

Education policies and Voices from below in Bangladesh



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Abstract

We need universal policies that can embrace and educate the broad masses in the society. At the same time, this does not mean that these policies are good for everyone. There could be local knowledge and experiences from individuals that universal education policies fail to notice, see or pay attention to. It is important to have universal education policies that can embrace the broad masses. It is also important to know what individuals and people themselves reflect on, witness and experience from education. The whole picture is important, both the universal and local.

I will analyze education policies from UNESCO, SIDA, BRAC and the Bangladesh government and also give the divorced and subaltern woman in Bangladesh a voice about her own view and experience of education. The broad questions for the thesis are: *How do UNESCO, SIDA, Bangladesh government and BRAC reflect upon education in their education policies; and how do the individual divorced and the subaltern woman reflect upon education?* I did two different studies to answer these two questions; one literature study and one Minor Field Study (MFS) with interviews in Bangladesh.

All the education policies complied and confirmed with the goals and policies adopted by the UN and UNESCO. Like the human capital theory; UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government, BRAC and the divorced and subaltern woman had an economic view on education. UNESCO, SIDA and the Bangladesh government all talked about the importance of gender, equality, right and equal opportunities; but they were still gender, culture and social blind for the local context. BRAC was also blind, but more sensitive to the local context than the three above. We need a vision of education that pays attention to capabilities, opportunities and social needs both on a universal and local context.

Key words: Women, Gender, Subaltern, Divorced women, Voice, Top-down, Bottom-up, Education, Bangladesh.

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Contents

List of abbreviations	5
Introduction	6
- Problem	7
- Aim	7
- Purpose	7
- Context	8
- Disposition	8
Chapter 1	
- Methods	9
- The voice	9
- The interview approach	10
- Data source and Fieldwork	12
Chapter 2	
- What does Education do for the Individual and for Society?	13
- Critique against education and knowledge	14
Chapter 3	
- Education as Human capital	17
- Education as a Right	17
- Education as a Capability	18
- Amartya Sen's development as freedom	18
- Amartya Sen's social opportunities	19
- Education as a social opportunity	20
- UNESCO on education	20
- SIDA on education	23
- The Bangladesh government on education	24
- BRAC on education	25
- Summary of the policies	26
- Conclusion	28
- Reflections	30
Chapter 4	
- Bangladesh	31
- Women's context in Bangladesh	32
- Individual women's voice from below on education	35
▪ <i>The mother at the little community</i>	35
▪ <i>The widow</i>	36
▪ <i>The young girl</i>	36
▪ <i>The married woman</i>	37
▪ <i>The middleclass woman</i>	37
Chapter 5	
- Hegemonic structures and social norms	39
- The subaltern	39
- Voices from below	41
▪ <i>Interview 1, at the Human right project</i>	41
▪ <i>Interview 2, at the Human right project</i>	42
▪ <i>Interview 1, at the Hindu village</i>	43
▪ <i>Interview 2, at the Hindu village</i>	44
- Summary of the interviews	45
- Reflections	46
Chapter 6	
- Conclusion	47
- Reflections	48
References	
Appendixes	

List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AL	Awami League
ASF	Acid Survivors Foundation
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education For All
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SIDA	Swedish International Development cooperation Agency
WCEFA	World Conference on Education For All
UDHR	the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

"Acknowledge us, before the whole world. Give us also the right to our existence" (Radclyffe Hall)

Introduction

In the first article of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it declares that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."¹ Anyway, 60 years later, there is still enormous differences and injustice in the World. All over the World, different groups of people and individuals have different opportunities and capabilities to develop and live a free life.² There are huge differences between men and women's access to economic, social and political possibilities and freedom.³ Men have in general, more power, capabilities and opportunities than women.⁴ In a patriarchal society, women are more excluded, barred or subordinated than men in different ways (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). These differences can complicate the possibilities and capabilities to develop and live a life that they choose by themselves. It is important to know that women are not a heterogeneous or powerless group; women are divided along and have different resources to power, capabilities and opportunities because of their class, ethnicity/race, religion, nationality, citizenship, disability, sexual orientation, age, geographic location, marital status and health. As long as women have less possibilities and capabilities than men, there is a hold back in their development.

Economic, social and political differences between women and men, often restrain people, individuals and societies capabilities for development (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). According to Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000), equality and justices between men and women is a fundamental part in the goal to reach development. Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000) stress that institutions and policies that can assist the society and all its citizens and members to get the same economic, political and social possibilities and capabilities, can also contribute to development. Sen (1999) stresses that, expansion of social opportunities like education, health care and so on, contributes directly to the quality of life and to its flourishing. Sen (1999) also put tension to that these kinds of facilities are important for private lives, but also for more effective participation in economic and political activities. Education is decisive in the challenge against poverty. The education policies from UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), SIDA (Swedish International Development cooperation Agency), the Bangladesh government and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) are important in this strive.

¹ See appedix 3.

² Free life refers in this context to positive and negative liberty. Positive liberty refers to having the power and recourses to act to fulfill one's own potentials; and negative liberty refers to freedom from restraint and interference by other people. A free life is also connected to what Amartya Sen (1999) call capabilities and opportunities. Capabilities are the various functionings that a person can attain – where functionings are the constitutive elements of living, that is, doing and being (Robeyns, 2006:78). Capabilities are the real opportunities to achieve valuable stats of being and doing, and what a person are able to do and to be within their society. See also in this thesis: education as a capability; Amartya Sen's development as freedom; and Amartya Sen's social opportunities, in Chapter 2, page 20-22.

³ Every culture holds and acts as intermediary of ideas of women's and men's sexuality, social, economic and political position and role in the society. For example: in Martinique, most of the typewriters' are women, but in Madras, India, they are men; in Lima, Peru, most of the servants' are women, but in Lagos, Nigeria, they are men; and in Accra, Ghana, 90% of the sellers on the market are women, but in Alger, Algeria, they are men (Henshall Momsen, 1991).

⁴ There are many differences that divide women across space, time, place, geographic location, religion, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation, age, class, marital and social status, health, disability, nationality, citizenship, social and economic power and so on. Women are not a homogenous group. Different individual women have different access to power, capabilities and opportunities.

Problem

Education is a common good, something that is both good for the society and for the individual. We need universal policies that can embrace the broad masses in the society. At the same time, this does not mean that these policies are good for everyone. For example, the human capital theory claim that, education has the same value for all and considers education as good, only direct or indirect, if education generates, contributes or increases the economic productivity (Robeyns, 2006). But there are some difficulties with this theory. The central problem is that it blocks out and ignores cultural, social, gender and non-material dimensions of life.

To lift people and individuals out from poverty, it is important to have universal education policies that can embrace the broad masses. It is also important to know what individuals and people themselves reflect on, witness and experience from education. The whole picture is important, both the universal and local. Because, there could be local knowledge and experiences from individuals that universal education policies fail to notice, see or neglect. Nussbaum (2000:98) stress that individuals can have a nominal right to political participation, this without having the right in the sense of capability: for example, they may be threatened with violence if they leave the home. It is the same with education (DFID, 1993; ADB, 2001; BRAC, 2007). This means that an individual can have the right to something, at the same time, not have the capability or opportunity to make use of it.

Aim

There are three aims in this thesis; the first aim is to see how UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC reflect upon education in their education policies and to see if there is a common or divided view on education between them. The second aim is to see how the divorced and subaltern⁵ woman in Bangladesh reflects upon education. The third aim is to see if there is a gap between UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladeshi government and BRAC and the divorced and subaltern woman's view on education. The broad questions for the thesis are:

- How do UNESCO, SIDA, Bangladesh government and BRAC reflect upon education in their education policies; and
- How does the individual, divorced and subaltern woman reflect upon education; and
- Is there a gap between UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladeshi government and BRAC and the divorced and subaltern woman's view on education?

Purpose

I want to analyze the education policies from UNESCO, SIDA, BRAC and the Bangladeshi government and also give the individual, divorced and subaltern woman in Bangladesh a voice about her own view and experience of education. The purpose with the analysis of their policies is to get the universal perspective and reflections about education, and also the theoretical perspective. The purpose with the interviews is not to choose a representative sample for divorced and subaltern women in Bangladesh, rather to select an illustrative one. The attention on the individual is to get the bottom (the divorced and subaltern woman) perspective and reflections concerning education, rather than the universal (UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC) claiming to represent the absolute truth.

⁵ The term subaltern in my thesis refers to a woman of inferior rank and station in the Bangladesh society, because of her marital status, gender and religion.

Context

Why Bangladesh? It has been a long journey and it started a few years ago. At that time Bangladesh was not even on my mind, it was Africa and India that enticed. The time passed by and so did the countries: Zambia, Tanzania, India (Kerala) and Nepal. In 2008, I started on my master thesis and was looking around for a MFS (Minor Field Study) scholarship. I've got a MFS-scholarship in the end of 2008 to go to Bangladesh. Because of my friend and classmate from Bangladesh, my focus was on Bangladesh at that time; I would say that my choice of Bangladesh was by chance.

Why did I choose to analyze UNESCO's, SIDA's, the government of Bangladesh's and BRAC's policies on education? The choice of the Bangladeshi government is not that surprisingly, it's the country I wanted to go to. Why did I choose UNESCO, SIDA and BRAC? UNESCO is an important organization and power in the world in the fight against poverty and illiteracy. UNESCO is an organization which has a hegemonic power position and creates policies that have an impact on poor people in the world. Here we can find important education policies like the Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and also The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). These policies and declaration have an impact on people and aid in the world. That's why it is important to analyze UNESCO's policies on education. I choose SIDA because I'm from Sweden and SIDA is the Swedish government's aid organization, and SIDA has many education projects in Bangladesh. By this, SIDA's education policies have an impact on people in Bangladesh. I picked BRAC because this NGO is the biggest NGO in Bangladesh.⁶

Why the divorced and subaltern woman? The Bangladesh society is by custom patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal, and women's life is dominated by this social system, and women are subordinated men in different ways in the Bangladeshi society (DFID, 1993; Jahan and Islam, 1997; ADB, 2001; Ahmed, 2007; BRAC, 2007; Hossain, 2009). Today, the role of Bangladesh women is changing. Traditionally, women in Bangladesh are bound to the private sphere (the family) and although they have begun to enter the public sphere of men, their obligations to the home still withstand. Women are subordinated men, but there is a group of women in the society that are more subordinated, its divorced women. Choosing to study their experience of education is to presume that something special can be found and I think there is. That's why I'm interested in the divorced and subaltern woman.

Disposition

I will present the methods, the voice, data source and fieldwork in the first chapter. In the second chapter, I will present what education do for the Individual and for the Society and also bring up some critique against education and knowledge. In the third chapter I will do an analysis of UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC policies on education. The fourth chapter will work as a general introduction to Bangladesh and to the national context where women in Bangladesh are located in. The fourth chapter is important for the understanding of the next chapter. In chapter five, I will present the interviews. In this chapter I will give the individual, divorced and subaltern woman an individual voice about her own view and experience on education. In the sixth and last chapter, I will present the conclusion and also my own reflections.

⁶ BRAC serves over 2 million village women and 1.2 million children. <http://www.brac.net> 2008-11-24. Time 16:20.

Chapter 1

Methods

I did two different studies to answer the three aims in the thesis; one literature study and one Minor Field Study (MFS) and a case study with interviews in Bangladesh. For the first aim, I will do a literature study and analysis of the education policies from UNESCO, SIDA, the government of Bangladesh and BRAC. I will use three normative models of education as an analytic framework in the analysis: education as human capital, education as a right and education as a capability. I will use Sen's third type of freedom, social opportunities and how he reflects upon education, to explain education as a capability. This to see how UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladeshi government and BRAC reflect upon education in their education policies and to see if there is a common or divided view between them. To answer the second aim, how individual, divorced and subaltern woman reflects upon education. I did a minor field study and a case study in Bangladesh to assemble interviews from individual, divorced and subaltern women. For this I used a qualitative research approach with semi-structured open ended questions.

With the analysis of UNESCO's, SIDA's, Bangladesh government's and BRAC's policies on education we will get the universal perspective and reflection on education, and also the theoretical perspective with the three normative models of education: education as human capital, education as a right and education as a capability. Through the interviews, with the individual, divorced and subaltern woman, we will get the bottom and the local perspective on education, and also an individual voice from the subaltern woman.

The voice

According to Spivak, any attempt from the outside to reorganize the subalterns condition by granting them collective speech, can encounter the following problems: first, a logo-centric assumption⁷ of cultural solidarity among a heterogeneous people; and second, a dependence upon western intellectuals to "speak for" the subaltern condition rather than allowing them to speak for themselves (Kapoor, 2004). According to Mohanty (2003), we as researchers, have to deconstruct and dismantle the western feminist construction of the Third World women as a singular, monolithic subject. By speaking out and reclaiming a collective cultural identity, the subalterns will in fact re-inscribe their subordinate position in society (Mohanty, 2003; Kapoor, 2004). The academic assumption of a subaltern collectivity becomes parallel or similar to an ethnocentric extension of Western essentialist, that doesn't account for the heterogeneity of the colonized body politic (Mohanty, 2003; Kapoor, 2004).

Spivak emphasize that someone who are inside the hegemonic power structure cannot speak for the subaltern (Kapoor, 2004). Who can speak for the subaltern, if the subaltern doesn't have the means, capabilities and power to do this, because they are outside the hegemonic power structure? I think we should, rather than asking whether we or the subaltern can speak or not. We should be asking: How can we hear the subaltern and how can we help others to hear them? (Asgharzadeh, 2008) I think anyone can give the subaltern a voice. But we who are not the subaltern cannot speak for the subaltern directly through our analysis, because we

⁷ Logo-centric assumption reflects a tendency of systems of thought where the truth is objective and unified and singular in nature. The logo-centric idea stress the objectivity of an external reality, that "truth" is singular and can be discovered using correct, suitable and proper "scientific" procedure and set of rules.

do not possess the knowledge and lived experience of being subaltern. By giving the subaltern a voice, the subaltern can be heard.

It is important to know that the voices in this thesis do not represent a united voice, interest, need and demand of a homogenous group. It's a single voice from an individual divorced and subaltern woman. These voices can give a deeper understanding and knowledge about education. When doing interviews it is important to reflect upon who you are and how your own identity will shape the interactions that you have with others. You have to recognizing your personality and being reflexive (Valentine, 1997:113).

“[...] it is important to recognize the different power relationship that exist between yourself and your informants. As Schoenberger explains: “questions of gender, class, race, nationality, politics, history, and experience shape our research and our interpretations of the world, however much we are supposed to deny it. The task, then, is not to do away with these things, but to know them and learn from them” (Schoenberger, 1992:218).” (Valentine, 1997:113)⁸

It is also important as a researcher, to be cautious, so you don't end up as an academic voyeurism, which treats marginalized individuals, peoples and groups as an exotic other (Valentine, 1997:113).

The interview approach

I used a qualitative research approach with semi-structured open ended questions (Valentine, 1997; Flick, 2006). I use this type of interview because it takes a conversational, fluid form, this because each interview varying according to the interests, experiences and view of the interviewees and also that this kind of interview is a dialog and not an interrogation (Valentine, 1997:111). The advantage of this approach is that it is sensitive and people-oriented, allowing interviewees to construct their own account of their experiences by describing and explaining their lives in their own words and voice (Valentine, 1997:111). The voice, this perspective “call for a (self) representation that acknowledges the highly diverse, changing and shifting nature of marginalized and dominant forms of identity, highlighting the saliency of constantly shifting difference in terms of past histories, current situations and individual worldviews.” (Asgharzadeh, 2008:338-339)

The emphasis in the use of this approach is that of considering the meanings people attribute to their lives and the processes which operate in particular social contexts (Valentine, 1997). This approach also allows the interviewer and the researcher to go back in the interview and ask the same question but in a different way in order to explore issues in detail, it also gives the interviewees the opportunity to explain complexities and contradictions of their experiences and allows them to describe their everyday lives in detail (Bryman, 1988, in Valentine, 1997:111). Another strength of this approach is that it allows the respondents to raise issues that the interviewer may not have anticipated (Silverman, 1993, in Valentine, 1997:111). A problem and criticism is the interviewer bias, that the interviewer is or cannot be objective. In Valentine's (1997:112) view, and mine, there is no such thing as objectivity in social science research. This because all research work is explicitly or implicitly informed by the experiences, aims and interpretations of the researcher who designed the question or the interview schedule and the researchers should treat participants in their research as people and humans, not as an object (Valentine, 1997:112). Our consciousness is always there and is a medium through which we as researchers come about and exist.

