the challenges of achieving quality primary education in CHT. Moreover, this qualitative research helps to reduce the current gap in the literature and present a new perspective for the education practitioners and the government policymakers to undertake policy and planning appropriate for CHT that will solve the underlying barriers and challenges and improve the quality of primary education.

## **1.6 Research Aims and Questions**

This study intends to understand and identify the current realities and challenges of achieving quality primary education in CHT of Bangladesh and offer possible solutions to the problem from the local education stakeholder's perspectives. The ultimate objective of the study is, therefore, to contribute to achieving quality primary education in Bangladesh and more specifically to the CHT. Specific objectives of the study lie in the answers to the following research questions:

- 1) How do the participants construct and understand the concept of 'quality' in the context of CHT primary education?
- 2) How do the participants construct and reflect on the difficulties of *current realities* for quality primary education in the CHT?
- 3) How do the participants imagine a future for primary education in the CHT that will *educate* (they learn things about the world that serve them as adults, and they enjoy) children?

## **1.7 Research Gap**

The CHT is the most underprivileged region in Bangladesh where most of the people are poor and uneducated. To alleviate poverty and to improve living standards by converting uneducated people into human resources, education can play a crucial role. Bangladesh has apotheosized the right to education for all in its constitution and made primary education compulsory and free for all children (Islam, 2017). But the educational status of CHT children is very poor. UNDP (2009) reported that the progress of indigenous children in the CHT is much lower than the mainstream students. Likewise, there are some literatures on primary education in Bangladesh, but they mostly focused on different issues of Bangladesh primary education. Very few studies have been conducted on the educational situation of

CHT children focusing on cultural diversity and equity issues (Islam, 2017), but no studies have been conducted on the current realities of poor quality primary education especially on the CHT issues. This research fills the gap in the existing literature and insight into the CHT primary system useful for education practitioners, policymakers, and all other stakeholders.

## **1.8 Limitations and Delimitations**

The findings of this research may not be generalised to other parts of the country. This research does not explain the issues and challenges of urban and rural schools separately because the problems and barriers may vary in these two different types of schools. This study could have been conducted through the case study method of ethnographic research over a period of time. However, due to the distance and the time constraint for the Master of Education degree, it was not possible. As I live away from Bangladesh and had less than one year to complete the dissertation and other four topics at the same time, it restricted my research methodology by limiting time and resources. Moreover, this research only involved five participants from different categories including only one participant from each category though more participants would have been included for each category.

## **1.9 Ethics**

This project has achieved ethics approval from the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix-A). In order to maintain ethical procedures, I shared the letter of introduction, information sheet, and consent form with the research participants that helped them to decide to give their consent to participate in the interview by providing information about the voluntary participation and the right to opt-out at any stage of the research (Sobočan, Bertotti, & Strom-Gottfried, 2019). The information sheet provides detailed information about the purpose and objectives of the research, data collection

process, and confidentiality and privacy of the research participants. Participation in this research was completely voluntary, the participants were not asked any questions that make them uncomfortable to answer. Hence, an environment of trust and respect has been established between the researcher and interview participants (Mears, 2009). Moreover, the information sheet also provides information to the research participants on how this study findings will benefit the primary education sector of Bangladesh. As permission is not necessary to access the research participants in Bangladesh, hence, no permission has been taken from the Department of Primary Education.

To protect the rights and safety of the participants (Mears, 2009), I maintained confidentiality and anonymity (Creswell, 2012) of the interviewees in this research, hence, the participant's personal details are not identifiable at any stage of this research. A comprehensive and general interpretation of the research participants has been provided with non-identifiable details and five interviewees have been reported as I1, I2, I3, I4, and I5.

## **1.10 Dissertation Structure**

This study comprises six chapters. The first chapter starts with the introduction of the study that describes the background of the study, personal narrative, statement of the problem, significance, objectives, research questions, research gap, limitations and delimitations, and ethics. The second chapter includes a literature review on quality primary education from Bangladesh and the global context. Chapter three outlines the methodology and methods applied in this study which includes research design, method and process of data collection, participants details, and data analysis techniques. Chapter four describes the significant findings from the interviews highlighting participants' perspectives on quality education and its barriers in the CHT. Chapter five presents the discussion about the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT in relation to the relevant literature and documents. Finally, chapter six provides the summary of the significant research findings

and the implication of this study and provides recommendations for ensuring the quality of primary education in the CHT.

## **2 Literature**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

Achieving quality primary education is a very important issue across the globe, more specifically across developing countries. To support the education professional and policymakers, many scholars have conducted studies and written on quality primary education defining it and identifying its supportive and challenging issues. This chapter review of existing literature on the study topic develops the context-specific knowledge and understanding about the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education. The literature review indicates a variety of theoretical viewpoints and practices that are pertinent to this research. This literature review enabled me to understand the issues and challenges related to quality primary education with a special focus on the CHT. This chapter highlights the concept of quality primary education, sustainable development goals, the structure of Bangladesh education system, parental education, school enrolment and retention, and diversity issue and education facilities.

### **2.2 Quality Primary Education**

Quality is a dynamic concept; it changes by context and over time. It reflects individual values and discernment. The definition of quality is grounded in cultures, values, and traditions, and may be distinct to a particular nation, area, community, educational institution, or student (Adams, 1993). Education quality

apparently may refer to inputs (number of teachers, amount of teacher training, number of textbooks), processes (amount of direct instructional time, extent of active learning), outputs (test scores, graduation rates), and outcomes (performances in subsequent employment) (Chapman & Adams, 2002, p. 2).

Education quality is defined in Jomtein and Dakar as “the desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation)” (UNESCO, 2004, p. 29). UNICEF (2000) considers five dimensions in defining quality education: learners, environments, processes, content, and outcomes (as cited in UNESCO, 2004). Hence, quality is neither a product nor a process, but a combination of product, input, and process. It does not depend on a single element, it has many dimensions (Haq, Ehsan, & Jabbar, 2004). According to Doherty (1994), quality in education is something difficult to define but can be understood when it is seen. There are debates among educational practitioners, professionals, and policymakers about the concept of quality education and there is no agreed definition yet (Haq et al., 2004). According to Hampton (1994), “if schools wish to embrace ‘quality’ then they must develop a culture and climate which will facilitate this” (Haq et al., 2004, p. 14).

Quality of primary education refers to the modernization of teaching methods and materials, betterment of infrastructure, enhancement of teachers’ capacity, introduction of child-friendly learning environment, and a special focus on student achievement levels (Pandey, 2006). Quality of education depends on the physical environment of educational institutions, learners’ achievements, teachers’ qualifications, regular attendance and continuation of the study of students (Haq et al., 2004).

Many developing countries are trying to improve the quality of primary education by improving the quality of teachers, increasing diversity among teaching staff, and increasing local government and the community’s participation. Many studies show that educators and students who share a common understanding, cultural perceptions, and experiences are better capable to establish subjectivity essential for productive education. The inability of teachers to understand students’ languages, cultures, and communities cannot ensure effective

education and often results in strained the teacher-student relationship. For example, Valenzuela (1999) found that majority of the Mexican and Chicano children believed that their educators do not take care of them as the educators are unable to understand students' needs and social perspectives (Pandey, 2006). Hence, sharing culture, language, and experiences of students is important for effective education (Monzo & Rueda, 2001). In the CHT, quality of primary education can be a culturally responsive pedagogy that will embrace the local culture and context in the education with effective participation of professionals and community, accountability, leadership quality, effective engagement of mentors in monitoring students, a compatible environment for teaching and learning, and increasing learners' learning attainments (Kabir, Green, & Chowdhury, 2020).

### **2.3 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**

Bangladesh is one of the few countries which achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) No. 2 for universal primary education (Kono et al., 2017). Bangladesh has achieved the net primary school enrolment rate (NER) of 62.9% in 2000 to 97.3% in 2013 (Directorate of Primary Education, 2014). Bangladesh has also reduced gender disparity in primary education where the NER for girls reached 98.4% in 2013. There are some government policies like the *Food for Education Program*, the *Free Education for Girls*, and the *Female Stipend Program* including free textbooks and compulsory education for school-going children which helped the government achieve these outstanding successes (Kono et al., 2017).

However, Bangladesh still has a long way to go to achieve the target of SDG No.4 which aims to ensure equitable and quality education for all by which overall educational outcomes will be improved to global standards that are required for producing skilled human resources (Kono et al., 2017). Various issues like dropouts, low standards of teaching-learning, lack of

infrastructural facilities, lack of proper training for teachers, and a lack of student facilities are hampering, substantially, the likelihood of achieving quality primary education in Bangladesh (Kono et al., 2017). Around five million school-going children are still out of school. They have either dropped out or never been enrolled in school (Ahmed & Rahaman, 2016).

## **2.4 The Structure of the Education System**

In Bangladesh, primary education is considered to be from grades 1-5 and is offered by different providers: government, NGOs, community and private schools (Kono et al., 2017). The majority (54%) of the students are enrolled in government primary schools; followed by Registered Non-governmental Primary Schools 22%, madrasahs 6%, and the rest of the students enrolled by kindergarten schools, NGO schools, community schools, and experimental schools (Kono et al., 2017). The medium of instruction and curricula are also different, including Bengali, the UK-based Cambridge GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education), and Islamic religious-based madrasah education. Bangladesh's primary education system is also one of the largest centralised systems in the world which creates multiple complexities. The "centralised", "top-down" and "autocratic" system impedes innovative policy development and implementation (USAID, 2007, as cited in T. Rahman, 2010). The division of school education under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) creates problems in articulation, coordination, and progression regarding teacher preparation and supervision, curriculum, student assessment, maintaining standards and quality, and delivery of services. Hence, these problems are impeding progress in the implementation of the National Education Policy 2010 (Ahmed & Rahaman, 2016). To ensure local control in the system requires more effort to be made in transferring the primary education department to the newly formed

administrative bodies in the CHT known as Hill District Councils (HDCs) established in 1997. However, the educational budget, curricula, textbooks for the CHT are still managed centrally by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) (T. Rahman, 2010).

The allocation of budget for the education sector of Bangladesh is lower than the South Asian neighboring countries. Only 2% of GDP is allocated for education. Primary education receives a significant portion of it, but the amount is still insufficient (Kono et al., 2017). Studies have also found some operational issues which include ineffective teaching-learning assessment methods with too many public examinations, huge curriculum, and over emphasis on grades. Additionally, children based on ethnicity, geography and language, and with disabilities have inadequate to access education (Ahmed & Rahaman, 2016). The presence of various education providers and divisions of school education under the two ministries creates problems in coordination, supervision, monitoring, and service delivery necessary for quality education. Furthermore, the highly centralised education system cannot fulfill the demand of local needs. Centrally managed education budgets, curriculum, and textbooks do not focus on the demands of the CHT. The CHT having a different geographical environment and culturally diverse population needs more budget and different curriculum inclusive of cultural and linguistic diversity which is missing in the centralised system. Consequently, it failed to attract children, who come from different language backgrounds in the primary schools.

## **2.5 Parental Education**

One of the important factors that influence the academic achievement of children is the level of parental education. Children are likely to have less academic achievement with low levels of parental education than children with high levels of parental literacy, however, most of the parents in rural Bangladesh are illiterate (Sabates, Hossain, & Lewin, 2013). Because of

being illiterate, they also suffer from poverty and are unable to provide their children with necessary school fees, learning materials including paper, pen, pencil, school bag, uniforms, etc. The educational life of these children is also uncertain because poor parents often need children to help them in earning instead of going to school (Karim, 2004). The poor and uneducated parents are also incapable to understand children's school tasks and guiding children with homework or encouraging children to study (Sabates et al., 2013). As parents are busy with their livelihood and also incapable of having a meaningful relationship with teachers and school activity, they remain unaware if the school is working properly, and what their children are doing at school. Hence, lack of parental involvement with children's schooling leads to absenteeism, grade repetition, and early school dropout (Latif et al., 2015; Nath & Chowdhury, 2009).

## **2.6 School Enrollment and Retention**

Bangladesh belongs to one of the largest primary education sectors in the world (Mollah, 2015) and has around 20 million students enrolled in primary level (BANBEIS-Educational Database, 2018) which is almost 12.5% of the total population of the country (CAMPE, 2008). Recently, Bangladesh achieved remarkable success in primary enrolment, the gross enrolment rate (GER) reached 114.23% (BANBEIS-Educational Database, 2018). Although Bangladesh has achieved this outstanding success in primary enrolment there are still serious concerns about the quality of primary education and the rate of dropout and grade repetition. About 20% of students still drop out before completing grade 5 and 7% of students repeat in the same grade/class. One-third of learners remain functionally illiterate although they complete primary education (Alam & Jahan, 2007). Around 10% of the primary school-age children of poor families are still not enrolled in school (M. S. Rahman, Yasmin, Begum, Ara, & Nath, 2010). This situation is more deplorable in the CHT where 65% of children

give up their studies before accomplishing primary education and 19% after completing primary schooling. Although Bangladesh has achieved the universal target in the enrollment at Grade 1, due to grade repetition and dropout, the school completion rate at the primary level was around 60% in 2000 (Sabates et al., 2013). A study conducted by Asadullah and Chaudhury (2013) on the ability of grade 5 completed students found that only 49% can answer more than 75% of a simple arithmetic problem which is only 9% higher than children who did not go to school at all. Another study conducted by CAMPE found that one-third of basic competencies of the national curriculum for primary education such as languages (Bangla and English), mathematics, and life skills were not achieved, hence they proposed further intervention to enhance the quality of primary education (CAMPE, 2008). The education achievement among the CHT students will even be worse.