⁸ It is also important to recognize sexuality, marital status and age into this power relationship.

“Whether we like it or not, researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual assembly of feelings, failings and moods. And all of those things influence how we feel and understand what is going on.” (Valentine, 1997:112)

The use of my interview approach creates an opportunity to explore the subjective values, beliefs and thoughts of the individual.

Collecting interviews are also a question of how to gain access to the field when doing a research and it's more crucial when doing a qualitative research than in quantitative research. I did single- and semi-structured open ended question interviews, this required that I and the interviewee got more closely involved than in other forms and styles of interviews. From a methodological point of view, it would be best if I as a researcher had the opportunity to be around and with the interviewee under a longer period through a participant observer role and style; this would do more justice to its object (Flick, 2006:113-114). Unfortunately this was not possible for me because of time compression.

I know that I could face some problems when gaining access to the field, on how to reach these individuals within it. I used my contact at the NGO BRAC and one of their education projects to gain access into the field and to the subaltern women that I was interested in. BRAC and my coordinator worked as a doorkeeper in my search for my subaltern individuals. I let my coordinator at BRAC “post” information about my research in projects and ask people to contact me if they were interested in participating in my research. I know that I could face problems in using this technique. Flick (2006:258) highlight that in some cases, the respondents; also the doorkeeper; can lead the interviewer into collecting and having only abbreviated information.

It was also important to try to foresee difficulties and situations that may arise when doing the interviews, especially when doing interviews in a different cultural context. First it was very important to tell the interviewees that they did not have to answer a question which they did not want to and also that I as interviewer should be sensitive to their responses and never pressurize them to talk about anything which could make them uncomfortable or distressed (Valentine, 1997:122). It was also important to respect, if they want to keep their identity anonymous.

To do interviews in a different culture context, especially in less developed countries, you as a researcher have to be particularly sensitive to the complex of power relations which exist between the researcher and the interviewees, and to the local codes of behavior (Valentine, 1997:124). It's is also important to be cautious and beware of the power relations between my interpreter and the individual, divorced and subaltern woman. The power relation could have an effect on the interviewees answer. Valentine (1997:124) accentuate that the cultural and economic power of the First World casts a shadow over relationships between researchers from North America and Europe when doing interviews in less developed countries, and that the researcher have to be aware of that the relationship between the researcher and the interviewees could be a continuation of the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Spivak stress that we cannot encounter the Third World today without carrying a lot of baggage (Kapoor, 2004:628). She also stresses that there is always, already various forms of Western hegemonic power over the Third World; and the same can or may be said of the field of development (Kapoor, 2004:628). Groups, individuals and organizations from the North or West who is working in development inevitably positions us within a “development discourse” where the North's or West's knowledge, experience and superiority over the South is taken for granted and where Northern-, Western-style development is the norm (Kapoor,

2004:628-629). Our “subjects” are therefore coded or framed in terms of an us and them dichotomy in which “we” aid/develop/civilize/empower “them” (Kapoor, 2004:629).

“Changing this relationship is not a question of mere good intentions or semantics: for instance, development organisations or researchers may now call their subjects ‘beneficiaries’, ‘target groups’, ‘partners’ or ‘clients’, instead of ‘poor’, ‘underdeveloped’ or ‘disadvantaged’, but this does not by itself change the discourse or dismantle the us/them power relationship. So caught up are we in this coding that it becomes important in our encounters with the Third World to ask who represents, and what baggage positions us in this us/them manner.” (Kapoor, 2004:629)

The very presence of the researcher, by virtue of the respondents’ perception of his or her being a powerful person, could generate a whole host of expectations on the part of the respondents. Gender, age and marital status could also be aspects of a researcher’s identity that can limit access to information’s or situations (Valentine, 1997:124).⁹ Being an outsider means that I as a researcher can be positioned outside the local gender norms. According to Valentine (1997:124), it is important to recognize local political agendas and not, through your choice of interviewees, be seen to be taking sides or belonging to a particular group.

Data source and Fieldwork

Choosing who to interview is a theoretical decision. Because, there is no single or general experience from which we can construct a general knowledge; and there are many differences that divides women and women are not a homogenous group. That’s why it is impossible to claim one generalized view (Mohanty, 2003). The women in the thesis came from two different places and have different backgrounds. Two women came from a rural town and a BRAC human right project in Gazipur district¹⁰. These two women are divorced and Muslims and come from a small “rural” town northeast of Dhaka, in the Dhaka Division in the district of Gazipur. Around 28 000 people live in this rural town and around 88 000 in the upazila. The other two women are divorced and belong to an ethnic and religious minority, they are Hindus. They come from a small village close to the first town. This rural village is a small Hindu village with around 400 people and is surrounded by Muslim villages.

There are also five more interviews in the thesis and they work as a complement to the introduction of the Bangladesh context. These women have also different back grounds and came from different places. They live in urban or rural areas. They belong to the ethnic majority; they are ethnic bangle and Muslims. One woman came from a small shanty community in the area of Banani in Gulshan thanas, Dhaka. Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and has around 15 000 000 inhabitants and Banani is one of Dhaka’s upper middleclass areas. This small shanty community is located beside the Banani Lake. The community is around 100 meters long and around 15 meters wide and has one single path that goes through the community. In this community lives around 68 families and between 500 to 600 people. Another one is a divorced middleclass women and student from Dhaka University. Dhaka University is the oldest and largest university in Bangladesh, with more than 32 000 students. Three others came from a rural town northeast of Dhaka, in the Dhaka Division and in the district of Gazipur; one is married, one is a widow and one is young and married to a man that has two wives.

⁹ It is also important to recognize class, ethnicity and sexuality as something that could be an aspect of a researcher’s identity that can limit access to information or situations.

¹⁰ Bangladesh has 6 divisions and these divisions are subdivided into 64 districts. The districts are divided into sub-districts, or upazilas. Bangladesh has 482 upazilas and 599 administrative thanas. An upazila is the lowest level of administrative government in Bangladesh.

Chapter 2

What does Education do for the Individual and for Society?

It is important to know that education can play several roles. Education can for example be intrinsically important and/or play an instrumental role (Drèze and Sen, 2002:38-40). Intrinsically important in the way, that a person may value knowing something simply for the sake of this knowledge.¹¹ Education also has a range of instrumental roles that it can play: the personal versus collective and the economic versus non-economic (Drèze and Sen, 2002). Education according to the instrumental personal economic role can help a person to find a job, to be less vulnerable on the labor market, and to be more able to find information one economic opportunities (Drèze and Sen, 2002). The instrumental personal economic role can also be collective (Drèze and Sen, 2002). If a large percentage of the population is illiterate, then the market for books and news papers for example will be limited (Drèze and Sen, 2002). It will also have an effect on economic growth if the growth requires the introduction of a certain technologies that need to be thought. Then an educated workforce will be necessary. The instrumental role of education are not just limited to the economic role, education can also be non-economic instrumental (Drèze and Sen, 2002). In contrast to a economic perspective, an non-economic instrumental personal level, could mean to have the access to information by being able to read the news paper, a medical instruction, being knowledgeable about issues of health, reproduction and contraception, be able to speak with strangers in their languages, being able to communicate with people worldwide and so on. Education can also open the minds of people about their rights, possibilities and capabilities. At the collective level, education can for example teach children to live in a society where people have different views of the good life, which can lead to a more tolerant society. If people know how to read, write and count they will also be more able to know if someone tries to hoax or take advantage of them.

According to UNESCO (2001; 2007a; 2007b), education is an invaluable tool in the bid to eradicate poverty and that the right to education, characterized as a fundamental right, among economic and social rights. SIDA (2005a) stress that there is a close interrelationship between education, democracy and human rights. According to SIDA (2001:11-15) education is also a basic human right and is necessary for sustainable social and economic development. SIDA also emphasize the right to education is a human right and basic need for all children, youth and adults, girls and boys, women and men, youth and adults with disabilities (SIDA, 2005b). This idea is based on the assumption that education is the key and favors the development of a democratic society and a democratic culture and respect for human rights (SIDA, 2005a). According to SIDA (2005a), education can and should also foster a set of values and ethics that protect and promote a democratic culture. According to Amartya Sen (1999:144), the expansion of health care, education, social security, etc., contribute directly to the quality of life and to its flourishing. These kinds of facilities are important for private lives, but also for more effective participation in economic and political activities (Sen, 1999:39). Sen (1999:40; 144) also stresses that a social opportunity like education can contribute to significant reductions in mortality rates and that female education has an impact on reducing fertility rates. Women's empowerment through education is one important lever for economic and social changes, these changes are a central aspect in the development process (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000).

¹¹ For example, people can find the study of foreign languages, even when one is unlikely to use them.

Critique against education and knowledge

The distance between the power and the powerlessness, between those who take decisions and those who have suffered from these decisions, has increased (Roy, 2008:31-54). Roy (2008:38) stress that it's a dangerous and risky journey for the poor and it's a pitfall filled to overflowing with lies, brutality and injustice. The people with the power to take decisions sits in Washington, New York in offices of the World Bank or the IMF (International Monetary Fund), bureaucrats that have the power to decide the fate and future for millions. Roy further highlight that it is not only their decisions that she or we are contesting, it's also the fact that they have the power to make those decisions and no one has elected them (Roy, 2008:38).

“No one said they could control our lives. [...] Those men in pin-striped suits addressing the peasants of India and other poor countries all over again – assuring them that they're being robbed for their own good, like long ago they were colonized for their own good – what's the difference? [...] The power of the World Bank is not only its money, but its ability to accumulate and manipulate knowledge.” (Roy, 2008:38-39)

Today we see modern science to be projected as a universal and a value-free system of knowledge which has displaced all other belief and knowledge systems by its universality and its value-neutrality, by the logic of its method arrived at objective claims about nature (Shiva, 1997:162). According to Shiva this is not true. Shiva (1997:162) stresses that the modern Western science is not value-free, value-neutral and objective. Western science has been produced by individuals and organizations, which is almost entirely white, middle-class, males and based on the progress of the West/North. This science and knowledge has then spread throughout the world.

The radical critiques of education in the 1970s emphasized three primary functions of modern schooling, its functions of channel, socialize and legitimize. According to the critique, a school in the capitalist society was not only to fulfill the function they believed to fulfill, in contrary the school carried out tasks odious from the standpoint of a democratic ideology (Nicholson, 1994). Studies showed that, schools did not provide the arena in which the smart made their way to the top of the social ladder. Schools rather provide the means for channeling young people of different capacities and classes into different occupations in the economy and by this school legitimized the existing class division constructed on the basis of difference in inheritance (Nicholson, 1994). Second, the school in the capitalist society did not and could not satisfy the ideal of imparting beliefs and skills that simultaneously contributed to an individual's self-development while making him or her social useful (Nicholson, 1994).

The critique also noted the important function of schools in legitimizing not only people but also different types of knowledge and thereby discrediting many skills and activities based on them not taught within schools (Nicholson, 1994). This critique, enable us to see how these functions of schooling, have all been importantly biased along lines of gender. “If the job of schools has been to prepare young people for participation in the public sphere, this sphere as primarily masculine has entailed a corresponding gender bias of both the population and the norms of schools.” (Nicholson, 1994:82)

According to Nicholson (1994), the separation of the private and public sphere, is an important framework for understanding modern Western schooling. The modern Western schooling arose as a necessary condition institution between the increasingly separation realms of family and society (Nicholson, 1994). Nicholson (1994:78) stresses that, as these two realms become distinguished in terms of both practice and norms, what arose then was

the need for an institution to socialize people, primarily young boys, out of the family and into the public world. Nicholson (1994:79) also highlight that we are in danger if we think of schooling as being merely the institution by which capitalism socialize its young. She points out that it is true that the development of capitalism has been inseparably linked with the separation between the public and private sphere, this separation has not been gender neutral. She also stressed that, school has been primarily viewed as necessary only for those who are expected to make a transition from the private sphere into the public sphere and this has been primarily truly for young boys and men (Nicholson, 1994). Schools have been gendered biased; this does not mean that schools have excluded girls and women. It is rather that schools have been primarily intended for young boy and men and only secondarily for young girls and women (Nicholson, 1994).

Ki-Zerbo (1997:153) sees the school as a dangerous cyst and a soul-eater.¹² According to Ki-Zerbo (1997:153), the modern school tends to rob the student of his historical memory. In school, one is trained to lose one's personality, no longer being able to recognize one's father or mother or home. He stress that as children are cut off from their historical roots, an entire populations risk losing their personalities and become cultural proletarians and victims of zombification. Ki-Zerbo (1997:154) also stresses that on another plan, the imported school leads to an economic dead-end and a social powder barrel. According to him, education leads to movement or migrations of people, which is common to all underdeveloped countries, particularly in Africa. The student with a degree from primary education goes to the little town, while the one with a degree from high-school goes to the capital and the one with a higher education goes to the rich countries. In the rural zone, which have paid for the expenses of education thus end up by being punctured, with their vitality, their capacity to progress and even to survive pumped out of them (Ki-Zerbo, 1997:154). Finally, schools tend to be increasingly anti-democratic (Ki-Zerbo, 1997). Because education assumes to be a source of upward social mobility, it is desired by everyone, but it actually serves people who are already educated, thus becoming the preserve of a small minority (Ki-Zerbo, 1997:154).

According to Nandy (1997:168), the modern colonialism or the second colonization won its great victories not through its military and technological ability as through its ability to create secular hierarchies incompatible with the traditional order. These hierarchies opened up new landscape for many, particularly for those exploited or cornered within the traditional order. The finest critical minds in Europe and in the East were to feel that colonialism, by introducing modern structures into the barbaric world would open up the non-West (Nandy, 1997:168-169). The Second form of colonization, the colonization of the mind, colonized the mind in addition to the bodies and its force within the colonized societies altered their cultural priorities once and for all (Nandy, 1997:170). In this process, the West becomes to be everywhere, within the West and outside; in structure and in minds (Nandy, 1997:170).

“As a result of this process of dividing or of deepening the division in the society, it happens that a considerable part of the population, notably the urban or peasant *petite bourgeoisie*, assimilates the colonizer's mentality, considers itself culturally superior to its own people and ignores or looks down upon their cultural values. This situation, characteristic of the majority of colonized intellectuals, is consolidated by increases in the social privileges of the assimilated or alienated group, with direct implications for the behavior of individuals in this group in relation to the liberation movement.” (Nandy, 1997:171)¹³

¹² He sees the school as insular and narrow-minded.

¹³ Amilcar Cabral, 1970. An extract from a speech made by Amilcar Cabral and quoted in a box in Nandy, 1997:171.

According to Rahnema (1997:158), the school system, which was introduced by the colonial power in countries under their rule, was soon co-opted by the emerging nation-state. Education becomes one of the most important vehicles of development strategy, being presented to the excluded as the answer to all the problems of their underdevelopment, the good thing that could save their children from misery and shame. In reality, according to Rahnema (1997:158), school served other purposes. Schools acted as a rather efficient channel for sieving out, into the power establishment, their most ambitious customers. Rahnema (1997:158) stresses, as a whole, schools foster unprecedented processes of exclusion against the poor and the powerless, despite their claim to serve as a new instrument of democratization. The excluding processes operated at a number of levels (Rahnema, 1997:158). It destroyed all previous established systems of cultural references, in relation to the society at large and as the only recognized providers of education, they systematically discredited all previously established mechanisms that different cultures had created throughout their histories for fostering knowledge and culture. Rahnema (1997:159) also heighten that the imported modern school also acted as another instrument of exclusion by allowing only a small minority of their clients to acquire social recognition.

In a Bangladeshi context, education till today has been a mean to earn social status and an impetus for upward mobility (Akhter, 2007:119). Historical, education in Bangladesh has been to serve the colonial masters. One had to be educated in English and in the absence of the colonial masters, to be educated to be westernized, to accept imperial values, paradigm, projects and relations uncritically (Akhter, 2007:119). “A powerful process of undermining the other institutional or non institutional forms of learning have been systematically destroyed or undermined, albeit with resistance.” (Akhter, 2007:119) According to Akhter (2007) the education question is a question of orality (vocal) and languages we speak. Akhter (2007) also stress that literate and illiterate is problematic and is both politically and culturally. Akhter (2007) further highlight that it does not mean that we should undermine education based on letters, but we should bring in wisdom, knowledge and skill based orality.

There have been different critiques against education and knowledge. Roy (2008) stressed the distance between the power and the powerlessness, between those who take decisions and those who have suffered from these decisions. Shiva (1997) talked about today’s science to be projected as a universal and a value-free system of knowledge. Shiva (1997) stress that this was not true, science is not value-free; science is instead influenced and subjected by the West. Nicholson (1994) put forward the functions of modern schooling, its functions of channel, socialize and legitimize. That school did not provide the arena in which the smart made their way to the top of the social ladder, and that schooling have been biased along lines of gender, and also served as a gender separator between the private and public sphere. Ki-Zerbo (1997) stressed that the modern school tends to rob the student of his historical memory, and that children are cut off from their historical roots, and to be an economic dead-end and a social powder barrel. According to him, educations lead also to movement and migration of people. Nandy (1997) talked about the second form of colonization, the colonization of the mind, colonized the mind in addition to the bodies and its force within the colonized societies altered their cultural priorities once and for all. In this process, the West becomes to be everywhere, within the West and outside; in structure and in minds (Nandy, 1997). Rahnema (1997) highlighted the colonial school system which was introduced by the colonial power in countries under their rule, and that this school system fostered processes of exclusions against the poor and the powerless.

So, how do UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC reflect upon education?

Chapter 3

I will in this part analyze education policies. I want to see how UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC reflect upon education in their education policies and to see if there is a common or divided view on education between them. I will do this with the help of three normative models of education: education as human capital, education as a right and education as a capability.

Education as Human capital

The human capital theory is embedded in neoclassical economics. Human capital theory considers education to be relevant due to its ability to create skills and help to acquire knowledge that serves as an investment in the productivity of the human beings as an economic production factor, as a worker (Robeyns, 2006). According to the human capital theory, education is important, because it allows workers to be more productive, and thereby being able to earn a higher wage.¹⁴ Skills and knowledge that is acquired through education are an important part of a person's income-generating abilities. In the context of living in poverty, basic skills or having a decent education can make the difference between starving and surviving, and between merely surviving and having a decent life (Robeyns, 2006).

The human capital theory is economic and instrumental, and benefits from education are only considered as good (direct or indirect) if the education generates, contributes or increases economic productivity and a higher wage. The theory blocks out and ignore cultural, social and non-material dimensions of life.¹⁵ The human capital theory sees that humans only act for economic reasons, and people who act for social, religious, moral, emotional, or non-economic reasons, cannot be accounted for by this theory. The human capital theory does not value non-instrumental values of education. This means that knowledge that is not economically instrumental, such as learning to read, understanding poetry or studying ancient cultures has no values in this theory if the knowledge does not generate money (Robeyns, 2006:73).

The human capital theory sees that not everyone has the same rate of return on education, and that the same amount and quality of education to different people will not give the same rate of return (Robeyns, 2006:73). Different people will be affected due to either internal or external restrictions, this can be either social or natural or a combination. Internal restrictions are for example physical or mental disabilities. External restrictions from nature may include the lack of labor market for skilled labor. External restrictions are often social and cultural in nature (Robeyns, 2006:72).

Education as a Right

In the education as a right approach¹⁶, men and women are entitled to equal rights. Viewing education as a Right is the opposite of the human capital theory's view on education as human capital. The human right framework stresses that education is a human right that should be guaranteed to all, regardless of economic return, even if education plays a non-economic role.

¹⁴ "By regarding skills and knowledge as an investment in one's labour productivity, economists can estimate the economic returns to education for different educational levels, types of education, etc." (Robeyns, 2006:72)

¹⁵ The human capital theory cannot explain the behaviour of someone who wants to spend her time studying something that will not give any economic returns (Robeyns, 2006:72).

¹⁶ The right to education model is directly associated with the education for all (EFA) movement (Robeyns, 2006:75).

This is the opposite of human capital that sees education as economic and instrumental. Education as a right sees human beings as the ultimate end to moral and political concern. This is the opposite of the human capital theory that sees human beings as input factors for economic production and growth.¹⁷ The right to education framework submits that every human being, men, women and children are entitled to equal rights to decent education, even when there is no guarantee that the education will pay off in terms of human capital (Robeyns, 2006:75). According to the right to education framework, education should prepare learners for parenthood and political participation; it should also develop social cohesion and teach the young that all human beings have rights (Robeyns, 2006:75).

Education as a Capability

The capability approach views education as more strongly connected with human freedom (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). The capability approach sees the benefits and results from education as multidimensional, not value-free, and as measurable by substantial achievements in freedom. This freedom can be articulated in terms of human capabilities and/or functionings all referred to dimensions of human development (Lanzi, 2007).

“Capabilities are the various functionings that a person can attain – where functionings are the constitutive elements of living, that is, doing and being.” (Robeyns, 2006:78) The focus of the capability approach is on what a person is able to do, being and doing, and to be within their society (Hicks, 2002).¹⁸ Those things that people actually accomplish such as well nourished, have decent shelter, being diseases free and appearing in public without shame are called functioning’s (Hicks, 2002). The bundle or choice of the functioning’s that a person can select entails his or her capability set (Hicks, 2002:140). The capability approach is a broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well being and social arrangements. Example of functionings include being healthy, being educated, holding a job, being a part of a nurturing family, having deep friendships, etc. (Robeyns, 2006:78).

Education is important in the capability approach. Having access to an education and being knowledgeable allows a person to flourish or prosper. Both Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000) highlight the importance of literacy for women in expanding her opportunity set, to live a healthy, flourishing and prospering life, and be equal to men and take part in politics.

Amartya Sen’s development as freedom

According to Amartya Sen (1999), development can be seen, as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Sen’s focus on human freedoms is in total contrast to the narrower view of development, identifying development with the growth as gross national product, or an individual’s rise in income, or as industrialization, or technological advancement, or as social modernization. According to Sen (1999), it is important to give tension to other economic, social and political freedoms. GNP growth or individual’s higher income can be important as a mean to expand individual’s freedoms in society. But,

¹⁷ The consequence of the human capital view on education is that people whose economic productivity is unlikely to benefit from education, such as mentally disables, are nevertheless equally entitled to education as people who are expected to have a high economic return on education (Robeyns, 2006:75-76).

¹⁸ “A person who has adequate access to food but who fasts for religious reasons has the capability to be well nourished, while the poor, starving person does not have such a capability. Neither the fasting person nor the starving one has the functioning of being well nourishing, but the former enjoys a kind of freedom that the later does not.” (Hicks, 2002:140)

According to Sen (1999), freedom also depends on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements like facilities for education and health care, as well as political and civil rights. Sen (1999:3) is aware that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states. According to Sen (1999:4), lack of substantive freedom (and functionings) can sometimes be related directly to economic poverty, which robs people of the freedom to satisfy hunger, achieve sufficient nutrition, obtain remedies for treatable illnesses, or the opportunity to have adequate clothes or shelter. In other cases, according to Sen (1999:4), unfreedom can be linked closely to the lack of public facilities and social care, such as the absence of organized and sufficient health care or educational facilities.

According to Sen (1999:4-5), freedom is central to the process of development for two distinct reasons. First, *The evaluative reason*: the assessment of progress has to be done primarily in terms of whether the freedoms that people has, is improving; and second, *The effectiveness reason*: the achievement of development is thoroughly dependent on the free agency of people. What people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives (Sen, 1999:5). Sen points out five distinct types of freedom, seen in an instrumental perspective, these include: first, political freedom; second, economic facilities; third, social opportunities; fourth, transparency guarantees; and fifth, protective security. Each of these distinct types helps to advance the general capability of a person. In this thesis, I will look into Sen's third type of freedom, social opportunities.

Amartya Sen's social opportunities

Development according to Sen (1999) can be seen, as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Unfreedom like poverty, poor economic opportunities, social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states, can be a major barrier for human capabilities and economic development. Lack of substantive freedom can sometimes be related directly to economic poverty.¹⁹ In other cases, unfreedom can be linked to the lack of public facilities and social care, such as the absence of organized and sufficient healthcare or educational and healthcare facilities. Sen's freedom depends on such social and economic arrangements like facilities for education and health care, as well as political and civil rights. Violations of freedom results directly from a denial of political and civil liberties by authoritarian regimes and from imposed restrictions on the freedom to participate in the social, political and economic life of the community.

According to Sen (1999), creation of social opportunities makes a direct contribution to the expansion of human capabilities and the quality of life. "Social opportunities refer to the arrangement that society makes for education, health care and so on, which influence the individual's substantive freedom to live better." (Sen, 1999:39) Expansion of health care, education, social security, etc. contributes directly to the quality of life and to its flourishing (Sen, 1999:144). These kinds of facilities are important for private lives, but also for more effective participation in economic and political activities (Sen, 1999:39). Illiteracy can be a major barrier to participation in economic and political activities that require production

¹⁹ This lack can take away people's freedom to satisfy hunger, or to achieve sufficient nutrition, or obtain remedies for treatable illnesses, or the opportunity to have adequate clothes or shelter (Sen, 1999:4).

according to specification or demand strict quality control, or be hindered by the inability to read newspapers or to communicate in writing with others (Sen, 1999:39).

Economic growth can help in raising private incomes, but it can also make it possible for the state to finance social insurance and active public intervention. Creation of social opportunities, through service such as public education, health care, and the development of a free press, contributes to significant reductions in mortality rates and female education and has an impact on reducing fertility rates (Sen, 1999:40; 144). It can also contribute to economic development, but at the same time, creation of social opportunities does not always go hand in hand with economic growth (Sen, 1999:43-46).

Education as a social opportunity

According to Sen (1999), adequate social opportunities like public education and healthcare, can effectively shape individuals in their own destiny and help others. Basic education, especially female schooling and literacy reduce birth rates and mortality rates (Sen, 1999); and women's agency, influenced by education and employment, can also influence public discussion on a variety of social subjects, including acceptable fertility rates and environmental priorities (Sen, 1999:193). Education also effects female's empowerment and their work outside the home. Women's employment and wage earning outside the home have effects on their families' prosperity. Female's freedom to seek and hold jobs outside the home can also reduce women's relative and absolute deprivation (Sen, 1999:194).

Life expectancy is also something that relates to a variety of social opportunities that are central to development (Sen, 1999). Illiteracy can be a major barrier to participation in economic and political activities that require production according to specification or demand strict quality control, or be hindered by the inability to read newspapers or to communicate in writing with others (Sen, 1999:39). Women's education and literacy tend to reduce the mortality rates of children (Sen, 1999:195). School education also may enhance young women's decisional power within the family (Sen, 1999:218). Many social opportunities, for example health care and basic education are public goods. Public goods are something that people consume together rather than separately. According to Sen (1999:294), if a person can become more productive in making commodities through better education, better health and so on, it is not unnatural to expect that she or he can, through these means, can directly achieve more, and have the freedom to continue to achieve more throughout her life.

So, how do UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC reflect upon education?

UNESCO on education

UNESCO's policy framework for education is determined by goals adopted by the UN and UNESCO.²⁰ UNESCO (2001; 2007a; 2007b) sees the right to education as an invaluable tool in the bid to eradicate poverty, and that the right to education, characterized as a fundamental right; and among economic and social rights. Education holds a central place in UNESCO development strategies. Education is therefore, today, at the very heart of their development strategies. UNESCO (2001:10) stresses that none of our civil, political, economic and social

²⁰ UNESCO's framework is determined by five goals adopted by the UN and UNESCO, these are: The six Education For All goals in the Dakar framework; The UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular goal 2 and 3, UN Literacy Decade 2003-2012, UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014; and The EDUCAIDS Global Initiative on Education and HIV/AIDS (UNESCO, 2007b). Only the two first will be analyzed in this paper.

rights can be exercised by individuals unless they have received a certain minimum of education.

UNESCO (2001) points at the World Declaration on Education for All²¹ to recall that education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages; and recognizes its necessity to give it to present and coming generations. According to the conference, basic education or basic learning need to embrace both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning (WCEFA, 1990:11; SIDA, 2001:15). Basic education is observed to facilitate the ability to meet other basic needs as adequate nutrition, shelter and clothing, and access to health services and clean water.

According to the World Conference on Education For All, learning is the catalyst for all development processes; a lack of learning opportunities constrains the individual and societal ability to produce, or to benefit from development (WCEFA, 1990). According to the WCEFA (1990:7), primary education is known to improve the productivity of workers and provides the necessary skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship; and that basic learning of all types can help families earn higher incomes and make better use of their earnings through informed consumption choices and improved household management. The WCEFA (1990) indicate that increasing in literacy contribute to increases in investment and in output per worker, and that literacy also correlates with improved nutrition, income and increased life expectancy and that literacy also reduced infant and maternal mortality. According to the WCEFA, primary education is critical for promoting the productivity of small entrepreneurs because they face additional decision-making demands and retain a larger share of the benefits of their own productivity, primary education also increases productivity and wages in agriculture (WCEFA, 1990:7).

According to the WCEFA (1990), economic disparities reinforce and reproduce over time by unequal access to basic education and unequal achievement in learning. More equitable access to effective basic learning opportunities will, according to the WCEFA (1990), immediately begin to reduce the gap between the least educated and the most educated within a society. Reduction of learning disparities has both immediate and long-term effects (WCEFA, 1990). Lacking skills to participate in a literate, technological world and the knowledge to transform their environment, people will remain on the margin of society, and society itself will lose its vast potential (WCEFA, 1990). Increasing the level of basic learning, will help to alleviate conditions disadvantage, or contributes to the reduction of social disparity (WCEFA, 1990:9). According to WCEFA (1990), education also contributes to reducing disparities and building common understanding among people of different countries, socio-economic origins, and cultural identities. Education also has an effect on gender. For instance, education for girls and women is strongly related to reduced rates of maternal and infant mortality; it also improves families' nutrition (WCEFA, 1990:10; 26-27). Basic education, according to the WCEFA, is more than an end in itself; it is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development in (WCEFA, 1990:12).

²¹ The outcome of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) at Jomtien, Thailand, 1990.

The World Declaration on Education for All (WCEFA) was just the beginning. The Jomtien conference got followed by the Dakar conference in Senegal, 2000; and with that “The framework for Action on Education for All” (EFA) was re-affirmed and six EFA-goals were adopted.²² The Dakar conference brought up, stressed and affirmed that the right to education is articulated in article 26 of the universal declaration of human rights;²³ and that the right to education guaranteed people’s access to, and enjoyment of, other rights was enhanced (EFA, 2002:4).

UNESCO (2001) also sees education as a key to mutual tolerance and understanding; according to them, proper education would lead to development of human rights and building of a culture of peace and democracy. Education also fulfils an international function of promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups.