## **2.7 Lack of Diversity and Educational Facilities**

As primary education is centrally designed and administered, the local people of the CHT have very little involvement in all relevant aspects such as curriculum development, teachers' recruitment, training, and monitoring, etc. Moreover, the number of teachers from the indigenous community is very few because of the low level of literacy. Although the new education policy emphasised first-language-based education for indigenous children, very few initiatives have been taken to prepare textbooks in languages rather than Bangla (T. Rahman, 2010). Hence, indigenous children of the CHT have no scope to receive education through their mother language which has a close connection in building a strong foundation for future education (B. Chakma & Soren, 2014). Due to the lack of opportunity to learn through mother tongue, around 55.5% of indigenous children of 6-10 years old do not enroll in primary school. The number of primary schools is also inadequate in the CHT. There is only one primary school for every five villages in the CHT, compared to two schools for

every three villages in other parts of the country although the National Education Policy - 2010 emphasises on equal opportunity. Subsequently, there is less opportunity for education for the children in the CHT compared to the rest of the country (A. Chakma & Chakma, 2014). Poverty, parental illiteracy, gender discrimination, and unskilled teachers affect the quality of primary education in the entire country. But in the CHT, language barrier, lack of sufficient schools, big class size, lack of skilled and culturally sensitive teachers, and different livelihood practice affects the learning opportunity for children (B. Chakma & Soren, 2014).

The CHT is culturally diverse and geographically different, but very little attention has been paid to the issues. The majority of the people working in the education sector do not know about the importance or how to address the issue of ensuring education for all based on equity. Hence, indigenous children in the CHT experience deeply rooted institutional discrimination that hampers their teaching and learning at the primary level (Islam & Wadham, 2016). Even, nationally, the complexity and diversity issue of the CHT has not received much importance in the education policies and strategies, although the culture of the indigenous community is considered as a part of the national culture and heritage of Bangladesh (T. Rahman, 2010). Only in the last decades since 2010, the government of Bangladesh has proposed the condition of providing first-language-based education for the ethnic minority groups in the National Education Policy 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2010). The policy, however, is yet to be implemented due to a number of unresolved issues and obstacles (T. Rahman, 2010) to be discussed in the finding chapter.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The notion of quality education is diversified that varies over time and by context. Quality of education depends on various factors such as teaching methods and materials, infrastructure, teachers and students' facilities, child-friendly learning environment,

involvement of community and parents, the inclusion of cultural diversity, and local context. However, centralisation of the education system, lack of parental and community engagement, low level of parental education, insufficient educational facilities, and lack of culturally responsive education hampering the CHT from achieving quality primary education. Hence, ensuring quality primary education for CHT children is a complex task as various necessary factors are absent in the CHT. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology applied to explore the understandings and experiences of individuals who are directly connected to CHT primary education.

## **3 Methodology**

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### **3.1 Introduction**

Exploring the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT through the lenses of individuals who are directly connected to the CHT primary education at different levels was the focus of this study. Moreover, I was concerned with how the participants construct and understand the concept of quality as well as how do they imagine the preferred primary education for the future of CHT children. To explore the deeply rooted realities, five participants from five different categories have been chosen. To obtain relevant data, one-on-one semi-structured interviews have been conducted over the telephone. To analyse the data, first, the interviews were transcribed in Bangla, then stories were crafted as part of the phenomenological approach from the interview transcription. The crafted stories were translated into English and finally, the important themes and codes have been discussed in relation to the research questions and literature.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Much of the empirical research literature focuses on qualitative exploratory research. A qualitative design was considered most appropriate for this research as the study intends to explore the possibilities and difficulties of quality primary education in the CHT through the personal experience of those who work there. This method is also supported by the purpose and questions of the study (Mears, 2009). My research investigates participants' personal experiences via qualitative semi-structured interviews (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

The design is a qualitative exploratory approach using a semi-structured interview protocol with a sample of personnel responsible for primary education in the CHT. Individual

interviews inform how the concept of quality primary education in the CHT region is made sense of and how ‘quality’ education is implemented in the CHT. Analysis of data using the sensemaking conceptual framework allows me to describe how quality primary education is interpreted and implemented in education policies in the CHT.

Exploratory research intends to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems. This type of research is usually conducted to study a problem that has not been clearly defined yet. In order to determine the nature of the problem, exploratory research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps us to have a better understanding of the problem. When conducting exploratory research, the researcher ought to be willing to change his/her direction as a result of the revelation of new data and new insights. Exploratory research design does not aim to provide the final and conclusive answers to the research questions but explores the research question with varying levels of depth. It has been noted that “exploratory research is the initial research, which forms the basis of more conclusive research.” (Singh, 2007, p. 64). A semi-structured interview method is chosen for collecting primary data for this exploratory study.

This study collected data from a small number of participants to explore the problems and develop a detailed insight into the central phenomenon, hence, it obtained participant views (Blaikie, 2007). Although many studies have been conducted on the issues of primary education, no significant research has been done on the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in Bangladesh in general, and particularly no research in the context of the CHT. To better understand the underlying issues and challenges of ensuring quality primary education in the context of the CHT, I tried to explore new insights and views from the participants and achieve a pragmatic finding through this research. This research design provided the scope to the research participants to express their concepts and understandings regarding the research questions. The findings of this qualitative exploratory

study contribute to discussions about ensuring the quality of primary education in the CHT and reduce the gap in the current literature.

### **3.3 Methodology**

As the purpose of this study is to understand the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh, the study used a phenomenology approach to understand the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education through the lived experiences of research participants (Van Manen, 2016). This study is, therefore, an “interpretative (hermeneutic) phenomenology” type study (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015, p. 93), where the researcher collaborates with the study participants and explores further understandings beyond the fundamental concepts to discover the deeper implications of the participants’ descriptions (Lopez & Willis, 2004). In this study, data were collected from the experiences and understandings of research participants. Interpretative phenomenology requires the researcher’s personal knowledge (Lopez & Willis, 2004), and since I have working experience with CHT primary education and have observed the quality-related issues and realities very closely this approach is suitable for me to explore the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in CHT.

### **3.4 Semi-structured Interviews**

A semi-structured interview is convenient for conducting individual interviews because it provides scope for both the interviewer and interviewee to interact effectively. In all forms of interviewing, there are some general steps to follow in conducting interviews (Creswell, 2012; Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews over the phone with five participants who are directly associated with primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh. The telephone interview modality provided extra comfort for the privacy of the interviewee and the participants feel comfortable

engaging in conversations (Cachia & Millward, 2011). In addition, considering the time limit and the scope of my study of Master of Education (Leadership and Management) at Flinders University in South Australia, I conducted one-on-one telephone interviews from Australia. Moreover, telephone interviews give access to the research participants who live away because of work commitments and are hard to reach in person or by other means (Fenig, Levav, Kohn, & Yelin, 1993; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Each participant was interviewed once for approximately 60 minutes and the timing of the interviews was scheduled with mutual understandings of the participants and the researcher as they both have different time zones.

This interview method provided me with the opportunity to gather participants' insights based on a predetermined semi-structured interview questionnaire (Appendix-F) and also allowed me to understand the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT in depth by adding questions (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, employing the semi-structured interview method in qualitative research provided more flexibility to adjust the research questions and for the participants to express their experiences beyond the contexts of the researcher (Creswell, 2012; Mack et al., 2005). The national language (Bangla) was used to interview the participants which allowed both the participants and the researcher to express opinions and experiences freely (Mears, 2009). I tried to put the interviewee at ease by establishing a good vibe while maintaining control of the conversation (Cachia & Millward, 2011). I have attached a translated version (Bangla) of the research questions (Appendix-G).

### **3.5 Research Participants and Participant's Details**

Purposeful sampling is used to identify the research participants and sites based on places and people that best suit to develop an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon of

the research (Palinkas et al., 2015). Hence, to best understand the phenomenon of this qualitative exploratory research, I employed a purposeful sampling strategy to select the participants and sites. One of the benefits of this purposeful sampling is that it gives me the opportunity to gain an extensive understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012) by involving people known to be involved and ‘on the ground’ in terms of experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015). To select the research participants, I prioritised their experiences in the field of primary education and their locations. The next section gives an overview of the five interviewees that I selected for my study:

***Interviewee 1 (I1):***

Interviewee 1 works as an Upazila Education Officer (UEO) in a remote Upazila (sub-district) in Bandarban Hill District. He has worked as a UEO for more than 17 years in different Upazilas in the CHT. He is the responsible person to monitor and supervising overall primary education at Upazila level. His tasks are to provide overall information to the higher authorities on his Upazila primary education, management of salaries and allowances of teachers, school inspection, coordination with Upazila Education Committee and District Education Office, and performing the direction of higher authorities. Although he is the responsible person at Upazila level, due to the centralised and hierarchical education system his power is very limited, and has to depend on higher authorities for every single decision.

***Interviewee 2 (I2):***

Interviewee 2 works as a head teacher in a remote primary school in Rangamati Hill District. He has worked as a head teacher for 3 years. Before joining as a head teacher, he has worked as an assistant teacher in several government primary schools for 13 years. As a head teacher his job responsibilities are to ensure teaching and learning at the school level, coordinate

teachers and SMC, maintain communication with Upazila Education Office and District Education Office. He also maintains communication and relationship with students, parents, community, and public representatives such as Word Commissioner and Union Parishad Chairman.

***Interviewee 3 (I3):***

Interviewee 3 works in a CHT-based local NGO in Khagrachari Hill District. He is working with this NGO since 1998. His NGO mainly works on quality education, good governance, livelihood, environment, and promoting gender equality and women empowerment in remote and most disadvantaged areas. He was directly involved in implementing several education projects which were financially supported by different government and non-government funding sources. Some of the projects he worked with include the Grassroot Initiative for Quality Education, Support to Basic Education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Reading Enhancement for Advancing Development, and Our Life Our Future. He has a long experience and opportunity to closely observe the CHT educational issues and realities.

***Interviewee 4 (I4):***

Interviewee 4 has worked as a president of SMC for more than 5 years in a remote primary school in Rangamati Hill District. As a president of SMC, he performs many schools related activities such as approving expenditures, helping in the management of schools, overseeing the presence of teachers and students in schools, and sending reports to the UEO on the presence and duties of teachers. Moreover, he also works to increase the awareness among the parents and community about education and its benefits.

### ***Interviewee 5 (I5):***

Interviewee 5 is a father of a primary school student. His son is enrolled in a remote primary school in Rangamati Hill District. He does not have much connection with his son's school and rarely goes to school. Even, does not have any communication with teachers and attended very few school meetings.

The above overview is included for the purpose of background in this dissertation and would be omitted from any published work from the dissertation in case anyone was identified from the descriptions.

## **3.6 Data Collection Process**

To approach the participants, an email was sent to each of the participants to invite a one-on-one telephone interview. The email included the letter of introduction (Appendix-B), the information sheet (Appendix-C), and the consent form (Appendix-D) by which the participants had the necessary information about the project that helped them to decide to give informed consent. Participation was voluntary and the participants were provided with full rights not to participate or withdraw their participation at any stage of the study. After selecting the participants for the interviews, semi-structured interview questions were sent to the participants beforehand. The participants who agreed to participate sent their signed consent form back to me.

Telephone interviews were conducted with five individuals separately as Cachia and Millward (2011) argue, that using telephone interview method helps to obtain as good quality textual data as face-to-face interview method does. A voice recorder was used to record the interviews. As the telephone interviews provide greater flexibility in setting up the time and appointment (Cachia & Millward, 2011), after the selection of the participants,

the interviews have been conducted at a convenient time over the telephone with the negotiation of interviewees.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Technique**

I transcribed recorded interviews in national language Bangla that we used during the conversations and sent each Bangla transcript to the participants to check whether they had anything to add or omit. I used a phenomenological approach to analyse data as it focuses on gaining a better understanding of the (lived) experiences of research participants (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015; Van Manen, 2016). I developed some crafted stories in Bangla with description and interpretation from each interview transcript as the first step of data analysis in this phenomenological approach (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2015). Before developing crafted stories, I carefully read the transcripts to develop a general sense of the data and understand what each research participant wanted to say and their relevance to my research questions. After developing crafted stories in Bangla from each interview that addressed the central phenomenon of the study and read them again to ensure that meanings were interpreted as authentically as possible before any translation occurred. Then I carefully translated the crafted stories into English to retain the exact meaning as much as possible. Finally, I investigated the important themes that are drawn from the crafted stories in relation to the research questions and literature from the previous studies. The themes discussed in this study are the “experience of focus, of meaning, of point” of different experiential understandings of research participants (Van Manen, 2016, p. 87). One crafted story from Interview 2 has been given in Appendix H followed by description and interpretation to show the kind of process used for each crafted story. The list of crafted stories from the interviews has been attached in Appendix I. I also sent a draft copy of my findings to the research participants for their feedback on the overall findings, especially, finding out if I have

presented them correctly to avoid any kind of misinterpretation (Creswell, 2012) and approve for inclusion in the dissertation.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has explained details of my methodology and methods, including analysis used to investigate the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education through the understanding and experiences of individuals who have direct involvement with CHT primary education. In the following chapter, I discuss the findings that have been drawn from the understandings and experiences of research participants in relation to the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education as well as the quality concept and preferred primary education for the future of CHT children.

## 4 Findings

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### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the important themes derived from the crafted stories. Firstly, the themes that are drawn from the stories are described in relation to the concept of quality primary education as understood by the individuals who are working with primary education in the CHT. Then, the themes that best represent the realities and current situation of CHT primary education are discussed. Finally, themes are illustrated regarding the preferred primary education for the future of CHT children.

### 4.2 Understanding the Concept of Quality Primary Education in the Context of the CHT

#### *Participants Understanding of the Concept of Quality*

All the participants were asked about their understanding of the concept of quality primary education. Although there is a variation in their responses regarding the quality of education, the overall response is that the concept of quality depends on the context. According to interviewee 2, quality primary education should be related to knowledge, skills, and views that can contribute to society and the nation and help to achieve high standards of living.

Interviewee 4 works as a president of SMC in a remote primary school. He defined the quality of primary education in a similar way to interviewee 2. He remarked:

Quality primary education ensures when “the students can achieve knowledge, skills, views, and values related to socialisation after completing the primary education and are able to apply them in the next stage of their life”. (Interview 4: story 2)

As an NGO staff member, interviewee 3 had a chance to work closely with the community. He observed the difference between the government-defined quality concept and the way it is commonly understood in CHT. The government set some specific criteria for each class

of students to be considered as quality education, but the community understanding is different. As he said, the CHT community thinks that if children have engagement with schools and if they can read, write, understand, explain, apply what is being taught in schools, and secure a good result in the exam they consider it as quality education. As Interviewee 3 explained:

The quality of primary education in the CHT is understood from two views, one is the institutional view and the other one is the general view of the CHT people. According to the institutional view “if the students can achieve the marginal requirements that are determined by the government for each class, then it is considered as quality education.” On the other hand, the general view of the CHT people is “if the children go to schools regularly and can read the books fluently, can understand, explain, and apply the contents they [people] think that this is quality education. Besides, if the children can secure a good result in the exam, the community thinks that this is quality education.” (Interview 3: Story 2)

Interviewee 5 is a guardian of a primary school student. He thinks that quality primary education transforms a child into a real human. The quality of primary education will be ensured when —

there will be available facilities in primary schools such as electricity facilities, adequate teachers, high salaries and residential facilities for teachers, good communication, proper monitoring, trained and qualified teachers, modern teaching methods and materials like computer and multimedia. (Interview 5: Story 2)

Interviewee 1 works as a UEO. He thinks that the quality of primary education is a broad concept, and it should be aligned with the local context and culture. In shaping the notion of quality primary education, the remoteness of the CHT, language issues, poverty, and lack of efficient and professional-minded teachers should be considered. He defined quality education as:

the education which develops justice, morality, humanity, social norms, patriotism among the students, increase consciousness about the history and tradition of the CHT, increase the affection for own linguistic people as well as the people of his/her own country, helps to develop moral and spiritual virtues, helps to adapt with the adverse environment, produce scientific and cultural-minded individuals with patriotism and helps students to be able to pursue next learning stages such as secondary, higher secondary and higher education. (Interview 1: Story 3)

### *Quality Education is Varied*

The quality of primary education is poor in the CHT, and it depends on the location of schools. Quality is good in those schools where facilities are available, and parents and community people have active involvement in the school management. Sadly, most of the school is out of adequate facilities in CHT. As Interviewee 2 illustrated:

The quality of education is very good in some schools where facilities like communication are very easy, they have enough teachers, electricity, mobile network, and internet facilities and parents and community are aware of the importance of education. On the other hand, in most of the remote area schools, the quality is very low where institutional facilities are not available, and parents and community do not see good outcomes of education. (Interview 2: Story 1)

Interviewee 5 also identifies the variation of quality of primary education in a similar way. He thinks that the quality of primary education depends on the locations, the quality is good in the schools where infrastructural and other facilities are available, and the quality is poor in the places and schools which do not have above-mentioned facilities.

The quality of primary education varies according to the location of schools; in some schools, quality is very good especially where modern facilities are available, in some schools are medium, and in remote schools, quality is very poor especially where modern facilities are not available. (Interview 5: Story 2)

The CHT lacks important elements that can ensure the quality of primary education. As the context of the CHT is different from the rest of the country, the quality of primary education cannot be generalised with other parts of the country, hence, the quality concept can be viewed in the CHT considering its geographical, socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts.

## **4.3 The Difficulties and Current Realities of the CHT Primary Education**

When the participants were asked about the problems and realities that hamper the quality of primary education in the CHT, they mentioned a range of problems such as lack of

awareness and illiteracy among parents and community, ineffective SMC, underdeveloped infrastructure, poverty, corruption in teacher's recruitment, lack of adequate and qualified teachers, language barriers, and lack of modern teaching methods and materials. There is also a lack of adequate facilities for teachers and monitoring officers, centralisation of policies and administration. Each of these factors is discussed in more detail in the next sections.

### ***Corruption Involved in Teacher's Recruitment***

As participants told teachers' recruitment in the CHT through the District Councils is highly corrupted. Due to corruption, qualified persons are often not recruited as teachers.

Corruption in teachers' recruitment has become an open secret in the CHT. Due to lack of transparency in the recruitment process, the CHT is depriving of having qualified teachers for primary schools. (Interview 5: Story 3)

There is a huge difference between the standards of teachers who received appointments through a transparent process and who arranged appointments through corrupt processes.

Teachers who received appointments through transparent processes bring some positive changes wherever they are posted.

Teacher recruitment in the CHT is corrupted, and not transparent, and hence not enough good teachers are appointed. Teachers who were appointed without corruption show huge differences in their standards and quality. Teachers who were appointed based on merit and quality, wherever they got posted, brought some positive change in schools. (Interview 2: Story 2)

Interviewee 3 and 4 both mentioned that political affiliation and corruption in teachers' recruitment hampers appointing qualified teachers. Bribery, lobbying, and political influence in the teacher's recruitment processes badly impact the quality of primary education. Candidates who give more money as bribes and have political affiliation with the ruling party receive an appointment as a teacher. Because of corruption, the overall educational qualification of teachers in the CHT is lower than in other parts of the country.

Various types of corruption such as bribery, lobbying, political influence hindering the CHT from recruiting qualified teachers. In the CHT, the educational requirement for the teachers is only Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) for men and Secondary School Certificate (SSC) for women, whereas it is minimum bachelor's degree outside the CHT, and teachers are recruited based on the quality and merit. (Interview 4: Story 3)

Interviewee 1 also reflects his dissatisfaction with the teacher's recruitment process who said:

Teachers' recruitment is not transparent in three Hill Districts. There are a lot of complaints and weaknesses in the teacher's recruitment process. The CHT is not getting qualified and truly educated people as teacher who has a professional mentality. (Interview 1: Story 4)

### ***Limitations of Upazila Education Administration***

The UEO as the head of the local education administration works with various limitations. They do not have adequate staff to monitor and inspect schools. They do not have the power to provide decisions tailored to the local needs but are directed to perform tasks according to procedures outlined by the higher authorities. For each and every decision, the UEO has to rely on higher authorities' approval.

Interviewee 1 as a UEO monitors overall primary education at Upazila (sub-district) level. Although there are five posts for investigation officers including the UEO, only 3 people are employed as investigation officers. With 3 people in the team, he is responsible to oversee 56 government primary schools with 265 teachers in his Upazila besides performing other administrative duties. Hence, five people's work is allocated among the 3 officers who try to inspect every school at least 2 to 3 times a year. Due to the remoteness of the area, and insufficient human resource visit to every school is not possible for them. Moreover, most of the schools do not have internet access or mobile networks which made the supervision and inspection process more difficult.

The allocation of budget for monitoring and supervision is also not sufficient. The inspection officers do not have enough allowances necessary for inspecting schools. Opportunity for

promotion is very limited and, in many cases, there is no chance for promotion for education officers and teachers in their entire service life. Hence, qualified people often do not feel interested to work in primary education, especially as a teacher.

I am working as a UEO for 17 years in this department but had not got any promotion, and I do not know whether I will get a promotion or not in the future. Some of my colleagues and similar age who work in other's department got the promotion and posted in the higher position. Hence, promotion is important at all levels from teachers to officers. (Interview 1: Story 4)

### ***Centralisation of Policies and Lack of Focus on Local Realities***

The CHT primary education was handed over to the three HDCs in 1997 through the CHT Peace Accord. But, as mentioned in previous chapters, except for teachers' recruitment and transfer, most of the important decisions such as curriculum, finance, and promotion of teachers and office staff are determined centrally by the DPE and MoPME. In fact, the central authority also reduced the power of the local organisation in recent years as said by a participant.

Although the district councils previously had the power to give promotion from assistant teachers to the headteacher, very recently the Department of Primary Education under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education took this responsibility back. (Interview 1: Story 2)

Hence, deserving teachers are not getting promoted on time or never. Consequently, they do not feel inspired to work with dedication. The centrality of the education system also hampered the CHT primary education more during this COVID-19 pandemic where the government ordered to conduct online class. But, because of not having access to the internet, necessary technical device, and appropriate guidance, unlike most other areas, the centrally formulated online learning policy was unable to benefit CHT children during the pandemic. Given the actual circumstances at homes in the CHT, it was also impossible for children to study at home or be supported by parents as was the case in many countries.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the government gives various directions to teachers like giving classes to students using online platforms such Google Meet, Zoom Meeting,

etc. But in most of the remote areas in the CHT, there is no electricity, mobile network, and internet facilities to implement such types of government direction. As a result, the children of the CHT remain completely out of education during the pandemic. (Interview 2: Story 2)

### ***Insufficient Schools in the CHT***

In the CHT, children need to walk long distances to attend school. In most remote areas, there is no road or transportation system. In fact, there are many hamlets and schools where paved roads do not exist. Walking through the uneven hilly terrain is the only way they can be in school. During rainy sessions, and also hot summer days, it is really difficult for children to commute to school. It contributes to their school absenteeism to a great extent.

Students have to walk 3-4 kilometres to go to school, the condition of walking ways are not good, in the rainy season, they have to go to school crossing knee-deep water, broken roads, cliffs, and mud. (Interview 4: Story 3)

In addition, the schools do not have proper sitting arrangements, or pure drinking water facilities and toilet facilities.

the walking distance from home to school is far and the pattern of walking way is not easy for children. Children have to cross the hills, river, canal, and lake on the way to school. (Interview 1: Story 4)

### ***Language Barrier***

There are 10 language-speaking 13 communities living in the CHT. The national curriculum is written in Bangla. Children who come from indigenous communities whose first language is not Bangla face language problems. When the teachers and children are from different language communities and children do not understand Bangla, then it creates problems in communication between teachers and students. Children neither can express what they want to tell nor understand teachers. Depending on the family and socio-economic status some children can overcome the language barrier gradually, but some cannot, even after completing primary education.

Children who have the opportunity to watch television at home, have interaction with mainstream Bengali community, visit markets, and have educated parents to help him/her to understand Bangla they can overcome the language barriers, but ... I observed during his inspection of remote schools “I visited many schools in different places. For example, when I inspect a school in Marma inhabitant areas where all the students are from Marma community and do not understand Bangla, if I ask the question to students on their lesions they cannot reply properly. In most cases, due to the inability to understand Bangla, they only stay looking at my face. In that case, if there is any teacher from the Marma community who interprets the question in their language what I want to know, they can answer it.” (Interview 1: Story 6)

In some remote areas where people are only from same the community, children do not have the opportunity to listen or speak other languages except their mother tongue.

“in the CHT there are some regions, where the community people do not have scope to speak other languages except their mother tongue. If I consider the Tripura ethnic community, there are some Tripura villages in remote areas, where children neither listen to Bangla nor can speak Bangla.” (Interview 3: Story 3)

Interviewee 1 claims that the government recently provided books in three ethnic languages (Chakma, Marma, & Tripura) in order to provide education to ethnic children in their mother tongue. But, because of teachers not having skilled in that languages cannot use the books. This is because, in the teachers’ training program, the language training or language issue is not considered nationally. As the teachers cannot teach children in their mother tongue, in many schools the mother language books are not distributed to the students. In addition, there are still 10 other ethnic groups whose languages have not been included yet.

the lack of special focus on CHT realities, mother tongue-based education programs for ethnic children and teachers’ training have not been included in the PEDP 4 project. Although the government published books in Chakma, Marma, and Tripura languages, there is no direction on how the students will be taught these books. For this, mother tongue-based education has not been implemented yet. (Interview 3: Story 4)

### ***Lack of Modern Teaching Methods and Materials***

In remote schools, teachers still use chalk, duster, and blackboard in teaching students. They do not have the scope to use modern teaching materials such as computers and multimedia due to the lack of electricity and internet facilities. Hence, students do not often feel interested in learning with traditional materials. Even, most of the remote primary schools

do not have good academic buildings, adequate bench and chairs for teachers and students, no playgrounds, sports, and playing materials. Moreover, teachers do not apply their training skills in teaching students. They follow the conventional and one-way teaching method which involves just giving lectures and guidelines to students and huge amounts of homework to memorise at home which is neither interactive nor effective.