UNESCO (2007a) brings up that there is a direct link between education and economic development. According to UNESCO (2007a), education contributes to economic development at various levels, from basic to technical, professional and higher education. But different types and levels of education do not, according to UNESCO (2007a), contribute equally to economic development. UNESCO (2007a) emphasizes that primary education in developing countries; tend to yield higher social returns than those in any other level of education. Primary education also has effects on economic development and on labour markets and employment opportunities (UNESCO, 2007a). UNESCO (2007a) also stress that economic development, without the framework of sustainability, has no future. Education has a strong role to play in cultivating awareness and understanding of the challenges of sustainable development. UNESCO (2007a) sees that economic development is undermined by the lack of educational opportunities; and inequalities in education are among the most powerful drivers of inequalities in income, health and opportunity. UNESCO (2007a) also points at, that education has the potential to act as an equalizer of opportunity as well as a force for economic growth and efficiency. According to UNESCO (2007a:3), “... human right in and of itself, linked to the full unfolding of human potential, education also contributes to open societies and societal change through the promotion of other human rights, tolerance, peace and disease prevention.” Access to equitable and good quality education is essential to fulfill the right to education (UNESCO, 2007a).

UNESCO points at and uses the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as a framework. There are eight Millennium Development Goals,²⁴ and all eight are connected and related to each other. The second and third Millennium Development Goals are those two goals that bring up the essential and importance of education in the attempt to reduce poverty; these two goals are central for UNESCO. The target for the second Millennium Development goal is to ensure that all boys and girls everywhere have the opportunity to begin and complete a full course of primary schooling (UN, 2005; 2006). According to the second goal, it is crucial to raise educational levels for development in poor countries. According to the MDG, education gives knowledge to people, and gives people choices regarding the kind of life they wish to live for themselves, and a chance to demand and help build up a democratic society and also to improve their economic and social prospects (UN, 2005; 2006; MDG, 2000a). Education, especially for girls, has social and economic benefits for society as a whole (MDG, 2000a); and educated women have more economic opportunities and engage more fully in public life.

²² See appendix 1 for the six EFA goals.

²³ See appendix 3 for the article 26 of the universal declaration of human rights.

²⁴ See appendix 2.

As mothers, educated women tend to have fewer and healthier children who are more likely to attend school; and educated women get medical help sooner and provide better care and nutrition for their children. According to the second Millennium development goal, this reduces hunger, infant and maternal mortality, spread of HIV/AIDS, and also environment damage. The second MDG sees these benefits as keys to breaking the cycle of poverty.

The third Millennium Development Goal brings up and promotes gender equality, and is connected and related to the second Millennium development goal. Gender equality means ensuring that women have the same chance as men to improve their lives and the lives of their families (MDG, 2000b). According to the third Millennium development goal, no progress on the other Millennium development goals can be made unless radical changes are made to ensure that women have the same rights as men, every single goal is directly related to women's rights (MDG, 2000b). Gender equality and investment in girls' education is important and it will raise every index of progress towards economic growth and development.

UNESCO (2007a) sees that it is difficult to see how development can be sustainable if a large proportion of a country's population remains illiterate, or poorly educated. Education is the most critical aspect that contribution to economic growth (UNESCO, 2007a).

SIDA on education

SIDA (2005a) sees that there is a close interrelationship between education, democracy and human rights and that education is a basic human right and is necessary for sustainable social and economic development, and education is also crucial for poverty reduction (SIDA, 2001:11-15). The right to education is a human right and basic need for all, children, youth and adults, girls and boys, women and men, and youth and adults with disabilities (SIDA, 2005b). This idea is based on the assumption that education favors the development of a democratic society, a democratic culture and respect for human rights, and education is the key (SIDA, 2005a). According to SIDA (2005a), education can and should foster a set of values and ethics that protect and promote a democratic culture.

According to SIDA (2005a), education as a basic human right shifts the focus on the contribution that education can make to economic development. In this perspective, the individual in the society is viewed as a stakeholder with rights and not an object of charity or investment. The right to education expresses the right an individual possess in society and the state obligation to guarantee this right. Furthermore, this right should be provided equally and no one should be denied the right as a result of discriminatory and practices (SIDA, 2005a; 2005b).

SIDA (2001:11-15) is aware that girls education is one of the most important determinations of development; and that investment in basic education is indispensable for human development and pro-poor growth; SIDA also stress that a growing economy is in its turn a necessary, but not sufficient, for human development. SIDA (2001:11) also sees that education opens possibilities, at the individual level, that otherwise would be closed, like chances to live a healthy and productive life.

Children's, youths and adults education have been the priority of SIDA's development cooperation in the education sector; and that education in all countries is crucial for coping with integration in a global world and the transformation of the nature of work (SIDA, 2001:11-12). SIDA's policy is based on a holistic view of that education sector, including

non-formal education and all levels of formal education (SIDA, 2001:12-13). SIDA's policy focus on basic education in a broad sense; SIDA shares the re-affirmation of the Dakar commitments of the "expanded vision" of basic education, article 1, that "Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.... Article 1" (SIDA, 2001:15)

SIDA's policy is also based on internationally agreed upon concepts and goals declared in Human Rights Conventions and Declaration, and Sweden's policies for development cooperation (SIDA, 2001:13).²⁵ The dominant goal of poverty reduction is underpinned by a right-based approach promoting democracy and human rights, equality between women and men, and sustainable development. SIDA is committed to "The framework for Action on Education For All" (EFA) and the six goals that were adopted in Dakar, 2000, and the declaration from the World Conference on Education For All at Jomtien, Thailand, 1990.²⁶

SIDA (2001:23) points at, without an adequate share of national income and state budget allocation to basic education, the goals of poverty reduction will not be achieved. SIDA (2001:23-25) also sees that it is important to strengthen poor women's and men's capabilities. According to SIDA (2001) it is important to strive for progressive public education spending, which benefits the poorest groups more than the richest and that it is important to enhance the rights of the poor and disadvantaged groups to be offered equal opportunities. To enhance the right to relevant education for all, and education that empowers the poor and excludes parts of the population to participate as active and informed citizens in all aspects of development (SIDA, 2001:24). SIDA (2005a) stresses that, at the most basic level, economic and social rights have both direct and indirect effects on democracy. Denial of the necessities of life (such as education or employment opportunities) means reduction for those who already are left without options to live a good life (SIDA, 2005a).

The Bangladesh government on education

The Bangladesh government's policy and focus on education; are to provide: value based education; emphasize on job-oriented and need-based education; and ensure gender parity (equality) at all levels of education.²⁷ The general objectives of education are to establish moral, humanitarian, religious, cultural and social values in person as well as in national life and to develop awareness in the learners to protect independence, sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh.²⁸ The Bangladesh government also wants to make education pragmatic, productive and creative with view to bring about changes in socio-economic conditions of the country. The government also wants to give special emphasis on primary and secondary education; to instill respect and eagerness for physical labor and enable the learners acquire

²⁵ See appendix 3, for the article 26 of the universal declaration of human rights.

²⁶ See appendix 1, for the six EFA goals.

²⁷ But also to provide: modernization of curriculum; ensure efficient management at all levels; strengthening the information and communication technology; ensure teacher effectiveness at all levels; and revitalize technical and vocational education. Bangladesh government. *Focus and Object: focus of the Government on Education, and General objectives of Education*. http://www.moedu.gov.bd/about_moe__focus_objectives.htm 2008-11-24. Time 12:20.

²⁸ Ibid.

vocational education for self-employment in all stages of education and promote moral values, generosity and fellow-felling in people and make them respectful of human rights. The government also stress that education promotes democratic values, emancipate the country from the curse of illiteracy, create opportunities and to ensure gender parity (equality) in education and remove barriers of cast, creed and ethnicity in obtaining education.

In this attempt; Bangladesh completely conforms to the Education for All (EFA) objectives and the Millennium Development Goal and international declarations like the human rights²⁹ that have been presented earlier in the text.³⁰ The Bangladesh government also has the Article 17 of the Bangladesh Constitution, which assures that all children between the ages of six and ten years are to be provided basic education free of charge.³¹

BRAC on education

BRAC has a holistic approach to poverty and highlight that poverty must be tackled from a holistic viewpoint, transitioning individuals from being aid recipients to becoming empowered citizens in control of their own destinies (BRAC, 2007:2). BRAC (2007) strives to bring about positive changes in the quality of life of people who are extremely poor and it comes about to actively promote human rights, human dignity and gender equality.

The main goal of the BRAC education program is to make the achievement of Education For All in Bangladesh. BRAC's aim is to improve the quality and deliver education appropriate to the needs of poor children, particular girls (BRAC, 2007:43). BRAC (2007:43) also stress that access to education is an issue particularly for children living in remote areas, from extremely poor households or ethnic minorities. BRAC (2007:43) points at, that, education today faces the challenge of creating a level playing field for all children in an increasingly globalized world and that education should provide children with the attitudes as well as the skills that are conducive to promoting creativity, problem solving and coping with uncertainties. According to BRAC (2007:43); "Bringing every child into classroom is no longer enough – each child is entitled to a high quality of education that will best prepare them for the future." BRAC (2007:43) also emphasize that pre-primary education is important for young children to ease their transition from home to formal schooling, and to help them to be familiar with the alphabet and numbers. BRAC (2007:49) also stresses that another focus on education is to provide and help individuals to empower them economically, socially and also to give girls number of life-skills training courses that enhance them status and self-esteem by increasing their earning potential and financial management skills.

BRAC (2007:47) points at, that it is important to ensure that children with special needs are a part of the school. BRAC (2007:47) accentuate that the issue of disability and the concept of inclusive education and building awareness about this among communities are important. BRAC (2007:47) also highlight that it is important to have education that focus on the educational needs for children from Bangladesh's indigenous communities and to have schools that have adopted teaching models and teachers that suits the needs of the communities that use native language; and also teaching and reading materials that are

²⁹ See appendix 3, for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

³⁰ Bangladesh government. *Education structures: Structures of the Education System, and Different Steams in Education*. http://www.moedu.gov.bd/edu_system__edu_structure.htm 2008-09-05. Time 12:30.

³¹ Bangladesh government. *Activities of Ministry of Education: The legal Framework on Education, and Activities of Ministry of Education according to the Rules of Business*. http://www.moedu.gov.bd/about_moe__duties.htm 2008-11-24. Time 12:40.

produced locally and focus on the children's culture, heritage and their everyday experiences (BRAC, 2007:47).

Summary of the policies

As I mentioned earlier, UNESCO's policy for education is determined by goals adopted by the UN and UNESCO. UNESCO make out that the right to education is an invaluable tool in the bid to eradicate poverty and that the right to education, is a fundamental right.

In the World Declaration on Education for All, UNESCO sees basic education or basic learning as essential learning tools. Through the World Declaration on Education for All, UNESCO stresses that literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving gives the learner the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that is required by human beings to be able to survive and develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity and to participate in development and improve their quality of lives. UNESCO sees learning as the catalyst for all development processes and the lack of learning opportunities constrains the individual and the society's ability to produce or benefit from development. UNESCO sees primary education as something that can improve workers productivity and that education provides the necessary skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship and that education can promote the productivity of small entrepreneurs and that primary education also can increase productivity and wages in agriculture. Education can also improve and help families to get higher incomes. According to UNESCO and the World Declaration on Education for All, education and increased literacy contribute to increase in investment and in output per worker. UNESCO sees the lack of received skills from education, as a barrier to participate in a literate, technological world and with this lack, people will remain on the margin of society, and that the society itself will lose a vast of potential that can help to contribute to development.

UNESCO points at, that there is a direct link between education and economic development, and that education contributes to economic development at various levels. But, the different types and levels of education do not always contribute to equally economic development. UNESCO stresses that primary education in developing countries, tends to yield higher social returns than those in any other level of education; and that education is the most critical aspect that can contribution to economic growth.

UNESCO also stresses through the World Declaration on Education for All, that education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages. This right to education is articulated in article 26 of the universal declaration of human rights. The right to education guaranties people access to and enjoyment of other rights. Improved and more equitable access to effective basic learning opportunities will reduce the gap between the least educated and the most educated within a society. According to UNESCO, education also contributes to reducing the inequality and building common understanding and tolerance among and between people of different countries, socio-economic classes, cultural and religious identities and groups, and between ethnic and racial groups. Education also leads to development of human rights and building of a culture of peace and democracy.

UNESCO strives to ensure that all boys and girls everywhere have the opportunity to start and complete a full course of primary education. UNESCO sees that education has an effect on gender, especially education for girls and women and that education for girls and women is strongly related to reduced rates of maternal and infant mortality, it also improves families' nutrition. UNESCO sees that education has the potential to act as an equalizer of opportunity and as a force for economic growth. Through the MDG, UNESCO highlight that education

gives knowledge to people and this knowledge provides everyone with choices and opportunities to live the life they wish to live for themselves. Especially education for girls has social and economic benefits for the society as a whole. UNESCO sees that economic development is undermined by the lack of educational opportunities and inequalities in education are among the most powerful drivers of inequalities in income, health and opportunity.

All the policies are determined and influenced by the goals adopted by the UN and UNESCO. SIDA and the Bangladesh government see that there is a close relationship between education, democracy and human rights. The Bangladesh government stress that the general objectives of education are to establish moral, humanitarian, religious, cultural and social values in person as well as in national life. BRAC highlight that their main goal is to: transitioning individuals from being aid recipients to becoming empowered citizens in control of their own destinies, but also to strive to bring about positive changes in the quality of life of people who are extremely poor and it comes about to actively promote human rights, human dignity and gender equality. SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC also accentuate that education is a basic human right that is necessary for sustainable social and economic development, and that education is crucial for poverty reduction. SIDA and the Bangladesh government stresses that the right to education is based on internationally agreed concepts and goals declared in Human Rights Conventions and Declaration. SIDA and BRAC points at, that education is a human right and this right is for everyone: children, youth and adults, girls and boys, women and men, and youth and adults with disabilities. SIDA sees that education is the key to the development of a democratic society, and to a democratic culture that have respects for human rights. SIDA's goal of poverty reduction is underpinned by a right-based approach that is promoting democracy and human rights, equality between women and men, and sustainable development.

According to SIDA, education as a basic human right is a shift from the focus on the contribution that education makes or can make to economic development. The individual in the society is viewed as a stakeholder with rights and not an object of charity or investment. According to SIDA, the right to education is something that the state is obligated to guarantee the individual in the society. This right should be provided equally and no one should be discriminated; children, youth and adults, girls and boys, women and men, and youth and adults with disabilities should not be denied the right as a result of discriminatory and practices. SIDA stresses that girls education is one of the most important determinations and keys of development.

SIDA and BRAC shares the re-affirmation of the Dakar commitments that, "Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs." (SIDA, 2001:15) The essential learning tools and the basic learning content, is something that a person needs to be able to survive and develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development and to improve the quality of their lives.

SIDA also highlight that education open ups possibilities at the individual level that otherwise would be closed, like chances to live a healthy and productive live. SIDA and BRAC also points at, that very person; children, youth and adults, girls and boys, women and men, and youth and adults with disabilities; shall have the same opportunity to meet their basic learning needs. SIDA and BRAC stresses that it is important to strengthening poor people and individual's capabilities; and to strive for progressive public education spending, this to

equalize and improve disadvantaged groups and to offer them the same opportunities as the rich in the society. SIDA accentuate that, without an adequate share of national income and state budget allocation to basic education, the goals of poverty reduction and the progress to equal opportunity will not be achieved. SIDA stresses that, at the most basic level, economic and social rights have both direct and indirect effects on democracy. The denial of the necessities of life (such as education or employment opportunities) means reduction for those who already are left without options to live a good life.

BRAC also highlight another focus on education, not just give and help the individuals to empower them economically and socially, but also to give girls number of life-skills training courses that enhance them status and self-esteem by increasing their earning potential and financial management skills. BRAC also heighten the value to have education that focus on the educational needs for children from indigenous communities, to have schools that are sensitive to indigenous communities' culture, heritage and everyday experiences.

Conclusion

Human capital theory considers education relevant due to its ability to create skills that serve as an investment in the productivity. According to the human capital theory, education is important, because it allows the workers to invest in skills and knowledge that helps them to be more productive and thereby being able to earn a higher wage. The human capital theory therefore sees education and its potential to generate skills and knowledge as an important part of a person's income-generating abilities. Like the human capital theory, UNESCO, SIDA, the government of Bangladesh and BRAC has an economic view on education. UNESCO and SIDA see primary education as something that can improve the productivity of workers and provides the necessary skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship; and that basic learning help families to earn higher incomes and that education has the potential to act as an equalizer of opportunity as well as a force for economic growth. BRAC sees education a something that is promoting creativity, problem solving, creating earning potential and financial management skills.