“in schools, teachers just supervise and provide guidelines to students what should they read and give huge homework, then students come back home, and the rest is on parents. Hence, if the parents are not educated, they cannot help their children with homework.”  
(Interview 3: Story 1)

Hence, students do not achieve the necessary learning. But, to maintain their reputation, teachers most of the time, help students write correct answers in the examination and use flexible marking when they are given the responsibility to mark the answer scripts.

during the exam, if students cannot write the answers, the duty teachers help students by writing the answers on the blackboard and students passed in the PECE exam. As a result, after completing primary school without achieving the necessary skills students face problems in the upper classes and fail to continue their studies. In the end, they drop out of high school. (Interview 3: Story 1)

### ***Teacher's Shortage and Teacher's Absenteeism***

Teacher shortage and teacher absenteeism are very common issues in remote schools. In remote areas, especially in the CHT, it is a common practice for teachers to come to school late but leave early as there is no monitoring from authority or parents. It is also because they do not live nearby the schools.

although the schooling time is from 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, most of the time teachers come to school at around 10.00 am and leave at around 2 to 3 pm and the majority of the teachers come from distance places. (Interview 4: Story 1)

There are some teachers who do not attend the school at all. As said by interviewee 5, they remained absent without authorized permission by using their family or political power. According to the national guideline, a primary school should have a minimum of 5-6 teachers. But most of the primary schools in the CHT only have 2-3 teachers appointed, most

of whom also remain partially or fully absent. Hence, it is not possible to ensure all the classes operate according to routine for five classes (class 1 to class 5) with 2 or 3 teachers. Participants also informed that many teachers willingly choose posting in a remote school so that they do not have to fulfill their duties as teachers so that they can avoid attending school. These teachers appoint a 'proxy teacher' by paying some portion of their salary while they live in the town or at home engaging in other activities. As said by the participants, sometimes, head teachers themselves are involved in teachers' absenteeism.

In some remote schools' teachers appoint proxy teachers instead of them. Even, teachers willingly take the posting in remote schools for not to go to schools at all due to the lack of proper supervision in remote areas. The unpleasant reality is "one of my acquaintances took posting in a remote school of Dighinala Upazila in Khagrachari District. In his school, officially there are 5 teachers but only 1 or 2 teachers go to school by rotation, and they appointed a proxy teacher from the village whose duty is to open and close the school on time." Although the head teachers are the responsible persons to ensure teaching and learning at the institutional level, they themselves do not go to school. (Interview 3: Story 3)

In addition, there is no administration staff in primary schools. So, the teachers also need to stay busy doing administration works which takes away a lot of their time which they could have spent in the classroom. In addition, teachers also need to have a regular visit to the Upazila Education Office or District Education Office for 1 or 2 hours on a monthly or quarterly basis for meetings or other administrative support. But schools being located in a very distance remote area, the teachers need to spend whole day or even overnight for the meeting.

"If I have one clerk to do these official tasks, I could give more concentration to academic activities ...". In his school, there are only 3 teachers against 6 posts. Among the 3 teachers, one teacher is on deputation for 2 years for foundation training. Hence, currently, they are only 2 teachers for 78 students. (Interview 2: Story 3)

Due to communication problems, and lack of other necessary facilities, teachers do not want to stay in remote schools. When they get a posting in remote schools, they try to take transfer in a better location by giving bribes, using political power, or through lobbying. Hence, while

schools located in remote areas do not have sufficient teachers, schools of the town areas are overflowed by additional teachers.

There is a lack of teachers in most of the remote schools ... When teachers take retirement from any school, it remains vacant for a long time due to lack of recruitment of new teachers in due time. There are only 2 or 3 teachers against 6 or 7 posts in most of the remote primary schools. (Interview 2: Story 2)

### ***Administrative Punishment is Not Seen for the Negligence of Duties***

According to a participant, these days, the teachers might have more academic qualifications, but they lack professionalism, moral human values, passion for teaching, and patriotism for the nation and society. Some teachers lack accountability and commitment for their roles and duties that hampers quality primary education.

“When I was a primary school student my teachers did not receive facilities as present teachers do, but they had professionalism and passion for the teaching profession. Even, during their time, the educational environment was not enjoyable like now. Teachers did not have the training, but the teachers applied their own strategy affectionately to teach the students”. (Interview 1: Story 4)

Such as lack of commitment and honesty is missing because of lack of accountability and administrative punishment for the negligence of their duties. When teachers face an administrative procedure for being absent in his/her duties they try to influence investigation officers through the political leader or by giving bribes to the high officials.

When inspection officers find teachers are absent during the school inspection, they cannot take action against the absent teachers, the accused teachers try to influence inspection officers through the high-profile political leaders or high officials by giving them bribes or other ways ... of their duties, “even I observed one head teacher did not go to school for 2 years, but there is no administrative action against him.” (Interview 3: Story 3)

Teacher Federations also create barriers in ensuring quality primary education by taking stands on behalf of the teachers who are convicted for neglecting their duties. Sometimes, they take money from the convicted teachers and act as barriers to taking disciplinary action.

### ***Lack of Parental and Community Involvement in Educational Process and Ineffectiveness of SMC***

Because of poverty and illiteracy, parents do not usually have active involvement in school activities. As said by Interviewee 5, they (parents) do not attend parents' meetings, even if they attend meeting they do not talk or talk very little in the meeting. Sending their children to school is itself a big sacrifice for them that they do not have the capability or interest to work as part of the school management committee (SMC). Even if they join an SMC, they do not know what their roles and responsibilities are.

The communities do not have awareness about the quality of education, they are happy if their children just go to school. In the CHT, the SMCs are not effective, "outside the CHT, I observed that there is huge competition among the interested individuals to get the post in the SMCs, even they have to go through the election process to select the members, but in the remote CHT, especially in the indigenous areas it is hard to find people to take the responsibility in the SMCs." (Interview 3: Story 3)

Some community members come to the SMC with ill intentions. They are not cooperative and active as they only want to get illegal benefits from the school. In some cases, they use money and political power to be a member of the SMC if they perceive it to be of advantage to do so.

I2 experienced that in 13 members of SMC, some members want to take place in the committee not to work for the education but to take financial and other benefits from schools. Even, they use money and political power to be a member in the committee. (Interview 2: Story 3)

### ***Poverty of Guardians***

Most of the parents in the remote CHT are poor. They prefer to engage their children in earning rather than education. Hence, they cannot provide an educational environment for their children. Some families cannot afford three meals a day and school uniforms for their children.

Most of the students come from poor families, hence, they do not have the dress, school bags, shoes to go to school. Even, some families do not have the capacity to eat enough

food three times a day and to buy educational materials such as pencil-pen-paper for their children. (Interview 1: Story 4)

Many children help their parents in earning activities and do not come to school regularly. Hence, it is difficult to continue their study and they drop out of education. Parents who are comparatively wealthy and educated send their children to the town schools in order to have a better environment and better education.

#### **4.4 Preferred Primary Education for the Future of the CHT Children**

When the participants were asked what types of education, they prefer for the future of CHT children, their responses were mixed. Their most common responses to educating children were that there should be available institutional facilities and infrastructure, adequate and qualified teachers, modern teaching methods and materials, residential facilities for teachers and students, corruption-free educational process, accountable monitoring systems, mother tongue-based education for ethnic children and effective engagement of parents, community, and SMC. Each of these is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

##### ***School with Available Infrastructural Facilities***

As most of the schools in the CHT do not have proper infrastructures and modern facilities. Hence, the participants want all the schools to be well equipped with modern facilities and sufficient teachers.

“in town schools, there are adequate teachers and most of the teachers are qualified and use modern teaching materials in the classrooms. In the same way, if we get adequate and qualified teachers in remote schools and can ensure the use of modern teaching materials, the quality of primary education will be improved ...” (Interview 5: Story 4)

to ensure the quality of primary education adequate teachers have to be ensured in remote schools, communication has to be developed, mobile and internet facilities have to be expanded in remote areas. (Interview 2: Story 4)

The participants want the government to undertake initiatives to alleviate poverty along with developing road communication and expanding electricity facilities in remote areas. To

retain qualified teachers in remote schools, more financial and residential facilities for teachers have to be ensured.

The people of the CHT are very poor, hence, the government should undertake initiatives to alleviate poverty, develop communication, expand electricity facilities in the remote CHT. Moreover, to retain qualified teachers in remote areas residential and financial facilities should be increased for teachers. (Interview 5: Story 4)

### ***Corruption Free Educational Process***

Ideally, there will be no corruption in the educational process. Qualified and talented teachers will be recruited through a fair and transparent recruitment process. All actors will be accountable for their roles and responsibilities and all the stakeholders will participate in the educational process through collaboration.

I4 expects that quality primary education will happen when “transparent and fair teachers recruitment process, recruitment of skilled and qualified teachers, ensuring adequate teachers, providing standard salary to teachers, ensuring accountability, providing updated and quality training, conducting proper monitoring and feedback system, improving teachers-guardian relationship, ensuring adequate teaching materials in schools can be ensured”. (Interview 4: Story 4)

It is expected that there will be an effective and participatory monitoring system in the future that will ensure accountability at all levels.

The participatory monitoring system involving the community and SMC, can increase the effectiveness of the schooling system, accountability, and develop teaching and learning because it is not possible for the Upazila Education Offices to monitor the schools properly with staff shortage. (Interview 3: Story 5)

Moreover, future education will ensure such an environment for the CHT children where they will have an environment of transparency and accountability, teaching-learning supportive infrastructure, science and technology-based education with modern curriculum and where parents, community, and multiple organisation will participate in the educational process with collaboration. Moreover, children will be given a mid-day meal at school.

I4 expects such a primary education in future for the children where there will be transparency and accountability, developed infrastructure, science and technology-based education, and a teaching-learning friendly modern curriculum. Considering the socio-economic context of the CHT, he wants a mid-day meal at school so that children

from poor families feel interested to go to school. He expects active engagement of parents, community, and various types of organisation in the educational process for ... (Interview 4: Story 4)

### ***Education with having Residential Facilities***

It is very urgent to provide residential hostel facilities for students who come from distant places and poor families. Residential facilities will ensure a good educational environment for the students. Besides, dormitory facilities for teachers will ensure the presence of teachers in remote areas.

the CHT needs more residential hostels for students so that students who come to school from distant places can study staying at hostels ... "I observed from my experience that teachers who are posted in remote areas but live in a distant place cannot come to school regularly. Hence, if they are provided with residential facilities at the school areas they can live with their families and become attentive in their duties." (Interview 1: Story 7)

Besides ensuring residential facilities for teachers, participants also emphasis improving the working environment to attract qualified teachers in remote schools. The participants also expect that electricity will be ensured in all remote schools through the solar panel that will ensure the use of modern teaching materials in schools.

The residential facilities and improved working environments for teachers can retain teachers in remote areas. Besides giving stipends to students, the government should provide teaching materials like paper-pencil and school uniforms for students ... electrification in schools by providing solar panels in no electricity areas can give access to schools to use laptops and multimedia in classrooms which will provide students to learn through modern materials. (Interview 2: Story 4)

### ***Opportunity to Learn through Mother Tongue***

As the language barrier is one of the prime barriers in ensuring quality primary education in the CHT, the ethnic children will have the opportunity to learn through their mother tongue.

I3 expects all the children of the CHT will get the opportunity to learn through their mother tongue, they will achieve all the required skills designed for each class, there will be no teachers shortage and a learning-friendly environment in every school. (Interview 3: Story 5)

To ensure mother tongue-based education for ethnic children, the recruitment of more teachers from ethnic communities can solve the language barrier and make learning more enjoyable for ethnic children.

Considering the cultural diversity and language barrier of ethnic minority children, I2 emphasised recruiting more teachers from the ethnic communities that can help to ensure mother tongue-based education for ethnic children. Mother tongue-based education can make learning enjoyable for ethnic children. (Interview 2: Story 5)

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the views and understanding of participants about the concepts, realities, and possibilities of ensuring quality primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh. The concept of quality primary education is determined by the contexts of respective locations. Quality education is linked to the skills, knowledge, and views that contribute to society and the nation, assisting in the attainment of high living standards, as well as increasing historical and cultural awareness and patriotism. The quality of primary education depends on available facilities such as electricity, adequate teachers, competent teachers, communication accessibility, proper monitoring and supervision, modern teaching methods, and materials. Centralisation of education, a lack of required facilities, ignorance of local context and realities, corruption, poverty, infrastructural inadequacy, remoteness, language barriers, inadequate monitoring and supervision, a lack of modern teaching methods and materials, and inadequate and underqualified teachers hampering the quality of primary education in the CHT. Moreover, there is also a lack of parental and community involvement in the educational process in the CHT and the SMCs are not effective. The findings of this study signify that CHT primary education has a range of problems that are distinct from other parts of the country. Hence, the government needs to give special attention to the CHT local contexts and issues to improve the quality of primary education in this disadvantaged

region. In the next chapter, the major findings have been discussed in relation to the literature from previous studies.

## **5 Discussion**

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### **5.1 Introduction**

This study identified the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh through the eyes of respondents who are currently working within primary education in the CHT region. This chapter discusses the barriers and issues of achieving quality primary education in the CHT. This research suggests that the quality of primary education in the CHT is impacted by so many barriers including the centralised education system, lack of available facilities, lack of focus on the local context and realities, corruption, poor infrastructure, poverty, and remoteness of the area, language barriers, absence of proper monitoring, lack of modern teaching methods and materials, and shortage of adequate and qualified teachers. This chapter discusses the key issues and problems of achieving quality primary education in the CHT in relation to the literature and the detail that emerged from the participant's understandings.

### **5.2 The Context and Available Facilities in Determine the Quality of Primary Education**

In the context of the CHT, the quality of primary education is primarily seen as the knowledge and skills that contribute positively to society and the nation and help individuals to have a quality living standard. It is therefore important that the community sees a benefit to being educated. In some cases, the quality of education is seen as a way to develop justice, morality, humanity, social norms, patriotism among the students, and increase awareness of the history and traditions of the CHT. By 'quality education' the participants also referred to the features of educational achievement where children will achieve knowledge, skills, views, and values related to socialisation after completing primary education and being able

to apply their learning in the next stage of their lives. In the eyes of participants, quality education occurs when there are available facilities in schools such as electricity facilities, adequate and qualified teachers, good communication, proper monitoring, use of modern teaching methods and materials such as multimedia and computers, high salaries, and residential facilities for teachers. Many people also consider quality education to occur when their children go to school regularly and can read the books fluently, can understand, explain, and apply the contents and secure a good result in the exam. Brock and Cammish (1997, as cited in Hunt, 2008), found that the key quality issues that affected school attendance were limitations in teacher quality (subject knowledge, pedagogy, and attitudes towards students), as well as teachers availability (school attendance, employment numbers, and teacher's distribution). Colclough, Rose, and Tembon (2000) mentioned that "poor school quality is associated with poor academic results, with higher levels of repetition and drop-out and with lower progression ratios to higher levels of the education system" (p. 21).

The quality of primary education in the CHT is poor and lower than in other parts of the country. After completing grade 3, only 47 % of students can read Bangla and 53% of students cannot read properly. Without having Bangla reading skills students are promoted to the next/upper classes. Even, students who cannot read Bangla properly, pass the Primary Education Completion Exam (PECE) because of the system failure. There is also an allegation of corruption in the assessment and PECE examination in the CHT. In most of the remote areas, there are complaints that duty teachers help the students by writing the answers on the blackboard during the exam. The Upazila Education administration and teachers want to pass all the students in the exam as they have pressure from the higher authorities. As a result, students pass the PECE exam without achieving basic skills, they drop out from the next stages. Boyle, Brock, Mace, and Sibbons (2002) identified that children with lower

academic achievement are more likely to drop out than those with greater academic achievement.

### **5.3 Centralisation of the Education Policies and Lack of Focus on Local Context and Realities**

One of the barriers to achieving quality primary education is the highly centralised education system. Most of the government programs do not focus on the contexts and realities of the CHT, hence, centrally planned government initiatives cannot give effective outcomes in the CHT. Islam and Wadham (2016) argued that the Bangladesh government does not undertake programs for indigenous children's fundamental education. Consequently, it is unrealistic to expect a positive outcome from a 'one-size-fits-all' education system. Chowdhury, Nath, and Choudhury (2003) claim that colonial attitudes regarding ethnic minorities still exist among Bengalis, although it is changing slowly. Islam (2017) argues that this condition persists despite national policies aimed at addressing issues like inequity and lack of diversity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government gave directions to teachers to conduct classes using online platforms such Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, etc. But because of lack of electricity, mobile network, and technology majority of the children from the CHT remained completely out of the education process during the pandemic.

A study conducted by Bleie (2005) contended that primary education has never been equitably available to all groups of the population in Bangladesh, particularly to indigenous children. Islam and Wadham (2016) argued that the centralised education curriculum and teaching materials in the Bangla language focuses on the needs of national culture and language. The indigenous children are negatively affected by this as they have different cultures and languages. Currently, the centrally planned CEDP-4 program is running all over the country for the development of primary education to improve school infrastructure and

training teachers. Sadly, special training needs for teachers in multi-lingual education are not incorporated into it. The government published books in Chakma, Marma, and Tripura languages, but because of the lack of proper training in using these books in the classroom, mother tongue-based education has not been implemented yet.

Although the primary education of the CHT is officially handed over to the district councils, most important decisions like finance, curricula, and teachers' promotion come from the central administration. The power of district councils is limited to teacher recruitment, transfer, and coordination. Additionally, there is a lack of proper coordination among central administration, district councils, district primary education office, and Upazila education offices. The UEO as a local level authority has very limited or no power to solve any problem independently.

#### **5.4 Lack of Focus on Diversity and Language Barriers Create Difficulty for Teachers and Students**

Recognising and acknowledging diversity is a fundamental aspect of quality education (UNESCO, 2008 as cited in Pinnock, 2008). According to *Save the Children*, the language of teaching is a key obstacle to education for children who do not speak the school language (Pinnock, 2008). For example, as Jackson (2000) reported, the Burundi government introduced French as the teaching language for two years. Consequently, the rate of Burundi children repeating the same class/grade increased from 28 to 40%. It indicates that children are unable to achieve necessary learning requirements in other languages. Similarly, in a household survey about students 12-19 years in Paraguay, Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (1995) found that "language strongly influences school attainment and performance" (p. 47) and students who are used to only Guarani language at home have lower academic performance than that of Spanish-only and bilingual students. On the other hand, it has been

noted that educational institutions that use both first language and local language as the medium of instruction to teach young children have been linked to decreased repeat and dropout rates (World Bank, 2002c as cited in Kane, 2004), and higher achievement levels (Hunt, 2008). Although bilingual education is frequently viewed as a way of improving children's educational achievement (Hunt, 2008), the CHT children do not have the opportunity to learn through their mother tongue other than Bangla. Hence, as indicated by Pinnock (2008), in the CHT where indigenous students are required to learn Bangla, the rate of dropout is twice the national average at 60%. Likewise, Islam and Wadham (2016) also claim that many children, notably indigenous children face challenges in obtaining proper education due to cultural and language issues.

As the national curriculum and language of instruction are in Bangla, children whose first language is not Bangla face difficulties communicating with teachers and do not understand what is being taught by teachers. In the same way, teachers also face problems communicating with the students who do not understand Bangla which impacts the overall teaching-learning environment. Moreover, the curricula do not reflect the local culture and contexts of the CHT, hence, the CHT children do not find the meaning of life in education.

Children who have educated parents, have the scope to watch TV at home, and interact with mainstream people can overcome the language barriers, but children who come from poor and uneducated families cannot overcome the language barriers easily, even after completing their primary education. Hence, children from poor socio-economic backgrounds often lose interest to study. Although the government and other education providers are taking some steps to overcome this situation, no remarkable progress has been made that can properly address the issues. The socio-political environment of the CHT is also not conducive to the growth of children. Lack of harmony between the mainstream Bengali community and

indigenous people impacts the physical, cognitive, aesthetic, and mental growth of the CHT children. It is also very challenging for teachers to work in such an environment fairly.

## **5.5 Absence of Modern Teaching Methods and Materials and Shortage of Teachers**

Teaching and learning can have an impact on children's schooling experiences, motivations, and the likelihood of dropping out (Hunt, 2008). However, the teaching methods in Bangladesh indicated are conventional and teacher-focused. As indicated by participants, teachers do not apply their training skills in teaching students. They tend to just supervise and provide guidelines to students about what they will read at home. Uneducated parents cannot help their children which seriously impacts students learning. Islam and Wadham (2016) also found that teachers in the CHT spent most of their classroom time talking where students play the role of listeners which is not conducive for developing the student-teacher relationship.

Teacher absenteeism is very common in remote primary schools in the CHT. The absence of teachers restricts teaching and learning (Hunt, 2008). The lack of adequate teachers in most of the remote primary schools is one of the prime causes that hinder the teaching-learning environment. The number of teachers varies depending on the communication facilities. Where communication is easy, these schools have more teachers. On the other hand, schools in remote areas with difficult communication have only 2 or 3 teachers. Due to the remoteness, lack of facilities for teachers like accommodation, electricity, mobile network, drinking water, and sanitation facilities teachers do not want to stay in remote schools, and they try to transfer to convenient locations by giving bribes or using political power. Alcázar et al. (2006) in their study on teachers' absenteeism in Peru had similar findings where teacher absence was disproportionately concentrated in impoverished and

rural areas. They claim that poor communities are less able to keep teachers accountable, and teachers do not feel motivated to work in bad conditions which reduces teacher motivation. Teachers in remote places may find it more difficult to get to school on time due to transportation issues, and therefore remote posts may be less appealing to teachers, resulting in lower motivation.

Moreover, because of not having office staff such as clerks, most of the time teachers have to engage with various official tasks such as preparing reports and attending meetings in the Upazila Education Office and District Education Office which curtail their time for classroom teaching.

## **5.6 Corruption in Teacher's Recruitment Process**

Corruption in education impacts a larger number of individuals than corruption in other areas. Particularly it has severe impacts on the poor, who have the limited possibility of escaping poverty due to a lack of access to school and no alternatives to low-quality education (Meier, 2004). Meier (2004) argues that a country's social, economic, and political destiny is threatened if its educational system is not founded on the principles of meritocracy, honesty, and fairness. However, the findings of this study suggest that corruption such as bribery, lobbying, nepotism, and political affiliation in the teacher's recruitment process deprives the CHT of employing qualified teachers for primary schools. The respondents complained that in most cases individuals gain appointments as a teacher if they give higher bribes and have political affiliations with the ruling parties. Hence, although enthusiastic and qualified teachers are one of the preconditions for ensuring quality teaching (Meier, 2004), most of the CHT remote schools do not have qualified teachers. The educational qualification of teachers in the CHT is lower than the teachers of other parts of the country. The minimum educational qualification of teachers in the CHT is Higher Secondary

Certificate (HSC) for men and Secondary School Certificate (SSC) for women whereas the minimum educational requirement for teachers in other parts of the country is a bachelor's degree for men and HSC for women.

The findings of this study also indicate that there is corruption and a lack of accountability in implementing the development activities such as procurements of facilities and equipment among the actors who work with primary education. Especially in remote areas, the concerned persons do not implement the tasks properly.

## **5.7 Poverty of People/Families**

Children who belong to lower socioeconomic families, rural areas, and socially disadvantaged groups are more likely to obtain lower-quality education (Hunt, 2008). According to Molteno, Ogadhoh, Cain, and Crumpton (2000) “children with hard-pressed life conditions drop out, having learnt little. Vulnerable children get the worst of school system, when they have most need of the best” (p. 2). While some hidden costs such as school uniforms, exercise books, equipment, travel, and the opportunity costs of receiving education are found to be the significant determinants in deciding education access (Hunt, 2008; Rose & Al-Samarrai, 2001), in this study, the participants mentioned that most of the poor parents are incapable to afford these materials. Most of the parents in the remote CHT are very poor and live from hand to mouth. Even some families do not have the capacity to afford three meals a day.

Although Bangladesh adopted the fee-free primary education system, school absenteeism among the CHT indigenous children continues as they have other expenses. As mentioned by Hunt (2008), poverty and children's education have a strong relationship as children also need to be engaged in earning. In the CHT, poor parents employ their children in income-generating activities, more specifically in agriculture farming instead of sending them to

school. It results in student absenteeism in school (Ersado, 2005). Hence, due to the gap in schooling children cannot cope up with school workloads and are permanently withdrawn from education (Hunt, 2008).

## **5.8 Parental Education and Parent and Community Engagement**

Research suggests that children's education is greatly influenced by the level of education of household members (Hunt, 2008). According to Ersado (2005) "the widely accepted notion that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education" (p. 69). The higher level of education among parents is connected to better access to school, higher rate of attendance, and lower rates of dropout (Duryea & Arends-Kuenning, 2003; Rose & Al-Samarrai, 2001). According to several studies, parents who are not educated are unable to provide assistance or do not recognise the benefits of education (Juneja, 2001). The current study also has similar findings in the CHT where being uneducated, parents cannot help their children in studies at home, even, parents and community are not aware of the benefit of education. As Al-Samarrai and Peasgood (1998) argued that while the household head's education enhances the likelihood of completion, the household head's basic literacy does not; hence, it claims more research is needed in different contexts. In their research (Boyle et al., 2002) found that

teachers and community leaders often expressed the view that the poorest parents (who they believe to be uneducated) have little or no understanding of the benefits of education and many children do not attend school (or attend irregularly) because their parents do not value education. (p. 45).

Parents and household members are hesitant and unsupportive of their children's education as they think that children will not get a job after studying. Hence, they consider investing in their children's education is a waste of money (Hunt, 2008). Similarly, in the CHT most of the parents think that their children will not get a job after study and as the quality of education is not good in remote areas, they cannot compete with the urban people in job

hunting. Without a job, education is often useless to them. These parents also do not attend monthly parents' meetings in school. Those, few parents, who attend the meeting, do not speak either, they just listen to the teachers.

Similarly, the SMC members of the remote areas are not educated, they do not have an effective involvement in the educational process. Being unaware of the benefits of education, the communities in remote areas do not show interest to work in SMC. In some cases, the SMC members enroll their names in the committee with the hope of getting financial and other benefits from the schools rather than working for education. Sometimes, they use money and political power to get a post in the SMC as they have no idea what their roles should be.