But, the human capital theory only considerers' education as good, direct or indirect, if education generates, contributes or increases economic productivity and a higher wage. The problem with the human capital theory is that, it blocks out and ignores cultural, social, gender and non-material dimensions of life. So, knowledge that does not generate more money has no values in this theory. The human capital theory also sees that not everyone has the same rate of return on education. This means that different people; children, adults or those with disabilities; will not give the same economic return from education. This means that different people will be affected due to either internal or external restrictions, this can be either social or natural or a combination. Internal restrictions are for example physical or mental disabilities.

The education as a right approach is the opposite of the human capital theory. The human right framework stress that education is a human right that should be guaranteed to all, regardless of economic return. Education as a right sees human beings as the ultimate end to moral and political concern. This view is the opposite of the human capital theory that sees human beings as input factors for economic production and growth. The right to education approach proposes that every human being, men, women and children are entitled to equal rights to education, even when there is no guarantee of economic pay off. According to the right to education approach, education should prepare the learners for parenthood and political

participation. Education should also develop social cohesion and teach that all human beings have rights.

UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC, all points out that the right to education is an invaluable tool in the bid to eradicate poverty, and that the right to education is a fundamental right. Both UNESCO and SIDA notice that human capital approach has its limits. They highlight that there is a close relationship between education, democracy and human rights. UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC also stresses that education is a basic human right that is necessary for sustainable social and economic development and that education is crucial for poverty reduction. UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC all accentuate that the right to education is based upon internationally agreed concepts and goals declared in Human Rights Conventions and Declaration. They also points out, that education is a human right and this right is for everyone. Particularly SIDA and BRAC emphasize that, every child, youth and adult, girls and boys, women and men, and youth and adults with disabilities have the same right to education. UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC also stress that education contributes to reducing disparities and building common understanding among people of different countries, socio-economic origins, cultural identities, and racial, ethnic or religious groups; and that education can help to build up a democratic society and also to improve their economic and social prospects.

Like Sen, UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC points out that education is central to the fight against poverty and that learning is a channel to development, and that the lack of learning opportunities constrains the individual, community and the society's ability to develop. They also, like Sen, view that access to basic learning and education opportunities will reduce the gap between the least educated and the most educated within a society and that education reduces poverty by providing everyone with choices and opportunities. Like Sen, UNESCO, SIDA and BRAC highlight that gender equality and investment in girls' education is important.

Sen stresses that social opportunities, like education, contributes to economic development, but at the same time, he sees that the creation of social opportunities, like education does not always go hand in hand with economic growth. SIDA and UNESCO see that a growing economy is, in its turn a necessary, but not sufficient, for human development. UNESCO, SIDA and BRAC have a common view on how important education is for the development process and for individual's possibilities to live a better life. UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC speak about education in a human rights perspective and not in a capability and social opportunity approach. But no one of them directly speak about social opportunities and capabilities like Sen. They do not speak directly about capabilities as functionings that a person can attain and that functionings are the constitutive elements of living, that is, doing and being. They do not speak about capabilities as people's real opportunities to achieve or being and doing. They speak instead primarily about individual's capabilities and opportunities through a human right perspective, but at the same time they still have one foot in the human capital approach. As I mentioned earlier, UNESCO's, SIDA's, the Bangladesh government's and BRAC's policy for education is strongly determined and influenced by goals adopted by the UN and UNESCO.

Reflections

There is nothing wrong in seeing education as the human capital theory does. It can help us to understand in economical terms, how important education is for producing skills³² and knowledge³³ that can help the individual to gain a higher income or a better economy. But, we have to recognize that this approach fails to identify other important dimensions of education. The right to education approach helps us to gain knowledge and understanding, that education is a human right that should be guaranteed to all, regardless of economic return. The right to education approach is the opposite of the human capital theory that sees human beings as input factors for economic production and growth. But, we also have to know and understand that the right to education approach also has its limitations. According to Nussbaum (2000:97-101), “People differ about what basis of a right claim is: rationality, sentience and mere life have all had their defenders.” (Nussbaum, 2000:97) Another limitations in the right to approach, according to Nussbaum (2000:98) is, “Women in many nations have a nominal right to political participation without having this right in the sense of capability: for example, they may be threatened with violence should they leave the home.” This means that an individual can have the right to and the opportunity to something, but at the same time, the individual do not have the capability to make use of it. So, do the individual have the right to it or not? The right to approach, points out that an individual have the right to something. Sen’s social opportunities help and give an individual the opportunity to it. The capability approach stresses the importance of an individual’s capability and opportunity to it. As Sen (1990) Nussbaum (2000) and Robeynes (2006) stresses, the ultimate aim is to expand people’s capabilities and opportunities, the rights and the right to are an instrument in the capability approach to reaching this goal.

³² Skills like reading, counting, writing and handicraft.

³³ Knowledge and information about a subject, like how the market, trade and /or a business work.

Chapter 4

Bangladesh

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is located in the lower lying of the Ganges-Brahmaputra river delta between India and Burma (Myanmar).³⁴ During the British colonial control, between 1856 and 1947, the area of today's Bangladesh was known as East Bengal. In 1947, when the British Empire was on its recoil after the Second World War; India and Pakistan (Pakistan and East Pakistan) emerged as two new countries. Bangladesh emerged as an independent state on 16th December, 1971, after almost a year long liberation war against Pakistan. In 1991 Bangladesh returned to civilian government following 15 years of mostly military rule. Since then the two main political parties have been the Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). In the 2008 election, Hasina Wajed and the Awami League gained the political power.

Bangladesh is, with a population on 153.3 million, the country that has the highest population density in the world.³⁵ The geographic location is important. Bangladesh is surrounded by India on three sides and the relationship with Indian is crucial for the Bangladesh government.

Remnants of civilization in the greater Bengal region date back four thousand years, when the region was settled by Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic people. Bangladesh is an Islamic nation. Islam was introduced to Bengal in the twelfth century. Today around 88 % of Bangladesh population are Muslims (97 % are Sunni) and 10 % Hindu (SIDA, 2008:18).³⁶ There are several indigenous minorities in Bangladesh. Most of them live in the Chittagong region.

The proportion of people living in poverty has fallen in the last five years, from 49 to 40%, (SIDA, 2007b:10).³⁷ The fertility rate has also fallen, from 6.34 in 1975 to 3.8 in 1996 (ADB, 2001:2).³⁸ But the mortality rate of 444 per 100 000 births is one of the highest in the world (ADB, 2001:3). Bangladesh has a primary enrolment rate of 92 percent (BRAC, 2007:44). A big problem today is the high dropout rates, particularly among girls (BRAC, 2007:44).³⁹ The total rate for adult literacy is today 41.1% and for females 62% (Akhter, 2007:125). There are critiques to these numbers (Akhter, 2007:125).⁴⁰ Another important demographic aspect is the international migration.⁴¹ Bangladesh is one of the few countries in the world where overseas workers contribute a third to the country's trade deficit and nearly a tenth to the GDP (ADB, 2001:3).⁴²

³⁴ See the map in appendix 7.

³⁵ And the percentage of urban population is 25 percent (SIDA, 2008:18).

³⁶ Bangladesh also has a Buddhist population on 0.7 %, a Kristina population on 0.3 % and also a Catholic population on around 0.1%.

³⁷ The rural poverty fell from 53 to 44% and the urban poverty fell from 37 to 29% (SIDA, 2007b:10).

³⁸ Mainly due to effective family planning measures and increased age of marriage (ADB, 2001:2).

³⁹ According to BRAC (2007:44), access to education is an issue particularly for children living in remote areas, from extremely poor households or ethnic minority groups and those with special needs.

⁴⁰ The rate of 62% appears from the field to be the literacy result of capacity to spell, not to pronounce (Akhter, 2007:124-125).

⁴¹ Of these workers, women represented nearly 2%, but there are also a sizeable number of undocumented women migrant workers who have gone to the Persian Gulf countries and to Southeast Asia (ADB, 2001:3).

⁴² The real GDP in Bangladesh grow by 6.7% in 2005-2006 and it was the increase in firm private consumption and a sustained recovery in the agricultural sector (SIDA, 2007b:8). After the world economic crisis 2008, the Bangladeshi GDP has declining.

Women's context in Bangladesh

I will try to present a general introduction to the national context where women in Bangladesh are located in. We have to have in our mind that women are not a homogenous group. Different women have different access to power, capabilities and opportunities; and there are many differences that divide women in Bangladesh across space, time, place, geographic location, religion, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation, age, class, marital and social status, health, disability, nationality, citizenship, social and economic power and so on. Within the muslim Bengali society there are economic, political, and social differences, these differences affects different groups and affects their relationship (Kotalova, 1993). This diversity makes it more or less impossible to present a general view for women in Bangladesh. Anyhow, here comes a general presentation.

Women in Bangladesh contribute substantially to their household and to the Bangladeshi economy. The majority of women workers are primarily involved in the informal sector. Within the formal sector, a large number of women work in export oriented industries (ADB, 2001). The majority of women in Bangladesh have yet to be empowered to participate actively in the social, cultural, economic and political life; gender discrimination is widespread in all spheres and at all levels, both within the labor market and the society (DFID, 1993; ADB, 2001; BRAC, 2007). The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal rights to all citizens; women and men are granted the same equal rights in all spheres of public life (ADB, 2001:6). But in family matters such as marriage, divorce, custody or maintenance and inheritance, there are law discriminations against women (Jahan and Islam, 1997; ADB, 2001; Hossain, 2009).⁴³ Due to variety of cultural, religious, ethnical and social factors, women's human rights are often violated (ADB, 2001:6; Hossain, 2009). Various laws have been modified to protect women's rights (ADB, 2001:6; Jahan and Islam, 1997).⁴⁴

The Bangladesh society is by custom patriarchal,⁴⁵ patrilineal,⁴⁶ and patrilocal⁴⁷ (ADB, 2001:3-7). Women's life is therefore dominated by this social system. This system upholds a rigid division that controls women's mobility, role, responsibility and also sexuality. The patriarchal society in Bangladesh is also based on class and caste divisions. The class and caste division allows movement and mobility between rich and poor, but the division of social space and the difference in behavioral norms between men and women are rigidly maintained (ADB, 2001:4). Within this system, the family is the basic unit of social control, and the family sets the norms, roles and rules for women and men. The system has given higher values to sons as potential providers and perpetrators of the family name. Boys have received privileged treatment and access to education, better nutrition and health care (ADB, 2001).

One thing that also controls women's mobility, capabilities and opportunities is marriage. A marriage in a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal society imply that the guardianship of the bride (woman) will be transferred from her father to her husband, and by this, the permission

⁴³ A Muslim man has the unilateral power to divorce his wife, but a woman does not (Ahmed, 2007). And according to Hindu law in Bangladesh, divorce is not allowed (Ahmed, 2007).

⁴⁴ For example: the Muslim family laws ordinance of 1961, the Muslim marriage and divorce registration act of 1974, the Dowry prohibition act of 1980, the family court ordinance of 1985 and the Child marriage registration act of 1992 (ABD, 2001:6).

⁴⁵ Patriarchy is the structuring of society on the basis of family units, where fathers have primary responsibility for the welfare of and over their families.

⁴⁶ Patrilineality is a system in which one belongs to one's father's lineage; it generally involves the inheritance of property, names or titles through the male line as well.

⁴⁷ In social anthropology, patrilocal residence or patrilocality is a term referring to the social system in which a married couple resides with or near the husband's parents.

for further education, employment, hospitalization and so on, will be in the hands of her husband (ADB, 2001). A husband in Bangladesh is obligate to provide for food, cloth and shelter to his wife or wives, even if he is poor (Ahmed, 2007). If a husband “willingly” divorces his wife without any reason, he has to pay “Denmohor” (money which husbands promised to pay at the time of marriage, if they separated) to his divorced wife (Ahmed, 2007). According to Bangladesh law, a Muslim husband has the unilateral power to divorce his wife, but a woman does not have the same power (Ahmed, 2007). A woman’s power of getting a divorce usually depends on her husband’s wishes (Ahmed, 2007). According to Hindu law in Bangladesh, divorce is not allowed, but separations do exist (Ahmed, 2007). Divorced women are one of the most exploited in the Bangladeshi society and they are greatly affected if their divorces are not registered. For example: when a divorced woman gets married with another man, her earlier husband may demand and pressurize her to come back to him as he has registration of marriage.⁴⁸

The relationship culture and norm in Bangladesh is that a woman should be married. Marriage and family life play a crucial role in marital life in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2007:28). If marriage takes place with the parent’s approval, then harmonious relationship can be restored and crises can be minimized (Ahmed, 2007:28). Monogamous marriages are common in Bangladesh, even if polygamy is permitted according to the law (Ahmed, 2007:28).

There is a conservative attitude towards women, especially towards divorced women (Ahmed, 2007). A divorced Muslim woman in Bangladesh has no rights to her children, while a non divorced Muslim woman has such right till the certain age of her children.⁴⁹ A woman in Bangladesh loses her right of her son who is more than 7 years old and loses the right of her daughter who enters puberty stage.⁵⁰ In the case of the Hindu religion, there are no such above rules or laws regarding divorce, the situation for Hindu women are worse.⁵¹ In Bangladesh, a Hindu woman does not have the right to divorce or ask for a divorce.⁵²

Divorced women have difficulties to engage themselves in social welfare activities in the society, because they are divorced (Ahmed, 2007:139). Divorce is a social stigma in the Bangladeshi society and women with divorce status are always neglected and badly treated by people (Ahmed, 2007). Problems women face due to divorce is harsh in all classes and castes in Bangladesh and they meet different kinds of problems (Ahmed, 2007). It can be economical when the former husbands do not pay the economic support if they have children (Ahmed, 2007). The woman’s parents can also meet economical problems if she moves back, this if her parents cannot support and provide for one, two or more new members. The divorced women are mostly dependent on their parents (Ahmed, 2007:151). She could also meet social and psychological problems if her family and friends take a stand against her as a divorced woman (Ahmed, 2007). The general view in the Bangladeshi society, according to Ahmed (2007:133), is that a woman should take the whole responsibility to protect the marital life and if marriage fails, the responsibility goes to the woman. Remarriage is one solution to

⁴⁸ Baobabconnections.org. *Legal Rights of Divorced Women*.
<http://www.baobabconnections.org/country/?id=10135&country=28&PHPSESSID=4aa19e>
2009-05-08. Time 11:57.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The Daily Star. *Human Rights: Laws of discrimination*. Volume 8 Issue 54, January 24, 2009.
http://www.thedailystar.net/magazine/2009/01/04/human_rights.htm. 2009-05-20. Time 20:40.

the problems that a divorced woman can face. But, remarriage can be hard if the divorced woman already have children (Ahmed, 2007:156-157).

There are many dimensions of poverty in Bangladesh and the most complex one to tackle is that of discrimination and exploitation (BRAC, 2007:50). “Poor women in particular suffer from an unfair system that upholds patriarchal customs and they live in a country with one of the highest rates of gender violence in the world.” (BRAC, 2007:50) According to BRAC (2007:50), the levels of extreme forms of violence such as rape, murders and acid attacks, remain exceptionally high and there are persistent problems of child labor and early child marriage. Acid violence is a particularly form of violence in Bangladesh where acid is thrown in people’s faces. According to ASF (Acid Survivors Foundation), the overwhelming majority of the victims are women; but recently there have been acid attacks on children, older women and also men (ASF, 2007). The victims are attacked with acid for many different reasons: in some cases it is because a young girl or a woman has rejected the sexual advances of a male, or either she or her parents have rejected a proposal of marriage, it could also be a result of family and land dispute, dowry demands or a desire for revenge (ASF, 2007). Factors that contribute to violence against women are social-economic and cultural factors; and domestic violence in Bangladesh cuts across class and location, but poor women from rural areas are more vulnerable to male violence (Jahan and Islam, 1997:10; 20). A growing tendency towards acceptance of violence in the society, mainly due to certain social-political factors and acceptance of patriarchal gender ideology and gender relations in all social structures, increases women’s vulnerability in Bangladesh (Jahan and Islam, 1997:20).

Bangladesh has one of the largest primary education systems in the world, with a system of approximately 18 million students (Nath and Mahub, 2008:1).⁵³ The education system has its origin in ancient India, long before the British colonial rule in the sub-continent (Nath and Mahub, 2008:1). During the British colonial period, English was strongly acquired by the elite which favored that medium and utilized private and international avenues of educational advancement that still operates today (DFID, 1993:63-64).⁵⁴ Today, education receives the highest allocation of resources in the Bangladeshi social sector (ADB, 2001:9). Because boys are supposed to take care of parents and the family, investing in their education is favored before girls (DFID, 1993; ADB, 2001; BRAC, 2007). At primary level, female enrollment has increased. It has risen from 45% in 1990 to 49% in 2000 (ADB, 2001:9). But, at the secondary level, the drop-out rate for females has increased by 10% (ADB, 2001:9).

Different factors affect women’s participation in education (DFID, 1993:67-73; ADB, 2001; BRAC, 2007). In geographical conditions, the distance of more than 2 kilometers and issues of female security⁵⁵ can prevent females from education and educational opportunities (DFID, 1993:67-68). In social-cultural environments, societal norms, especially the parental attitude towards education is the key factor for women’s educational progress (DFID, 1993:68). The absent of female teachers is also a factor (DFID, 1993:68-69).⁵⁶ Socio-economic status is a factor in the decision whom to send to school (DFID, 1993:70; ADB, 2001). There are also

⁵³ See appendix 4 and 6 for more information about the education system.

⁵⁴ I did an everyday observation under 7 weeks, at different times, at Rollexpress café and restaurant at Banani, a café and restaurant for upper class people in Dhaka. At this café and restaurant different upper class people in different ages came to eat and drink. One interesting observation I did was that the Bangladeshi elite spoke English instead for Bangla to and between each other.

⁵⁵ There is a widespread fear of violence and sexual assaults upon females (DFID, 1993:68; BRAC, 2007:50).

⁵⁶ There is a bias between rural and urban areas, there are more women teachers in urban than in rural areas (DFID, 1993:68-69).

religious and legal factors. Due to the variety of cultural and social factors, women's human rights are often violated (DFID, 1993; ADB, 2001:6).

The employed labor force in Bangladesh is estimated to be around 41.7 million or at 54.6 million using the extended definition⁵⁷ (ADB, 2001:10). At the labor market, women traditionally are involved in the non-monetized sector and in subsistence activities. Women have experienced in the last decades some major changes in the labor market, this in terms of jobs and opportunities, but most women still work in the rural sector⁵⁸ and women are concentrated in a few sectors in the informal sector.⁵⁹ The nonagricultural sector is generating female employment at an increasing rate, this mainly due to the fact that government and nongovernment interventions are more concentrated in this sector (ADB, 2001:10). In urban areas, employed women are almost equally divided between unpaid family worker and employee (ADB, 2001:11).⁶⁰ Only around 40% of the employed women are engaged as unpaid family helpers, this in contrast to 83% in rural areas (ADB, 2001:11). Women's participation in economic activities shows great variations by gender, by nature of activity, and place of residence (ADB, 2001:10). More than 75% of employed women above 15 years are to be found in unpaid family labor; this in contrast to around 47% of the men (ADB, 2001:11). The agriculture sector is overwhelmed by unpaid family workers who are disproportionally represented by women. Self-employed or own account workers are predominantly found in the trade, hotel, restaurant, transport, storage and communication sector, where the male involvement is sizeable much greater.

Individual women's voice from below on education

The mother at the little community

I'm 40 years old, married and Muslim. We are eight in my family, eight with my brother. I have five children, two boys and three girls. I was 19 years old when I got my first child. We have lived here in this community in Banani, Dhaka, for 20 years. But we had to move for 2 years. In 1996 when the military government was in power, they destroyed this community to build up and develop a new one. So we lived outside Dhaka for 2 years, but we moved back after 2 years.

I have no education and I have not been to any training programs like health training, but I learned some Arabic when I was younger. I didn't get any education because poor people are not conscious about education. So that's why I didn't get an education. Today my second oldest son goes to school; my oldest son also went to school, but he had to quit when he was 17 years old. He had to earn money to the family. I think it's important for my children to go to school, even if my eldest son has to quit. My other children are too young to go to school right now, but next year my oldest daughter will begin her education. I think without education my children cannot do anything in their future. I also think it's important both for

⁵⁷ Under the extended definition of labor force, persons who are engaged in some major household activities such as food processing, threshing, cleaning, and livestock and poultry are considered as part of the economically active population (ADB, 2001:10).

⁵⁸ Rural income generating activities for women, include postharvest activities, cow fattening, milking, goat farming, backyard poultry rearing, pisciculture, agriculture, horticulture, food processing, cane and bamboo works, silk reeling, handloom, garment making, fishnet making, coir production and handicrafts (ADB, 2001:11).

⁵⁹ Among informal sector activities are: selling groceries, betel nut, soft drinks, snacks, sweetmeats, country cakes etc. (ADB, 2001:11).

⁶⁰ Traditionally, rural women have always been involved in different kinds of informal activities like: cottage crafts, horticulture, livestock and poultry rearing etc. (ADB, 2001:11).

my girls and boys to go to school and get an education, so they become better persons and human beings. I do not want my children to be uneducated and illiterate. I want them to be educated so they can earn money in the future. But right now my children, or my child, will not benefit from his education, but in the future they will. I also think that if my children get educated, people will respect them. I also think that my son, child, will be a god man in the future. If it's possible he will also support me when I get old. This is a benefit for me. But money is a problem to get them educated. I have to rent out one room in our home, to get money, to get him educated and to pay his school fee or costs. The school/tutor fee is 1200 BDT (Bangladeshi Taka) a month.⁶¹

The widow

I'm 70 years old, widow and Muslim. I have lived here in Kaliganj for my whole life. I have two children, two daughters and I was 19 or 20 years old when I've got my first child. Today my two daughters are married and my daughters live with their husband's and their families. I'm alone and do not have anyone that supports me. So I have to break bricks with a hammer everyday to support myself.

Both my children have been to school. My first child got an education until grade 6, and then she finished school. My youngest daughter left school when she failed in an essay examination. I have neither been to school nor do I have an education, but I know Arabic. I can count to 70 or 80 and speak Arabic; but I cannot read or write. I cannot read or write in Bangla to, but I can count. I did not get an education because when I was young there was no education for girls.

It was important for me that my children to got an education. But I could not support their further education, this because of problems with financial support. I think it is important for people to get an education; this to be more conscious about life and how to live a life. It is also important to get an education so no one can cheat you. If I had an education, I would not face the problems I have today. I think it is important to be literate, but it is also important to know and get other education to. I also think that education is important for both girls and boys, this for their earnings and also for their future life. Today girls face many difficulties when they go to school. I think that the government should take actions for boy's behavior against girls and teach them on how to behave.

The young girl

I'm 18 years old, Muslim, not married and I have lived here in Kaliganj my whole life. I have been studying until grade 8. I'm conscious about my education and I want to earn money; I would like to have an income. After completing my education, I want to educate and teach

⁶¹ 1200 Taka (BDT) is around 156 Swedish kronor, 2009-04-19. I think my interpreter or maybe the interviewee is making a mistake. I think it is probably 1200 BDT for one year. Why! The school "fee" or cost for one boy one year in primary education in Bangladesh is estimated to be around 800-1000BDT (SIDA, 2007a:37). This when all the costs of registration, exam fee, uniform, exercise books and pencils and contributions for incidental expenses incurred by the school are totaled up (SIDA, 2007a:37). There is no fee for girls. This is interesting. According to reports and other papers about primary education in Bangladesh, education is free and that there is no school fees. But according to this interview and SIDA (2007b) there are hidden costs or fees for getting boys educated at primary level in Bangladesh. So according to me, there is a fee. Especially, when you have to pay for registration, exam fee and exercise books in school. Of course there are some costs to get an education. But according to me, costs that have to be paid (if not, you as a student cannot get an education) to get an education are a hindrance and should according to me be called a school fee. This cost is something that you have to pay to get educated.

children. I think education is important in every stage in life. I've got some benefits from my education, now I can attend and be a part of any kind of BRAC education programs, because I can read and write. I also got schooling in sanitation and handicraft. Handicraft is something I can do in the future.

I want my children to get an education, because I do not have enough education to live a better life. So I want my children to get an education so they can live a better life in the future. I think it is important for both girls and boys to get an education and also equal rights. I think my family and I will get benefits from my children's education. My children will not get an education just to earn money, but also to be a better person and also learn social skills.

The financial problem to support education is the main problem. I had to finish my education because of the problems with the financial support for my education. There were too many members in my family, so my family could not support my education and I had to give up and leave school. I think the education costs are too high in our country. That's why poor communities and families cannot support their children's education. Girls are neglected in this country and are not taken care of. The families are not conscious about girl's rights and equal rights between boys and girls. That's why I had to give up my education. Another problem in my family was that my father got sick and could not, because of this, support my education costs.

The married woman

I'm 32 years old, I'm married and Muslim. We are 4 members in my family and I have 2 children, one boy and one daughter. My daughter is 15 years old and my son 8 years old and both my children go to school. I've got my first child when I was 18 years old. I moved to Kaliganj after my marriage; I lived in another town before I've got married. I'm working with handicraft and I also do the daily housework in our family. My husband has recently married a second wife. Because of his second marriage, he does not properly support and take care of me as he should.

I have been studying at school, but only first and second grade. I do not remember anything from that education; I cannot read or write, but I can count a little bit. I do not remember why my parents brought me out from school; I was too young to remember. I can count money, but I cannot read and this is a problem. If there is something that I have to read, for example a letter, I have to go to someone who are literate, educated or to my husband to get help.

I think education and reading is important. I'm depressed because I cannot read. My husband tells me that I'm illiterate. I cannot work or support my family properly because of my lack of education. I think if I could read and write, I could earn money for my family and support them. I am trying to support my family in the best way without any education. I'm attending a BRAC program about human rights right now. I want my children to get an education, because I want them to become better persons, and maybe in the future support our family. I think it is important for both boys and girls to get an education so they can get an income and support the family. I want my children to become good persons and learn different kinds of subjects like English, Arabic and religious education.

The middleclass woman

I'm 24 years old, divorced and Muslim. I divorced from my husband 4 years ago; we were married for 6 month. He tortured me physically. I do not have any children and we are 6

members in my family. I have lived here in Old Dhaka for my whole life. I'm studying at University right now and beside my education I also work with education. I have also taken courses in handicraft, pottery and ceramics; this is something that I have worked with

I was an average student in primary and secondary school; and I liked the education environment. I completed my graduation after I've got divorced. The education I have from primary, secondary and university level, made me more confident and I can now realize that my former husband was torturing me. My former husband was not against education, but I stopped my education when I've got married and started it again after the divorce. I think my marriage was too short, so he did not have the time to say anything or put my education to an end.

I think reading is the most important to learn. I enjoyed reading and I still like to read. I like to read novels and I like to know things. That's why reading is important for me, reading it's like a hobby for me. I also think that English is important to learn. I think we have to increase the opportunity to learn English, so it will be easier to communicate with other people from other countries. English is a language that you can use and communicate with people worldwide. I also think that the discrimination between man and females in school is something that is important. I was studying at a girls' school and we got less good education and opportunities than the boys. The boys got better education and better opportunities. They got better teaching, better playground and better opportunities to play than we.

I want my children in the future to get educated. I want them to be more conscious about life, so they can take decisions in the future. My parents were not educated and they took the wrong decisions for me. For example they married me with a wrong person. This is why I want my children in the future to get an education. I think it's important that both boys and girls get educated. I hope I will get a girl in the future. I will give her more focus and support for the future. I also want my children to be social, cultural and academic educated. I also want my children to get an education from university.

I think we need to bring together all education systems in Bangladesh. Today we have three different education systems and that's too many. We have to coordinate and develop the system so it will be better and compatible. I also think that we have to put more effort and consciousness in women's education. We have to let the common people to be more conscious about women's education. Today boys are more expected and conscious to go to school and to get an education, women are not. This is something we have to change. The male society has to give more preference on women education.

So, how does the subaltern woman reflect upon education?

Chapter 5

Hegemonic structures and social norms

Hegemonic structures or social norms indicate the established and approved ways of doing things: behavior, dress, speech and appearance. Social norm is a code of conduct shared by a society or group and is enforced through internal or external sanctions,⁶² including shame, guilt, embarrassment anxiety and loss of self-esteem. These codes and norms vary and evolve not only through time and place in the society but also vary from one age group to another, between social classes or caste, ethnical/race groups, gender, religious groups, sexual orientation and so on. What is deemed to be acceptable behavior, appearance, dress or speech in one social group may not be accepted in another group. Deference to the social norms maintains one's acceptance and popularity within a particular group; ignoring the social norms risks one becoming unacceptable, unpopular or even an outcast from a group. Failure to stick to the norms and rules can result in severe punishments, the most feared of which is exclusion from the group. Subaltern groups are groups that stand outside the hegemonic power structures in the society in one or another way.

The Subaltern

According to Gayatri C Spivak, the subaltern is not just a word for the oppressed, for the other, or for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie (Kapoor, 2004). According to postcolonial terms, everyone that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism⁶³ is subaltern. Spivak stress that not everyone that are oppressed belong to the subaltern. Some use the subaltern in a general sense to refer to marginalized groups and the lower classes, a person rendered without agency by his or her social status. Those who are the subaltern, according to Spivak, refer to the perspective of persons from regions and groups outside the hegemonic power structure that are marginalized individuals rendered voiceless by sexism, classism and an interconnected web of global and local power configurations (Kapoor, 2004; Asgharzadeh, 2008:340-341). The subaltern in my thesis refers to a person of inferior rank and station, because of her marital status, gender and religion.

Women who are divorced in Bangladesh are not just oppressed, they are also subaltern.⁶⁴ According to the postcolonial terms, everyone that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern. The cultural imperialism refers to internal domination by one group (men in this case) and its culture or ideology over another one (women). Those who are the subaltern refer to the perspective of persons from regions and groups outside of the hegemonic power structure. Women are subordinated men in different ways in the Bangladeshi society. Men have more power, capabilities and opportunities than women and men are inside the hegemonic power structure of the Bangladeshi society. We have to have in

⁶² Internal sanctions could be punishment and/or sanctions by a group, family or by an individual and external sanction could be the punishment and/or sanctions by the state laws or regulations.

⁶³ Cultural imperialism is the performance of promoting, distinguishing, separation, or artificially embrace the culture or language of one culture into another. It is usually the case that the former belongs to a larger, economically or military powerful nation and the latter belong to a smaller and "less" important one. Cultural imperialism can be either forced acculturation of a subject population or be voluntary embraced by peoples free own will of a foreign culture.

⁶⁴ There exist numerous subaltern groups in the Bangladeshi society. One is Hijras, generally known in the West as hermaphrodites or eunuchs. Another one are individuals that are homosexual (homosexuality is forbidden according to Bangladesh law). There are also numerous ethnic and religious minority groups in the Bangladeshi society.

our mind that women, who are divorced in Bangladesh, like women in general, are not a homogenous group. Different subaltern women have different access to power, capabilities and opportunities. There are many differences that divide the subaltern women in Bangladesh across space, time, place, geographic location, religion, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation, age, class, marital and social status, health, disability, nationality, citizenship, social and economic power.