## **5.9 Long Distance from Home to School**

The short supply of schools increases the distance of locations and restricts the educational access for children (Hunt, 2008). School distance for rural people is a significant factor for educational access (Boyle et al., 2002). This research also found a similar situation in the CHT. Due to the lack of adequate schools in remote areas students have to walk 3 to 4 miles to go to school. Being a remote area and not having road transportation facilities, children have to cross hills, rivers, canals, and lakes to go to school. Hence, parents do not feel safe sending their children alone in case if anything bad happens on their way. Therefore, some children come to school very rarely or stop coming completely. In their research in areas in Ethiopia and Guinea, Colclough et al. (2000) found “as elsewhere, the greater is the distance from home to school, the less likely it is that a child will attend” (p. 21).

## **5.10 School Facilities**

The resources and facilities of schools play a significant role in improving the quality of primary education (Hunt, 2008). From this sense, the educational environment of CHT is not friendly for teaching and learning. Structural issues such as the lack of good school buildings, classrooms, chairs, benches, and playgrounds are not available in most primary schools. Molteno et al. (2000) found school infrastructure, as well as the availability of resources such as textbooks, chalkboards, and desks have an impact on dropout rates. The presence of separate sanitary facilities contributes to the retention of female students, especially when they grow adult and began menstruation (Colclough et al., 2000). Similarly, the absence of latrine facilities leads to the absence of female students and low performance in study or drop-out (Hunt, 2008). However, in the remote CHT, schools do not have separate latrines for boys and girls, even most of the schools do not have usable latrines.

Working in primary education in the CHT is challenging. Individuals who work in primary education have a huge workload due to limited staff, and the assumption that the administration of schools involves surveillance and tight expectations. For example, I found that there are only 3 investigation officers to monitor 56 primary schools and 265 teachers in his Upazila. With this shortage of investigation staff, they cannot properly monitor the schooling activities which hampers the quality of primary education. The remoteness of the schools creates barriers for inspection due to a lack of internet access and mobile networks. Consequently, teacher absenteeism is a problem, and coming to school and leaving early has become a common feature in most remote primary schools. Where there are 3 or 4 teachers, only 1 or 2 teachers come to school by turn, and in some cases, teachers appoint proxy teachers (locally known as ‘borga’ teachers) to perform their duties. Some teachers intentionally get a posting in remote areas to stay away from their duties. Although the head teachers are responsible persons at the institutional level, they too are involved in teacher

absenteeism and always find ways not to go to school. As all the teachers are involved in not playing their role properly, they support one another in corruption. The stand of the Teachers' Federations is one such example, which always protests against the punishment of accused teachers for neglecting their duties. Also, as primary school teachers are employed by the government, it is very difficult to remove them from the job once appointed as every government job is recruited as a permanent (lifelong) position in Bangladesh. The same is also found in Pakistan by Ghuman and Lloyd (2010) in their study on the Pakistani primary education system.

## **5.11 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed how the barriers and challenges hamper the quality of primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh. The study analysed the participant's views regarding the quality of CHT primary education and highlights that the children of the CHT suffer from discrimination in various ways because of the centralised education system that does not embrace and acknowledge the culture and diversity of CHT children. In the CHT, the socio-economic conditions are not children's education-friendly. Most children come from poor families where parents and community are not aware of the importance of education. Since the national curriculum is in Bangla, indigenous children do not have the opportunity to learn through their mother tongue. Remote schools do not have enough facilities for teachers and students which creates a big quality gap between rural and urban schools. There is a lack of application of modern teaching methods and materials in teaching remote children. Due to the remoteness of the area children have to walk long distances to go to school. The lack of qualified teachers and teacher absenteeism in remote areas hamper the teaching-learning environment seriously. In the last chapter that follows I provide the summary of the research and findings as well as provide recommendations for improving the quality of primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh.

## **6 Conclusion and Recommendations**

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### **6.1 Introduction**

Education is fundamental for transforming any individual of a society or nation into a useful human resource, and primary education is the foundation of it and the basic human rights. Like any other developing country, Bangladesh is also taking multiple policies and initiatives to ensure universal primary education consistent with global development agendas such as the MDGs and SDGs. In recent years, Bangladesh has achieved tremendous success in increasing primary school enrollment. However, achieving SDGs 4, which aims to ensure quality education for all, is still a challenge for Bangladesh as Bangladesh still has huge numbers of primary-school-age children out of schools. In addition, the quality of the education of children in primary education is not up to the global standards which children are unable to achieve necessary skills and learning achievement which affects their further study and also in overall education standards and the government's efforts to develop human resource. There are many remote areas in Bangladesh where the number of out-of-school children and dropout is high but learning achievement is low. The CHT is one such area in Bangladesh due to multiple complexities, corruption, and political issues children being deprived of education. The poor education status of the CHT indigenous children affects the country's overall educational achievement. Despite, this fact, very little attention has been paid to CHT education more specifically to CHT's primary education, by the education authorities, and by the academics. To fill this gap, this study has been conducted identifying the issues and challenges affecting quality primary education in the CHT through the lenses of the participants who are directly involved with primary education in the CHT. In this chapter, the following sections will provide the summary of the findings of this study and a recommendation for improvement.

## **6.2 Summary of the Research and Findings**

The research findings are summarised for each research question:

1. How do the participants construct and understand the concept of ‘quality’ in the context of the CHT primary education?

Quality primary education occurs when facilities like electricity, available teachers, trained and qualified teachers, adequate facilities for teachers, good communication, proper monitoring, modern teaching methods and materials like computers and multimedia are ensured. Quality primary education helps an individual to achieve knowledge, skills, and views by which he/she contributes to the society and country as well as maintain a good living standard. The perception of CHT general people is that quality primary education occurs when children are engaged with schools and can read, write, understand, explain, and apply what is taught in schools, as well as achieve a good grade in the exam.

The research participants considered the remoteness of the CHT, language issues, cultural diversity, socio-political contexts, and realities of primary schools. Moreover, they relate the concept of quality with the development of justice, morality, humanity, social norms, patriotism, awareness about the CHT’s history and tradition, affection for one’s own linguistic people, adaptability power with adversity and capability to pursue next learning stages. However, the participants do not see quality primary education in the CHT as it varies based on the locations and available facilities of schools.

2. How do the participants construct and reflect on the difficulties of current realities for quality primary education in the CHT?

The participants constructed and reflected a range of problems and issues considering the CHT context, culture, and realities that hinder the quality of primary education. The issues and realities that are identified in this research can be outlined as:

- a) Corruption such as bribery, political affiliation, lobbying, and nepotism is involved in the teachers' recruitment process which leads to the supply of less qualified persons in primary schools. The educational competency of CHT teachers is lower than in the other parts of the country. Hence, quality teaching cannot be expected from less qualified persons.
- b) As a local authority, the Upazila Education Administration has very limited power or no power to solve urgent issues. The Upazila Education Administration lacks adequate staff to monitor and supervise schools properly which hampers the teaching-learning environment. The UEO only performs the tasks and responsibilities determined by the higher authorities. He has no power to decide school infrastructures like construction of the academic building, providing furniture, water and sanitation facilities, etc. Moreover, there is not enough budget for the UEA to monitor and supervise remote schools.
- c) There is a lack of proper coordination among the authorities such as Central Administration (MoPME and DPE), District Councils, District Primary Education Offices, and Upazila Education Offices regarding teacher recruitment, transfer, and teachers' adjustment. For example, as a local level authority, the UEO has no power to adjust or transfer teachers according to the needs of schools and has no engagement with the teachers' recruitment process.
- d) The highly centralised education system does not focus the CHT's distinctive context and realities. Although the CHT primary education is handed to the District Councils, most of the important decisions like curriculum development, budget, promotion of teachers are determined by the central administration. The power of District Councils is only limited to teachers' recruitment, transfer, and teacher coordination. The centrally

maintained educational policy and planning do not focus on the local demands and actual realities.

- e) Lack of convenient road communication, lack of electricity, internet, and mobile network facilities in remote areas hampers the inspection and supervision activities that impact ensuring a proper teaching-learning environment. Lack of adequate infrastructure such as good school buildings, desks, playground, pure drinking water, toilet and sanitation facilities, entertainment opportunities, modern teaching materials in remote schools made the school environment unpleasant for children.
- f) Being the national curriculum and medium of instruction in Bangla, ethnic minority children do not understand Bangla and face language barriers at the very beginning of their student life. As there is no multilingual or mother tongue-based education, children have no way to learn other than Bangla.
- g) Teachers are not enthusiastic and lack professionalism. They do not apply the training skills in the classrooms, instead, follow a one-way conventional teaching method. They prioritise memorising which is neither interactive nor productive for teaching and learning. Teachers are not committed and accountable for their roles and responsibilities. The assessment and examination process are also not fair, teachers support students by writing the answer on the blackboard during the PECE exam and providing higher marks when scrutinise the student's scripts. As a result, students are promoted to the upper classes without achieving the required skills and knowledge, and later they drop out from high school.
- h) Most of the remote schools do not have adequate teachers, which are run only with 2 or 3 teachers. Due to lack of proper investigation in remote schools, teachers come to school late and leave early and where there are 3 or 4 teachers only 1 or 2 teachers come to school by turn. Even, some teachers employ the less educated person as 'proxy

teacher' from the village to perform their duties. As there is no Clerk in primary schools to help with the administrative task, most of the time teachers have to perform various official tasks which hampers the teaching-learning environment. Due to lack of facilities like electricity, mobile network, transport, etc. teachers do not want to stay in remote schools and try to transfer to a good location where facilities are available.

- i) In the CHT, parents and the community are not aware of children's education, and are not involved in the educational process. Being poor, illiterate, and unconscious, parents do not give importance to their children's education. Moreover, the SMCs in remote areas are not effective.
  - j) As most parents are poor, they prefer to engage their children in income-generating (household or agricultural) activities rather than receiving education. Although primary education is free, most parents do not have capacity to buy teaching materials like paper, pencils, school uniforms, bags, and shoes for their children. Even, some families do not have ability to provide three meals a day.
3. How do the participants imagine a future for primary education in the CHT that will educate (they learn things about the world that serve them as adults, and they enjoy) children?

The participants indicated their preferred education for the future of CHT children considering the current realities and problems. The expectations of research participants explored in this study summarised as follows:

- a) There will be no rural-urban gap in the quality of primary schools. Good communication, adequate infrastructure, electricity, mobile network and internet facilities, modern teaching materials like computers and multimedia, adequate and qualified teachers will be ensured in remote schools.

- b) The educational process will be free from all types of corruption and political influence. There will be no corruption in the teacher's recruitment process, qualified and meritorious individuals will be recruited with transparency based on merit. All actors will be held accountable for their roles and responsibilities. Parents, community, SMC, and other stakeholders actively participate and collaborate in the education process.
- c) All the indigenous children will have the opportunity to learn through their mother tongue. The culture, context, history, and tradition will be included positively in the national curriculum, so the indigenous children find the connection between education and their life. To ensure multilingual and mother tongue-based education, available teachers will be ensured from Indigenous communities. The educational policy and planning will focus on the CHT contexts and realities. Moreover, there will be a learning-friendly environment in every school where children will have the opportunity to learn with enthusiasm and joy.
- d) To attract highly qualified persons in the teaching profession, teachers will be provided with a standard salary and other facilities. Teachers will be provided up-to-date and quality training.
- e) To retain the poor students in education, a mid-day meal will be given to children at schools in poverty intensive areas, and considering the financial status of children, teaching materials and school uniforms will be provided.
- f) Hostel facilities should be provided for students who come from poor and uneducated families. Besides, to reduce teachers' absenteeism residential facilities for teachers have to be ensured.

### **6.3 Implications of the Study**

This research has a wide range of implications including for me as an education professional in Bangladesh, and also all education stakeholders. This study has a great significance in the context of the CHT and at the national and global levels. As Bangladesh has one of the largest and centralised education systems in terms of primary education, the findings of this research will help the government to take effective strategies for indigenous children. This research has provided me the opportunity to contribute to bringing to light the current realities and issues of achieving quality primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh. Besides, this research certainly attempts to fill the current literature gap in the context of CHT primary education as well as help people to understand identical phenomena in the field of education. The findings of this study will increase the awareness among the policymakers and education workers as well as to be sensitive culturally and contextually to undertake policies in the specific context. Moreover, the findings of this study can be applied to similar contexts all over the world.

### **6.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study and literature reviews, the following recommendations have been made in order to improve the quality of primary education in the CHT:

1. Teachers should be recruited purely based on merit without any corruption and political influence so that qualified and sincere persons work as teachers.
2. To attract meritorious persons as teachers, more benefits and facilities should be given to teachers, it could be increasing their salary, providing teachers accommodation near the schools, and giving some extra allowance for working in remote areas.

3. Every school should have an administration staff/officer to look after the administration issue.
4. A participatory accountability system should be ensured at all levels including parents, community, SMC, teachers, UEA, and multiple organisation to secure a conducive teaching-learning environment in the CHT. Active and comparatively educated and enthusiastic persons have to be involved in the SMC.
5. Power and autonomy should be decentralised at the Upazila level so that the Upazila education administration take immediate steps of urgent issues measuring the needs and situation of primary schools. Moreover, the Upazila education administration has to be made more capable by employing an adequate workforce for monitoring and supervision.
6. School infrastructural facilities such as sitting arrangements for both teachers and students, pure drinking water, separate toilet and sanitation facilities for boys and girls, and recreation facilities for children have to be improved in every school.
7. A mid-day meal in selected poverty-intensive areas can encourage poor students in education and come to school. To provide a realistic educational environment to children who come from poor and uneducated families as well as from distant and isolated places, residential hostel facilities have to be provided. Moreover, more primary schools have to be established in no school areas and where school distance is too long for children. Apart from monthly stipends and textbooks, the government has to be provided supports like school uniforms, paper, pencils, and other stationaries for poor students.
8. Mother tongue-based education has to be ensured for indigenous children. For this, multilingual and community-based teachers have to be appointed and the posting of

teachers should be determined based on community and languages. Besides, all teachers should be provided training on indigenous languages.

9. The CHT requires distinct educational policy and planning for the multiple indigenous communities that will recognise and respond to the distinct identity, cultures, language, and livelihood of ethnic minority people. In policymaking, knowledgeable representatives from every community have to be included.

# Appendix A Ethics Approval

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9 February 2021



## HUMAN ETHICS LOW RISK PANEL APPROVAL NOTICE

Dear Dr Bev Rogers,

The below proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application and its attachments.

**Project No:** 4093  
**Project Title:** Understanding the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh  
**Primary Researcher:** Dr Bev Rogers  
**Approval Date:** 09/02/2021  
**Expiry Date:** 30/11/2021

**Please note:** Due to the current COVID-19 situation, researchers are strongly advised to develop a research design that aligns with the University's COVID-19 research protocol involving human studies. Where possible, avoid face-to-face testing and consider rescheduling face-to-face testing or undertaking alternative distance/online data or interview collection means. For further information, please go to <https://staff.flinders.edu.au/coronavirus-information/research-updates>.

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### RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS

#### 1. Participant Documentation

Please note that it is the responsibility of researchers and supervisors, in the case of student projects, to ensure that:

- all participant documents are checked for spelling, grammatical, numbering and formatting errors. The Committee does not accept any responsibility for the above mentioned errors.
- the Flinders University logo is included on all participant documentation (e.g., letters of Introduction, information Sheets, consent forms, debriefing information and questionnaires – with the exception of purchased research tools) and the current Flinders University letterhead is included in the header of all letters of introduction. The Flinders University international logo/letterhead should be used and documentation should contain international dialing codes for all telephone and fax numbers listed for all research to be conducted overseas.

#### 2. Annual Progress / Final Reports

In order to comply with the monitoring requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (updated 2018)* an annual progress report must be submitted each year on the approval anniversary date for the duration of the ethics approval using the HREC Annual/Final Report Form available online via the ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety system.

**Please note** that no data collection can be undertaken after the ethics approval expiry date listed at the top of this notice. If data is collected after expiry, it will not be covered in terms of ethics. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that annual progress reports are submitted on time; and that no data is collected after ethics has expired.

If the project is completed before ethics approval has expired please ensure a final report is submitted immediately. If ethics approval for your project expires please either submit (1) a final report; or (2) an extension of time request (using the HREC Modification Form).

For student projects, the Low Risk Panel recommends that current ethics approval is maintained until a student's thesis has been submitted, assessed and finalised. This is to protect the student in the event that reviewers recommend that additional data be collected from participants.

#### 3. Modifications to Project

Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval has been obtained from the Ethics Committee. Such proposed changes / modifications include:

- change of project title;
- change to research team (e.g., additions, removals, researchers and supervisors)
- changes to research objectives;
- changes to research protocol;
- changes to participant recruitment methods;
- changes / additions to source(s) of participants;
- changes of procedures used to seek informed consent;
- changes to reimbursements provided to participants;
- changes to information / documents to be given to potential participants;
- changes to research tools (e.g., survey, interview questions, focus group questions etc);
- extensions of time (i.e. to extend the period of ethics approval past current expiry date).

To notify the Committee of any proposed modifications to the project please submit a Modification Request Form available online via the ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety system. Please note that extension of time requests should be submitted prior to the Ethics Approval Expiry Date listed on this notice.

#### 4. Adverse Events and/or Complaints

Researchers should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 08 8201-3116 or [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au) immediately if:

- any complaints regarding the research are received;
- a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs that effects participants;
- an unforeseen event occurs that may affect the ethical acceptability of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Hendryk Flaegel

on behalf of

Human Ethics Low Risk Panel  
 Research Development and Support  
[human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)  
 P: (+61-8) 8201 2543

Flinders University  
 Sturt Road, Bedford Park, South Australia, 5042  
 GPO Box 2100, Adelaide, South Australia, 5001

[http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/ethics/human-ethics/human-ethics\\_home.cfm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/ethics/human-ethics/human-ethics_home.cfm)

**ResearchNow**  
 Ethics & Biosafety



*Proactively supporting our Research*

# Appendix B Letter of Introduction

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Dr Bev Rogers  
College of Education, Psychology and  
Social Work  
Education Building  
Flinders Drive, Bedford Park SA 5042  
GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide SA 5001  
Tel: +61 8201 3445  
Fax: +61 8201 3184  
bev.rogers@flinders.edu.au  
Web <http://www.flinders.edu.au/>  
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam

This letter is to introduce Emerson Chakma who is a Master of Education (Leadership and Management) student in the College of Education, Psychology and Social Work at Flinders University.

Emerson is undertaking research leading to the production of a dissertation/18-unit research on the subject of "understanding the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh."

He would like to invite you to assist with this project by agreeing to be involved in an interview, for 60 minutes either telephone call or via a web-conferencing platform e.g., WhatsApp, Skype, Messenger etc. The timing for the interview will be decided with mutual agreement. Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and every effort will be applied to reduce the likelihood that you will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Since Emerson intends to make an audio recording of the interviews, he will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interviews, to use the recording and a transcription in preparing the dissertation, report or other publications. The permission is sought on condition that every effort will be made for your name or identity to not be revealed, and the recording will not be made available to any other person. It may be necessary to make the recording available to secretarial assistants for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, which outlines the requirement that your name or identity not be revealed, and that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on +61 8 82013445 or e-mail [bev.rogers@flinders.edu.au](mailto:bev.rogers@flinders.edu.au)

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Dr Bev Rogers

Lecturer/researcher Educational Leadership  
Coordinator of MEd Coursework Project and Leadership and Management Specialisation in MEd  
College of Education, Psychology & Social Work

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project number 4093). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project, or to discuss any concerns or complaints, please contact the Executive Officer of the committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*

## Appendix C Information Sheet

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### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

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EDUC9724A – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)  
EDUC9724B – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)  
EDUC9724C – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)  
EDUC9724D – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)

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**Title:**

**Understanding the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh**

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**Investigator**

Mr. Emerson Chakma  
College of Education, Psychology and Social Work  
Flinders University  
Tel: 0433506558

**Supervisor**

Dr Bev Rogers  
College of Education, Psychology and Social Work  
Flinders University  
Tel: 08 82013445

My name is Emerson Chakma and I am a master's student of Flinders University. I am undertaking this research as part of my Master of Education degree. For further information, you are more than welcome to contact my supervisor. Her details are listed above.

**Description of the study**

This project will explore the influencing issues and barriers that are hindering the quality of primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh. Moreover, this project will investigate the initiatives undertaken by the government to ensure quality primary education and provide possible solutions to enhance the quality at elementary level. For this study, one education administrator [e.g. UEO/AUEO (Upazilla Education Officer/Assistant Upazilla Education Officer)], one primary school head teacher, one member of SMC (School Managing Committee), one guardian and one NGO staff involved in education program in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh will be interviewed in order to identify the main barriers and issues of achieving quality primary education through semi-structured interview approach.

This project is supported by Flinders University, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work.

**Purpose of the study**

The aim of this project is to find out the possible solutions for achieving quality primary education by exploring the main issues and challenges in the CHT of Bangladesh. The focus of the study is to investigate the underlying influencing issues and challenges that are hampering quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. However, the purposes of this study are to:

- identify the main factors that are hindering the quality of primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh;
- investigate the initiatives that has been undertaken by the government and NGO's to ensure quality primary education;
- find out the possible measures that need to be taken to improve the quality of primary education in that region.

**Benefits of the study**

This study is significant in the context of the CHT of Bangladesh as well as all over the country. Bangladesh is one of the biggest countries in terms of primary enrolment. Recently Bangladesh has achieved tremendous success in the enrolment of primary education, but the quality issue remains one of the main concerns and the condition of CHT regarding this issue is worse than other parts of the country. Because of the low-quality in primary education most of the students cannot achieve the required knowledge and hence they cannot continue their studies in later stages. The research, therefore, will certainly identify the barriers and possible solutions in securing the quality provision of primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh. Moreover, this study will provide the scope to the government policymakers and education practitioners to take proper strategic planning to overcome the underlying barriers and challenges in improving quality primary education. Besides, this research will also help to fulfil the current gap of the literature.

**Participant involvement and potential risks**

If you agree to participate in the research study, you will be asked to:

- attend a one-on-one interview with a researcher that will be audio recorded. This can be via either telephone call or online platforms such as WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, Messenger, or anything that is comfortable for both of us.
- respond to the questions from your own experiences, observations, and understandings in terms of the barriers and issues that influence the quality of primary education and provide some recommendations that can improve the quality. You will be asked to respond to questions about:
  - the barriers that are hampering in achieving quality primary education
  - the initiatives undertaken by the government and NGO's to improve the quality primary education in the CHT
  - the recommendations that can enhance the quality of primary education

The interview will take about 60 minutes and participation is entirely voluntary. The transcript of the interview will be provided to you to read, add to or delete some sections before you return it to me for use in the research.

The following risks may apply to your participation in the project:

**Risk of inconvenience:** this includes giving your time to take part in the interview. The duration of the interview will be approximately 60 minutes and the time and date of the interview will be set at a time that is comfortable to you such as after hours. You will be asked for the approval to take part in the interview even if the interview happens outside of contracted work hours.

**Risk of discomfort:** we don't expect the questions to be asked in the interview will cause any risk or discomfort to you. The interview will happen in a friendly and adjustable manner.

**Risk of loss of data or information:** data and information that will be provided by the participant will be stored in a highly secured password-protected laptop and will not be accessible by non-users.

**Risk of invasion of privacy:** the interviewee may feel uncomfortable with this risk. In order to minimise this risk, anonymity of the interviewee will be assured so that participants will not be recognised. An extensive and general explanation of the participants information will be mentioned with non-identifiable details.

The researchers do not expect the questions to cause any harm or discomfort to you. However, if you experience feelings of distress as a result of participation in this study, please let the research team know immediately.

**Withdrawal Rights**

You may, without any penalty, decline to take part in this research study. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you may, without any penalty, withdraw at any time without providing an explanation. To withdraw, please contact the Chief Investigator or you may just refuse to answer any questions and not participate in the interview at any time. Any data collected up to the point of your withdrawal will be securely destroyed. Data recorded during the interview may not be able to be destroyed. However, the data will not be used in this research study without your explicit consent.

Your decision not to participate or to withdraw from this research study will not affect your relationship with Flinders University and its staff and students.

**Confidentiality and Privacy**

Only the researchers mentioned in this form have access to the information that will be provided by you. The privacy and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. The outcomes of this research will be the part of a dissertation/18- unit research and may be a part of a published paper. However, the privacy and confidentiality of individual interviewee will be protected at all times. No information that reveal your identity will not be accommodated without your explicit consent.

No data will be provided by you will not be shared or used in future research projects without your explicit consent.

**Data Storage**

The information that will be collected from the participants may be stored securely on a password protected computer and/or Flinders University server throughout the study. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University for 12 months after publication of the results. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

**How will I receive feedback?**

After the completion of the project, a short summary of the outcomes will be provided to the interested participants via email if they want to read it. Moreover, if the participants express desire to read, the accomplished dissertation abstract will be sent to them through email.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and if you accept our invitation to be involved, please sign the enclosed Consent Form.

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project number 4093). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project, or to discuss any concerns or complaints, please contact the Executive Officer of the committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*

## Appendix D Consent Form

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### CONSENT FORM

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#### Consent Statement

- I have read and understood the information about the research, and I understand I am being asked to provide informed consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I can contact the research team if I have further questions about this research study.
- I am not aware of any condition that would prevent my participation, and I agree to participate in this research.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study and that my withdrawal will not affect my relationship with Flinders University and its staff and students.
- I understand that I can contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office if I have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study.
- I understand that my involvement is confidential, and that the information collected may be published. I understand that I will not be identified in any research products.

I further consent to:

- participating in an interview
- having my information audio recorded
- my data and information being used in this project

**Signed:**

**Name:**

**Date:**

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project number 4093). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project, or to discuss any concerns or complaints, please contact the Executive Officer of the committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*

inspiring  
achievement

## **Appendix E Email Scrip to the Participants**

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### **Scrip of email to the participants**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am inviting you through this email to participate in a research for my Dissertation at Flinders University, Australia. I hope you will be happy and comfortable to find this email.

My name is Emerson Chakma from Rangamati, Bangladesh. I am a student of Master of Education (Leadership and Management) at Flinders University, Australia. As a part of my degree, I am doing a research project under the tittle “understanding the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh”. In this research I want to investigate challenges of achieving quality primary education in the CHT and its way forward. To successfully complete my research, I will collect data through one-on-one semi-structured interview via either telephone call or online platforms such as WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, [Messenger](#) or anything that is comfortable for both of us. For this study, I have to take interviews from one education administrator [e.g. UEO/AUEO ([Upazilla Education Officer/Assistant Upazilla Education Officer](#))], one primary head teacher, one member of SMC (School Managing Committee), one guardian and one NGO staff involved in education program in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. I would like to invite you with due respect to participate in this research. The interview will take about an hour. For more details, please read the attached documents.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you have anything to be informed or if you agree to participate in the research study, kindly let me know through email.