The domination is in this context; one class/cast/gender (men) over another class/cast/gender (women). The power does not rest in a given person, but in the way things are (social, economic, political, educational and governing), to make its dominance formal. In the patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal Bangladeshi society, male is the norm and men have the access to the hegemonic power structure. Within this system, the family is the basic unit of social control and sets the social norms. This system has given higher values to sons as potential providers and perpetrators of the family name. Within this system the guardianship of a woman is transferred from her father to her husband and by this her further life into the hands of her becoming husband. Women's life is therefore dominated by this patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal system. The system upholds a rigid division of labor that controls women's mobility, behavior, responsibility and sexuality. In this system, women are outside the hegemonic power structure, but women who are divorced are "more" outside the hegemonic power structure than women who are married. It is important to know that women are not a heterogeneous and powerless group; women are divided along and have different resources, power, capabilities and opportunities because of their class, ethnicity/race, religion, nationality, citizenship, disability, sexual orientation, age, geographic location, marital status and health. According to Bangladeshi law, a Muslim husband has unilateral power of divorcing his wife, but a woman does not have the same power and according to Hindu law⁶⁵ in Bangladesh a Hindu woman does not have the right to divorce or ask for a divorce (Ahmed, 2007).

The general view in Bangladesh is that a woman should take the whole responsibility to protect the marital life and if marriage fails, the responsibility goes to the women (Ahmed, 2007:133). A divorced Muslim woman in Bangladesh has no rights to her children, while a non divorced Muslim woman has such right till the certain age of her children.⁶⁶ A woman in Bangladesh loses her right of her son who is more than 7 years old and loses the right of her daughter who enters puberty stage.⁶⁷ In the case of the Hindu religion, there are no such above rules or laws regarding divorce.

The relationship culture and norm in Bangladesh is that a woman should be married. Marriage and family life play a crucial role in marital life in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2007:28). If marriage takes place with parents consent, then harmonious relationship can be restored and crises can be minimized (Ahmed, 2007:28). In the Bangladeshi society a conservative attitude towards women, especially towards divorced women exist (Ahmed, 2007). Divorce is a social stigma in the patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal Bangladeshi society and women with divorce status are neglected and badly treated by people. Problems women face due to divorce is harsh in all classes and castes in Bangladesh and they meet different kinds of problems

⁶⁵ The Daily Star. *Human Rights: Laws of discrimination*. Volume 8 Issue 54, January 24, 2009. http://www.thedailystar.net/magazine/2009/01/04/human_rights.htm. 2009-05-20. Time 20:40.

⁶⁶ Baobabconnections.org. *Legal Rights of Divorced Women*. <http://www.baobabconnections.org/country/?id=10135&country=28&PHPSESSID=4aa19e> 2009-05-08. Time 11:57.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

(Ahmed, 2007). Women who are divorced have difficulties to engage in different social welfare activities because they are divorced (Ahmed, 2007:139). They also meet economical problems if the former husbands don't pay his economic support. The parents to the divorced woman can also meet economical problems if she moves back home. Due to problems that a divorce women face; remarriage is one solution to the problem. But, remarriage can be hard if the divorced woman already have children (Ahmed, 2007:156-157).

A growing tendency towards acceptance of violence in the Bangladeshi society, mainly due to certain social-political factors and acceptance of patriarchal gender ideology, the gender relation between man and women in all social structures have increased women's vulnerability (Jahan and Islam, 1997:20). Acid attacks is a particularly form of violence against women in Bangladesh and the majority of the attacked is women (ASF, 2007).

So, how do the subaltern women reflect upon education?

Voices from below

Interview 1, at the Human right project

I'm 20 years old, I'm divorced and Muslim. I've got married in 2002 when I was 13 years old and for the last 6 years I have had no contract with my husband. My husband has not sent me the divorce papers I sent to him. So I'm informally divorced. I have one child, it's a girl and she is 6 years old. I had a terrible life with my husband. So, when I was 14 years old I moved back to my father's home, because my husband didn't treat me well. He was torturing me because of dowry. So that's why I moved back to my parent's home. At this time I was 3 month pregnant. After my child was born, I moved back to my husband's house. My husband and his family did not want to take care of my child, as usually they should. They wanted to kill my child. So I escaped from their house and back to my parent's house. Now she is in kinder garden school. I'm also a teacher at this kinder garden.

I have lived here in this town my whole life. I'm working for my earnings as a kinder garden teacher, I also work for Marie Stopes⁶⁸ and I'm also an actress for an NGO. I have studying until grade 6. My mother was conscious about my studying; she wanted us to go to school. My stepfather was not conscious about my education, but my mothers were. Her father was also not conscious about her education and she quitted in grade 6. The education I've got until grade 6 gave me benefits to work. I'm working right now in a Marie Stopes shop. The education gave me the benefits that I now can earn money. I can now read, write and count in Bangla. I think if I can get more education, this can give me more benefits and opportunities at Marie Stopes. I think I can get a higher position in the organization.

I'm working in a kinder garden right now, this to increase my earnings. The education I have is important. It is also important for my child; I can learn and educate my child more. I think the population growth in Bangladesh and in families is a problem for getting an education. I think education is important. Education helps in decision-making. I make different kinds of experiences everyday because of my education. People think I'm well educated and of course I enjoy it. People wants to talk to me about health care and I give them knowledge, advice and information about this. I'm happy to do this. I'm also very conscious about my child's

⁶⁸ Marie Stopes International (MSI) is a not-for-profit sexual and reproductive health (SRH) organization that uses modern business methods to achieve the social goal of preventing unintended pregnancies and unplanned birth in 40 countries worldwide. Marie Stopes International delivers programs in family planning (<http://www.mariestopes.org> 2009-05-29. Time 00:50).

education. I'm already talking to her about education and I want her to get an education. Because, she will meet many different problems in life and in the future and with an education she can overcome these problems. That's why I want my children to get an education. I also think that both boys and girls should get educated. I had problems with my husband, because my husband is illiterate and because of this he didn't understand me or the importance of education for girls. I do not want my child, my girl, to be treated as a girl does; I want her to be treated as a human being. That's why I think education is important. Not only formal education and academic education is important, but also other kinds of educations. I also want my child to be an agent for my family. I also think that my child and also my family will get benefits from her education. She will support me when I get old; she will spread the family name and also earn a better social status.

There are some problems with education. First I think the government should control the birth rates. Then the families will be consciousness about their girl's education. Because if families have too many children, the families will definitely avoid girls education and that's why I think they should control the population growth. Then NGOs should also come out to every village in our country and spread information about how important education is for both girls and boys and make them consciousness about education. In our country, especially in rural areas, people are not consciousness about education, both for girls and boys education.

One problem with education and school in this area is that the only primary school is too far away, so I have to place my child, my daughter, into a private school. This is very costly for me to shoulder. I think, in this country, money and the cost for education is the biggest and the main problem. I think the financial support should increase for women's education and that the government should take the lead and increase the numbers of schools in the country. So that private schools will decrease, because they are expensive. I think this is important.

Interview 2, at the Human right project

I'm 19 years old and Muslim. I've got married 2 years ago and I divorced from my husband 6 month ago. I do not have any real family or old parents. I was raised by adoptive parents and I have lived here in this town since I was 2 years old. I have one child, a boy, he is 2 years old. I was 18 years old when I've got my child. I divorced my husband because he didn't give me any everyday expenditures and he was also torturing me. He didn't trust me; he thought that I was with other boys. He didn't accept my child; he wanted to kill my child before it was born. When my child got born, my husband separated me from my child. But I escaped from this family with my child. I wanted to leave just for my child. My husband was not a good man. Before we got married, he picked me up outside school. He kept me from school for 4 days and after 4 days when my family found me, he offered to marry me and my family arranged a wedding, after that we got married.

I have been studying until grade 8. Today I can write, count and read in Bangla. An older woman told me that I was too busy. She thought school was not good. That's the reason why I quit school. I was a very good student in my class, I have very easy to learn, and I was always in school. It was a setback for me to quit school. I didn't get many benefits from my education, because the villagers' and my family that takes care of me was too busy with themselves. But to be literate, I dropped my CV (Curriculum Vitae) at a factory in the neighbor village. They told me at the office, that I could comeback when my child had grown up and could take care of himself.

I think counting is the most important to learn. Reading and writing is also important, but I think counting is more important. If I don't know how to count, people will try to fool me. I think it is important to get an education. If I can get an education; I can work and earn money for my family. I'm living with my adoptive parent's right now. I do not know if they will stand for my costs and support me in the future. That's why I'm conscious about work, so I can support myself and my child in the future. I'm involved in the community, in a word mission comity that provides education for poor people. Here I look after the children. I earn around 1500 BDT a month.⁶⁹ I think I've got this job because of my education skills that I've got from my 8 years of education.

Education is important, but I think it is also important to learn other activities, like for example handicraft. I think this is something that could help poor people and poor communities to earn money.

I want to participate in decision-making and also protest against social crimes. I also want to protest against the things that happened to and that happens to other women that face the same problem as I did. For this, I want to be more educated. I also think it is important for my child to get an education. This to ensure his rights and he will do this through education. I think it is important both for boys and girls do get an education. I also think it's important for my child to learn and know about the laws, the human rights and also about social relationship. I would be proud if my child got educated and I want him to be conscious about education. I want both of us to be more conscious about education and the society. I also want him to be a good man. That's why I want him to get an education.

There are some problems with education. In general, I think that the financial support for my child is the biggest problem with education. Something else that I think is important and that education should put tension on and bring up is social rights and social conscious.

Interview 1, at the Hindu village

I'm Hindu and 30 years old. I'm not "directly" divorced, but we live in different places and he does not pay the everyday expenditure for me. I live with my sister and we are 6 members in our family; It's my mother, my sister, my sister's husband, my sister's two children and me. I do not have any children of my own. I have lived here in this village for my whole life, except one year. I lived one year outside Dhaka, in Narsinghdi with my husband. I have a business and I do tailoring for my living, so I can get money to my living and everyday expenditure. I also do some handicraft and I'm trying to learning how to do candles right now.

I have been studying at primary school. I finished primary school and after that I have not been attending any education or school. I left school and did not attend any more education because my father was not conscious about education. My experience from school is that I can read, write and count in Bangla today. I fell more advanced than the ones that cannot read and write. With the opportunity to read, write and count I can keep up with the daily work where the reading, writing and counting is necessary. My education has also given me one more experience; to be literate in my village, illiterate people in the village comes to me to ask questions about life and daily things.

I think reading is the most important to learn. Because there are so many people that cannot read; and the lack of reading skills is most important to focus on. Most of the people can

⁶⁹ 1500 TK (BDT) is around 195 Swedish kronor, 2009-04-19.

count; I think that you don't have to go to school to learn how to count. I think reading is important to learn; I'm involved in a micro financing project for poor people and here it is important to know how to read. I think it is important that both boys and girls gets an education. I also think it is important to provide education that is connected or related to handicraft. This is something that I would be interested in. Previous I was interested to get more education, but today I'm too old and do not have the time to study. The handicraft is something that I think is important to learn beside general education. I also think it is important to learn about social relationship in school.

My education helped me when I've got trained on tailoring. I could write down what my trainer told me, this helped me in the way that it was easier for me to understand and get down the whole tailoring training.

I do not have any real practical experience from education. But in our country, girls get more opportunities to education, this from both the government and NGO's. But the poor communities are not conscious about education, to make their children educated. For me the financial support is a big problem.

The financial support is a problem in our country. This is why poor people and communities do not want to send their children to school. Poor communities put more emphasis on their boys' education than on girls, because after marriage, the women will move into another family and if the girl has an education, she will provide financial support for the new family and not to her old family. This means that poor families are more conscious about boys' education and will put more money and investments into their education than in girls, because these money and investment will stay in the family.

Interview 2, at the Hindu village

I'm not quite sure about my precise age, but I'm around 20 years old and I'm Hindu. I have lived in this village for my whole life. I'm not directly married or divorced, however I don't live with my husband, we live separated. My husband does not take care of me and he does not provide me with the daily support for my expenses. We are 7 members in my family and I have a child, it's a boy. I work at a prawn factory where I pack the prawns. Two years ago I've got married with my husband and after one year we got a child. I was 19 years old when I got my child. After a while my husbands and his family toke my child from me and sent me back to my family. So today I live without my child. If I had a girl he would not taken her from me like he did with my son, this because he is a boy.

I have studied, but I do not remember anything, I was too young and it was just for a short while, one or two years. I cannot read or write, but I can count. I could read when I was younger, but not anymore. I think counting is the most important to learn. If you know how to count, no one can swindle or take advantage of you. That's why I think counting is important to learn. It is also important for both girls and boys to get an education and be educated, this because of their opportunity to earn money in the future. I have faced many problems from being uneducated and one is that I do not get any job. I think formal education is important, but also learn how to play and to build social relationship and become a better person. I don't think that just education will turn a man into something better; they should also learn about manners, behavior, norms and values; this beside formal and basic education. I also think that extra education like computer knowledge and handicraft is important.

If I have another child, she or he will learn about her or his rights. It is important for both boys and girls to get an education. I will tell them about my past and what happened to me, so they can protest against it and change the society. In the future when I get old my child will support me.

I'm not interested to go back to school, because of the expenses. I cannot support the expenses that come with education. My parents wanted me to go to school but I was not interested. Today I know that it is important to have an education. But right now I'm more interested to earn money. But I will try to get my children educated. I don't have any children right now but my brothers have, so I want them to get an education.

Summary of the interviews

The subaltern women highlight in the interviews that they are conscious about their own as well as their children's education. They stressed that their fathers and husbands was not conscious about girls. They also put tension to, especially in rural areas, that people were not consciousness about girls and boys education. They all emphasize that the financial support was a big problem and that poor people and communities did not want to send their children to school and also that poor communities and families put more emphasis in their sons' education than in their doters' education because of marriage. After marriage, the woman moves into another family and if the girl has an education, she will only provide financial support for the new family. Because of this the poor families were more conscious about boys education and put more money and investments into their education than in girls, because these money would stay in the family. They all put emphasis on that they wanted their children, specially the girls, not to be treated as a girl does in the society; they want them to be treated as a human beings.

They also highlighted that education gave them benefits and now they could earn money. They also accentuate that their children would get benefits by their own education and earn money in the future. They all point out that education was important for their children and that their children would meet many different problems in the future and with an education they could overcome those problems. They also highlight that education could help their children in decision-making, teach them about the laws, human rights and also about social relationship. They also accentuate that their child's education would support them in the future when they get old. One pointed out that her child's education would improve her child's social status.

They all highlighted problems around getting an education. One was that the only primary school was so far away, that she had to place her child into a private school and this was too costly for her. One thought that the financial support should increase for women's education and that the government should take the lead and increase the numbers of schools in the country. All highlighted that the biggest and main problem was the costs for education. Another one stressed that the population growth in Bangladesh and in families was a problem for receiving an education. She thought that the government should control the birth rates and then the families would be more conscious about their girl's education, this because if a family have too many children, the family would definitely avoid girls education.

They pointed out different things that they thought was important to learn. Two emphasized that counting was the most important to learn, but that reading and writing also was important. They also emphasized that if you don't know how to count; people would try to fool you.

Another one stressed that she thought that reading was the most important to learn, this because there are so many people that cannot read.

They also highlighted that it was important that both boys and girls got an education and also that it was important to provide education that is connected or related to handicraft. They thought that education is important, but that it also was important to learn other activities, like for example handicraft. One stressed that it was important to learn about social relationship in school. Another one accentuated that beside formal and basic education, extra education like computer knowledge and handicraft was important.

The women also draw attention to that their education gave them opportunities. One stressed that she with the capability to read, write and count could keep up with her daily work. Another one highlighted that her education gave her new experience, to be literate in her village; illiterate people in the village came to her to ask questions about life and daily things. One put emphasis on that people wanted to talk to her about health, because of her education. She gave them knowledge, advice and information on health and this made her happy. Another one got the opportunity to use her education when she got trained on tailoring. Because of her education, she could write down what her trainer told her, and this helped her in the way that it was easier for her to understand and get down the whole tailoring training.

One accentuate that with education, her children could protest against the things that happened to her and what her husband did to her and what happens to other women that face the same problem as her. Another one stressed that she would tell her children about her past and what happened to her, so they could protest against it and change the society. All put emphasis on that it was important for both boys and girls to get an education. Another one highlighted that she faced many problems from being uneducated and that she did not get any job because of being uneducated. One woman thought that just education would not turn a man or men into something better, they should also learn about manners, behavior, norms and values.