Best wishes,

Emerson Chakma

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# Appendix F Interview Guide

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## Interview Guide/Protocol



- EDUC9724A – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)
- EDUC9724B – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)
- EDUC9724C – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)
- EDUC9724D – Dissertation in Education (4.5/18 units)

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### Understanding the issues and challenges of achieving quality primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh

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Participants: Upazilla Education Officer (UEO), Head Teacher, NGO Staff, SMC Member, and Guardian/Parent

Interviewee
Name:
Profession/Designation
Address (Optional):
Contact No (Optional):
Interviewee Reference No:
Interviewer Comment:

.....  
.....

#### Introduction:

Welcome to you and thank you very much for your time and agreeing to participate in my research.

Q1. Could you please explain your working environment, duration of working in the field of education, and your role? (For UEO, Head Teacher and NGO staff)

Q2. How long have you been working as a member of SMC and what is your role? (For SMC member)

Q3. As a guardian of a student do you have any connection with the school and how frequently do you visit the school? (Parent only)

**Concept of quality primary education:**

I am very eager to know how the people of the CHT especially those who are working in primary education understand and construct the concept of “quality” in primary education in the local context. Now I would like to ask you few questions on quality primary education.

Q1. How do you define the quality of primary education in the context of the CHT?

Q2. Are you satisfied with the quality of primary education in the CHT?

Q3. From your understanding what is the level of quality (for example poor/medium/high) in the primary education of the CHT?

**The challenges of current realities:**

I am interested to learn about the difficulties of the current realities of primary education in the CHT. So, now I would like to ask you few questions on this issue.

Q1. From your position what are the difficulties of current realities do you see in the primary education of the CHT?

Q2. What are the major challenges that hindering the quality of primary education?

Q3. What factors do you think the most important in ensuring the quality of primary education?

Q4. Besides the government, various organisations are working for the primary education of the CHT. Do you see coordination among the actors (such as Government, NGOs, and so on) working for primary education?

Q5. As you are working with primary education what are the barriers for you to ensure the quality of primary education? ( For UEO, Head Teacher, and NGO Staff)

Q6. As the CHT is one of the culturally diverse regions in Bangladesh having high illiteracy, how do you deal with the cultural diversity and illiteracy in educational settings? ( For UEO, Head Teacher and NGO Staff)

**Recommendations:**

Q1. To ensure the quality at the primary level which factors should be given more priority?

Q2. What types of primary education do you expect in the future for the children of CHT?

Q3. In what ways can the children of the CHT be educated?

Q4. Could you please provide some recommendations that can ensure the quality of primary education in the CHT?

**Closing:**

Do you like to add anything (e.g., quality, challenges, initiatives, and recommendations) that is important to overcome the existing barriers and achieve the quality of primary education in the CHT of Bangladesh?

Thank you....

## Appendix G Interview Guide (Bangla Version)

### Bangla Translation of Interview Guide/Protocol



#### সাক্ষাৎকার গাইড (বাংলা ভার্সন)

সাক্ষাৎকার প্রদানকারী নাম: পেশা/পদবী: ঠিকানা (ঐচ্ছিক): মোবাইল নম্বর (ঐচ্ছিক): সাক্ষাৎকার রেফারেন্স নম্বর: সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহণকারীর মন্তব্য:
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#### সূচনা/পরিচয়:

আমার গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণ এবং সময় দেয়ার জন্য আপনাকে ধন্যবাদ।

প্রশ্ন ১। শিক্ষা বিভাগে আপনার কাজের পরিবেশ, কাজের ধরণ এবং কার্যকাল বর্ণনা করবেন কি? (ইউইও, প্রধান শিক্ষক এবং এনজিও কর্মীদের জন্য)

প্রশ্ন ২। কত বছর ধরে এসএমসি এর সদস্য হিসেবে কাজ করছেন এবং এতে আপনার ভূমিকা কি? (শুধুমাত্র এসএমসি সদস্যের জন্য)

প্রশ্ন ৩। একজন শিক্ষার্থীর অভিভাবক হিসেবে আপনার কি স্কুলের সাথে কোন যোগাযোগ আছে এবং কি পরিমাণ/কত ঘন ঘন স্কুলে যান? (শুধুমাত্র অভিভাবক)

#### শিক্ষার গুণগত মান সম্পর্কে ধারণা:

পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের মানুষ বিশেষত যারা প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় কাজ করছেন তারা স্থানীয় প্রেক্ষাপটে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় "গুণগত মান" ধারণাটি কিভাবে বোঝেন এবং সজ্জায়িত করতে চান তা জানতে আমি খুব আগ্রহী। এখন আমি আপনাকে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার গুণগত মানের উপর কয়েকটি প্রশ্ন করতে চাই।

প্রশ্ন ১। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের প্রেক্ষাপটে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার গুণগত মানকে আপনি কিভাবে সজ্জায়িত করবেন?

প্রশ্ন ২। আপনি কি পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার গুণগত মান নিয়ে সন্তুষ্ট?

প্রশ্ন ৩। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের প্রেক্ষাপটে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার গুণগত মান কোন পর্যায়ে (যেমন: দুর্বল/মার্বারি/উচ্চ) আছে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

#### বাধাসমূহ:

আমি পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার বর্তমান বাস্তবতার সমস্যাগুলো সম্পর্কে জানতে আগ্রহী। তাই, এ বিষয়ে আমি আপনাকে কিছু প্রশ্ন করতে চাই।

প্রশ্ন ১। আপনার অবস্থান থেকে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় বর্তমান বাস্তবতার কঠিনতম দিক কোনগুলো মনে করেন?

প্রশ্ন ২। গুণগত প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা অর্জনে বিদ্যমান সৃষ্টিকারী প্রধান অন্তরায়গুলো কি কি?

প্রশ্ন ৩। গুণগত প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা অর্জনে কোন উপাদানগুলো সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

প্রশ্ন ৪। সরকারের পাশাপাশি বিভিন্ন সংস্থা পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা নিয়ে কাজ করছে। আপনি কি প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা প্রদানকারী সংস্থাগুলোর (যেমন: সরকার, এনজিও বা আরো অন্যান্য) মধ্যে সমন্বয় আছে বলে মনে করেন?

প্রশ্ন ৫। একজন শিক্ষা সংশ্লিষ্ট পেশাদার হিসেবে গুণগত প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা নিশ্চিতকরণে আপনার বাধ্যতাস্থিতি কি কি? (ইউইও, প্রধান শিক্ষক এবং এনজিও কর্মীদের জন্য)

প্রশ্ন ৬। যেহেতু পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বাংলাদেশের একটি অন্যতম সাংস্কৃতিক বৈচিত্র্যময় এবং নিরক্ষর অধুষিত অঞ্চল, শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে আপনি/আপনারা কিভাবে সাংস্কৃতিক বৈচিত্র্য এবং নিরক্ষরতা নিয়ে কাজ/সমবয় করেন? (ইউইও, প্রধান শিক্ষক এবং এনজিও কর্মীদের জন্য)

#### **সুপারিশমালা:**

প্রশ্ন ১। প্রাইমারি স্তরের গুণগত মান নিশ্চিতকরণে কোন উপাদানগুলো বেশি অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া উচিত?

প্রশ্ন ২। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের শিশুদের জন্য ভবিষ্যতে আপনি কোন ধরনের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা প্রত্যাশা করেন?

প্রশ্ন ৩। কিভাবে পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের শিশুদের সঠিকভাবে শিক্ষিত করা যেতে পারে?

প্রশ্ন ৪। আপনি কি এমন কিছু সুপারিশমালা প্রদান করবেন যা পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার গুণগত মান নিশ্চিত করতে পারে?

#### **সমাপ্তি:**

আপনি কি আরো এমন কিছু (যেমন- গুণগত মান, চ্যালেঞ্জ, পদক্ষেপ, সুপারিশমালা) যোগ করতে চান যা বাংলাদেশের পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের বিদ্যমান প্রতিবন্ধকতাস্থিতি কাটিয়ে উঠতে এবং প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার গুণগত মান অর্জনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ?

আপনাকে ধন্যবাদ

## **Appendix H An example of a crafted story followed by description and interpretation**

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### ***Story 1: Quality Education is not found***

I2 is working as a head teacher for 3 years in a remote primary school in the CHT. As a head teacher he has to maintain communication with teachers, guardians, and higher authorities such as the Upazila Education Office and District Education Office. At the school level, he maintains communication and relationship with students, guardians, and public representatives such as Word Commissioner and Union Parishad Chairman of his school area as well as with other stakeholders. Quality education occurs when “the education that we provide [is] related to knowledge, skills, and views [which] can bring positive outcomes for the society and the nation and helps to develop the quality of living standards”. The quality of primary education of the CHT should be considered differently from other parts of the country. Currently the quality varies based on the location of schools and institutional facilities. The quality of education is very good in some schools where facilities like communication are very easy, they have enough teachers, electricity, mobile network, and internet facilities and parents and community are conscious of the importance of education. On the other hand, in most of the remote area schools, the quality is very low where institutional facilities are not available, and parents and community do not see good outcomes of education. Even, after completing primary education many students cannot read Bangla properly and are not able to do general calculations. Most students want to speak in their mother languages and there are some opportunities depending on teachers. Most parents in the remote areas send their children to school mainly to get a stipend and free books rather than planning for education influencing their future.

### **Description**

In this story, I2 reflects his dissatisfaction with the quality of CHT primary education and that the quality of CHT primary education depends on the location of schools. Quality is very good in those schools where facilities are available, and parents and community believe education is important and has good outcomes. On the other hand, where facilities are not available, and parents and community are not convinced of good outcomes, quality is very low in those schools. The medium of instruction for the

national curriculum is Bangla, the CHT children who come from the non-Bangla speaking community have no other choice and face a major language barrier at the very beginning of their educational life. Most of the children cannot overcome the language barrier even after completing primary education, Even, after completing primary education many students cannot read Bangla properly and are not able to do general calculations, so parents and the community do not see good outcomes.

## **Interpretation**

In Bangladesh, the role of primary school head teachers is to maintain communication with teachers, parents, and higher authorities such as Upazila Education Office and District Education Office besides conducting the academic activities at schools. They also have to maintain the relationship with students, local public representatives such as Word Commissioner and Union Parishad Chairman (the lowest local government body of Bangladesh), and other stakeholders. I2 defined quality primary education as the education that is related to knowledge and skills, contributes positively to the society and the nation and helps individuals to have a quality living standard. It is therefore important that the community sees a benefit to being educated.

As the context of the CHT is different from other parts of the country, hence, the quality of CHT primary education cannot be generalised with the quality of the rest of the country. In the CHT, the quality of primary education depends on the location of schools and their facilities. In some schools where facilities such as communication are easy, they have adequate teachers, electricity, mobile network, and internet facilities, the parents and community are able to see good outcomes from education. In most of the remote schools where there are no such facilities, parents and community do not see good outcomes. Even after completing primary education, many students are not able to read Bangla properly and cannot do the general calculations.

In the CHT, there are multiple ethnic groups besides the mainstream Bengali community who have distinct cultures and different languages. The CHT has students from different ethnic minority groups who

speak their own mother tongue and whose first language is not Bangla. Being the national curriculum and the teaching method and medium of instruction in Bangla, children who come from ethnic minority groups do not understand the national language Bangla and suffer from language barriers and therefore do not understand what is being taught. Some students can adopt gradually but most students cannot overcome the language barrier even after completing primary education. Many children feel comfortable speaking in their mother tongue. Hence, children who come from poor and uneducated families feel disinterested in education, as they cannot relate to what is taught in a different language. Although the government and other education providers are taking some steps to overcome this situation no remarkable progress has been made that can properly address the issues. The socio-political environment of the CHT is also not conducive to the growth of children. Lack of harmony between the mainstream Bengali community and ethnic minority groups impacts the physical, cognitive, aesthetic, and mental growth of the CHT children. The CHT teachers work in a complex environment as the children come from different religious, ethnic, and language groups.

## **Appendix I Research participants and their stories**

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### **Interview 1 (UEO)**

*Story 1: Working with limited capacity*

*Story 2: Centralised administration*

*Story 3: Quality education is understood in local context*

*Story 4: The multifaceted realities*

*Story 5: Proper coordination is not seen*

*Story 6: Language barriers faced by ethnic children*

*Story 7: Hope for the future*

### **Interview 2 (Head Teacher)**

*Story 1: Quality education is not found*

*Story 2: The realities of teacher appointment*

*Story 3: The institutional realities*

*Story 4: A desire for expected primary education*

### **Interview 3 (NGO Staff)**

*Story 1: Incompetent teaching method*

*Story 2: Understanding the quality*

*Story 3: The realities*

*Story 4: Lack of focus on local issues*

*Story 5: Preferred education*

### **Interview 4 ( SMC President)**

*Story 1: The school realities*

*Story 2: Quality perception*

*Story 3: Multiple problems*

*Story 4: Desire for children future*

### **Interview 5 (Guardian/Father)**

*Story 1: Parents participation is absent*

*Story 2: Understanding quality concept*

*Story 3: The realities*

*Story 4: Desired future*

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