Reflections

With the interviews of the divorced and subaltern woman we get the bottom and the individual voice, view and experience of education. We also got the specific local perspective on education. The purpose with the interviews was not to choose a representative sample for the divorced and subaltern women in Bangladesh, rather to select an illustrative one. The attention on the individual was to get the bottom (the divorced and subaltern woman) perspective and reflections concerning education, rather than the universal (UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC) claiming to represent the absolute truth. It is important to know that the voices in this thesis do not represent a united voice, interest, need and demand of a homogenous group. It's a single voice from an individual divorced and subaltern woman. These voices can give a deeper understanding and knowledge about their own view, experience and knowledge on education.

A problem in my strive to give the individual divorced and subaltern woman a voice, is that I do not speak or understand Bangla. Their voices were therefore translated from Bangla into English by my female interpreter from Bangladesh. The best had been if I could understand Bangla and by this let their own voices speak. But I do not or cannot speak for the divorced and subaltern woman directly through my analysis, because I do not possess the knowledge and lived experience of being subaltern. But as I said before, I think that a person who is not subaltern can give the subaltern a voice, but not speak for the subaltern.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

How do UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC reflect upon education in their education policies and how does the individual, divorced and subaltern woman reflect upon education?

Like the human capital theory; UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government, BRAC and the divorced and subaltern woman has an economic view on education. They see education as a key to something that could improve the productivity of individuals and provide the necessary skills for self-employment and that education could help families to earn a higher income. One woman stressed that she got the opportunity to use her education skills when she got trained on tailoring. Another one put emphasis on that, with the capability and knowledge on how to read, write and count she could keep up with the daily work. All women also considered that education is important, but it was also important to learn other activities that could provide the necessary skills to earn money, for example handicraft.

UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC, all points out that education is a fundamental right and education should be guaranteed to all, this regardless of economic return. They all point out that the right to education is an invaluable tool in the bid to eliminate poverty. This view is the opposite too the human capital theory. The education as a right stresses that education should be guaranteed to all, this regardless of economic return. The education as a right sees human beings as the ultimate end to moral and political concern, and the right to education approach put forward that every human being are entitled to equal rights to education, even when there is no guarantee of economic pay off. According to this approach, education should prepare the learners for parenthood, political participation and develop social cohesion and teach that all human beings have rights. All the divorced and subaltern women put the emphasis on that education is important for their children and that education is important for both girls and boys. They also highlighted that education could help their children in decision-making, learn them about the laws, the human rights and also about social relationship. One woman stressed, with education, her children could protest against the things that happened to her and against the things that her husband did to her and for other women that have faced the same problem. Another one highlighted that she would tell her children about her past and what happened to her, so they could protest against it and change the society.

UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC do not directly speak about social opportunities and capabilities as functionings that a person could attain and that functionings are the constitutive elements of living, that is, doing and being; or about capabilities as people's real opportunities to achieve valuable stats of being and doing. They speak instead primarily about individual's capabilities and opportunities through a human right perspective and have at the same time a foot in the human capital theory. The divorced and subaltern women highlights in the interviews that they are conscious about their own as well as their children's education. They draw the attention to that their children's education could give them opportunities in the future; to get a better life, be a better person and get an income. They also utter that their children's education could give them the capability to support the family in the future and also themselves when they become older. One woman stressed that her child's education would improve her child's social status. Two subaltern women emphasized in their interviews, that their education gave them a new experience and

opportunity that illiterate people in their village came to them with questions asking about life, health and daily things.

Do UNESCO's, SIDA's, the Bangladesh government's and BRAC's policies on education have common or divided view on education?

All the policies comply and confirm with the goals and policies adopted by the UN and UNESCO and they all confirm to the Education for All, the Millennium Development Goal and also The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They all have an economic view on education, they point out that education is a fundamental right, but they do not directly speak about social opportunities and capabilities as functionalities that a person could attain, the constitutive elements of living, that is, doing and being. They do not have anything that directly divides them. The only thing that divides them is how, where and to whom they operate for and towards.

Is there a gap between UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladeshi government and BRAC and the divorced and subaltern woman's view on education?

There was not actually a gap between the bottom and the universal view on education. But in the interviews, the divorced and subaltern women pointed out different things that they thought was important to learn; something that UNESCO, SIDA, the Bangladesh government and BRAC don't mention. Two women point out that counting was the most important to learn, they remark that if you didn't know how to count, people would try to take advantage of you. The women also brought up problems with the obtaining of an education. One problem was that the only primary school was too far away, so she had to place her child into a private school and this was too costly for her. Another one thought that the government should take the lead and increase the numbers of schools in the country; and also that the financial support should increase for women's education. All accentuate that the biggest problem was the costs for education. One emphasized that the population growth in Bangladesh was a problem for getting an education. She thought that the government should take control over the birth rates in the country and the effect of this would be that the families would become more conscious about their daughters' education. This is because if families have too many children the families would definitely avoid education for their daughters and focus more on the sons.

Reflections

We know that education is a common good, something that is good both for the society and for the individual and that education is important for producing skills and knowledge that can help individuals to gain a higher income, better economy and social life. Education can also open up the minds of people about their rights, possibilities and capabilities. Education can also help out and provide the knowledge to understand if someone tries to hoax or take advantage of you.

There was not actually a gap between the bottom and the universal view on education, but there is a gap in UNESCO, SIDA and the Bangladesh government policy and in their view on gender, equality, right and equal opportunities. They stress the importance of gender, equality, right and equal opportunities but they are still gender, culture and social blind for the local context. BRAC is also blind, but is more sensitive to the local context than the three above. Their policies have a big influence from the human capital theory and this theory blocks out

and ignores cultural, social, gender, non-material dimensions of life. With this blindness, the human capital theory misses the social and local information.

There is nothing wrong in seeing education as the human capital theory or the education as a human right do. Education as a human right is a step forward in the development for equal education for girls and boys, but the education as a right has its weak points. Individuals can have the right to something but not the capability and opportunity to it. The ultimate aim should therefore be to expand people's capabilities and opportunities, and the rights and the right to will be an instrument in this goal.

If we want to help and lift people and individuals out of poverty, we also have to know what individuals and people themselves think about, reflect on, witness and experience from education. Because we need to get the whole picture, both the universal and local context and at the same time, understand the individuals picture and context and their understanding and knowledge about education and its effects and impacts on their local daily lives, capabilities and opportunities. There are local knowledge and experiences from individuals that these universal policies fail to notice, see or pay attention to.

Policy makers have to be clear when creating education policies and take into account that the school has been primarily viewed as necessary only for those who are expected to make a transition from the private sphere into the public sphere, this have been primarily truly for boys. By this, schools have been gender biased, this does not mean that schools have excluded girls and women, they have rather been primarily intended for boys and men, and only secondarily for girls and women. This bias is something that is more obvious in a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal society, where higher values have been given to sons as the potential providers and perpetrators of the family. If the public sphere is created, dominated and controlled by men, women will be held back and hindered to get an education. This bias holds back people and individuals, foremost poor women and girls, from developing into free individuals with capabilities and opportunities that has the power and recourses to act to fulfill one's own potentials and the freedom from restraint and interference from other people. I think that all different forms of segregations and discriminations holds back individuals from take actions over their own lives and their life situation and also the society from developing into a more equal and democratic society. That's why this bias is important not to bypass or not take into account when creating education policies and it is also important to be sensitive to the local context and listen to the individuals own view on education. If we acknowledge women before the whole world, people in power positions have to give women the right to their existence and give them the capability and opportunity to develop into individuals that have the power and recourses to act and to fulfill one's own potentials, an individual that have the freedom from restraints and interferences from others. We need a vision of education that pays attention to capabilities, opportunities and social needs both on a universal and local context.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1, the six EFA goals.⁷⁰

1. “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
4. achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girl’s full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. “ (World Education Forum, Dakar 2000)

⁷⁰ SIDA, 2001:14.

Appendix 2, The Millennium Development Goals.⁷¹

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

⁷¹ UN. 2006. *The millennium development goals report 2006*. United Nation. New York.

Appendix 3, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁷²

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

⁷² <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html> 2008-12-09. Time 12:30.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Appendix 4, Bangladesh education system in brief. ⁷³

Age	Grade											
26+												
25+	XX											
24+	XIX			Ph. D	PostMBBS Dipl	Ph. D(Engr)	Ph.D(Medical)			Ph. D (Education)		
23+	XVIII		M.Phil	M.Phil(Medical)								
22+	XVII	MA/MSc/MCom/MSS/MBA	LLM	M B B S BDS	MSc(Engr)	MSc.(Agr)		M B A	M.Ed & M A(Edn)		MA(LSc)	
21+	XVI	Bachelor (Hons)	Masters (Prel)	LLB(Hons)	BSc.Eng BSc.Agr BSc.Text BSc.Leath	BSc.Eng	BSc (Tech.Edn)	B B A	B. Ed & Dip.Ed	BP ED	Dip.(LSc)	Kami
20+	XV		Bachelor (Pass)			Diploma (Engineering)					Diploma in Nursing	Fazil
19+	XIV											Alim
18+	XIII											
17+	XII	Secondary	Examination		HSC			HSC Vocational	C in Edu.	C in Agri	Diploma in Comm	
16+	XI		HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION									
15+	X		Examination		SSC	TRADE Certificate/ SSC Vocational	ARTISAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS					Dakhil
14+	IX		SECONDARY EDUCATION									
13+	VIII	JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION										
12+	VII											
11+	VI											
10+	V	PRIMARY EDUCATION										
9+	IV											
8+	III											
7+	II											
6+	I											
5+		PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION										
4+												
3+												

⁷³ http://www.moedu.gov.bd/edu_structure_diagram.htm 2008-09-05. Time 12:35.

Appendix 5, some of the semi-structured open ended questions used in the thesis.⁷⁴

Questions for the women at the human right project

1. How old are you?
2. Are you married?
3. How many are there in your family?
4. Do you have any children?
5. **If yes.** How old were you when you got your first child?
6. How many children do you have?
7. How many boys and girls, and how old are they?
8. How long have you and your family lived here?
9. Have you lived somewhere else?
10. **If yes.** Where did you live and why did you move to this community?
11. **If she have children.** How many of your children go to school?
12. What do you do beside this program? Do you work?
13. **If yes.** What do you work with?
14. Have you been studying at school or attending any other kind of education like health or programs?
15. **If yes. (If no. Go to 16)** What level or what kind of education?
 - What is your experience of that education?
 - Did that education give you any benefits or opportunities that you could use?
 - Did that education give you any opportunities in work life?
 - Can you read, write and count?
 - **If no.** What is the biggest problem for you in daily life because of this? Does this have an effect in your life?
 - Could you read, write or count before taking this education?
 - Could you read, write or count after been taking this education?
 - Why do you think it is important to learn to read, write and count?
 - Is there something in education that you think could be better? Something that you found out when taking education to be “bad” and that could be better?
 - What do you think is important to learn? For example something that could give you more opportunities in your life?
 - Do you have any life experience or moment in your life when you could use our education skills?
16. **If not.** Why didn't you get any kind of education?
17. Do you want to get an education?
18. What do you want to learn?
19. Is it important that your children go to school and gets an education?
20. Why is it important for them to go to school?
21. Is it important that both your girls and boys go to school and gets an education?
22. **If not.** Why?
23. What do you think is the most important for your children to learn in school?
24. Why is this important?
25. Why do you think it is important for your children to go to school and get an education?
26. Do you think their education will give them and your family benefits and opportunities in your family's life?

⁷⁴ These questions are semi-constructed and open ended.

27. Is there something with education that you think is not so good? Something that you think should be better or something that you think your children need to learn?
28. Is there something more about education that you want to say? Something that I have missed to ask or talked about that you think is important for you or for others?

Questions for the women at the small community

1. How old are you?
2. Are you married?
3. How many are there in your family?
4. Do you have children?
5. **If yes.** How old were you when you got your first child?
6. How many children do you have?
7. How many boys and girls, and how old are they?
8. How long have you and your family lived here?
9. Have you lived somewhere else?
10. **If yes.** Where did you live and why did you move to this community?
11. How many of your children go to school?
12. Have you been studying at school or attending any other kind of education like health programs?
13. **If yes. (If no. Go to 16)** What level or what kind of education?
 - What is your experience of that education?
 - Did that education give you any benefits or opportunities in your life?
 - Did that education give you any opportunities in your life?
 - Could you read, write or count before taking this education?
 - Could you read, write or count after been taking this education?
 - Did you get some other knowledge from this education?
 - Is there something in education that you think could be better? Something or an experience from life that you found out when taking this education to be “bad” and that could be better?
 - What do you think is important to learn? Something that you think could give you more opportunities in your life?
 - Do you have any life experience or moment in your life when you could use our education skills?
14. **If not.** Why didn't you get any kind of education?
15. Is it important that your children go to school?
16. Why is it important for them to go to school?
17. Is it important for you that both your girls and boys go to school?
18. **If not.** Why?
19. What do you think is the most important for your children to learn in school?
20. Why is this important?
21. Why do you think it is important for your children to go to school?
22. Do you think their education will give them and your family any benefits and opportunities in your family's life?
23. Is there something with education that you think is not so good? Something that you think should be better or something that you think your children need to learn?

Appendix 6, the education system in Bangladesh.

Primary education was provided during the ancient and middle age by the Gurus in the institutions called Gurugriho (Guru House), Pathshala, Chotushpati and Moth (temple/monastery/convent); and the Islamic based primary education was provided in the Maktabas (Nath and Mahbub, 2008:1). The modernization of and the expansion of today's Bangladeshi education system and among the masses were held in British India (Nath and Mahbub, 2008:1). During the British colonial period, English was strongly acquired by the elite which favored that medium and utilized private and international avenues of educational advancement that still operates today (DFID, 1993:63-64). Under the Pakistan rule there was an attempt to impose Urdu in schools, this was forcefully opposed by indigenous people; and after its independence; there was a strong policy for Bangla, which lead to the decline of English (DFID, 1993:64). The major shift in the school and education system occurred after independence, when the government repealed the previous primary education laws Act 1919 and the Rural Primary Education Act 1930, and took over all the primary educations in Bangladesh (Nath and Mahbub, 2008:3-4).

Today, the education system in Bangladesh has three major stages: primary, secondary and higher educations.⁷⁵ Primary education is a 5-year cycle while secondary education is a 7-year one with three sub-stages: 3 years of junior secondary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary. The entry age for primary is 6 years. The junior, secondary and higher stages are designed for age groups 11-13, 14-15 and 16-17 years. Higher secondary is followed by graduate level education in general, technical, engineering, agriculture, business studies, and medical streams requiring 5-6 years to obtain a Masters degree.

In the general education voyage, higher secondary is followed by college/university level education through the Pass/Honors Graduate Courses (4 years). The masters Degree is of one year's duration for holders of Bachelor Degree (Honors) and two years duration for holders of (Pass) Bachelor Degree. Higher education in the technical area also starts after higher secondary level. Engineering, agriculture, business, medical and information & communication technology are the major technical and technological education areas. In each of the courses of study, except for medical education, a 5- year course of study is required for the first degree.

Primary level education is provided under two major institutional arrangements (stream)-general and madrasha, while secondary education has three major streams: general, technical-vocational and madrasha.⁷⁶ Higher education, likewise, has 3 streams: general (inclusive of pure and applied science, arts, business and social science), madrasah and technology education. Technology education in its turn includes agriculture, engineering, medical, textile, leather technology and ICT. Madrashas (Arabic for educational institution), functional parallel to the three major stages, have similar core courses as in the general stream (primary, secondary and post-secondary) but have additional emphasis on religious studies.

⁷⁵ http://www.moedu.gov.bd/edu_system_edu_structure.htm 2008-09-05. Time 12:30.

⁷⁶ http://www.moedu.gov.bd/edu_system_edu_structure.htm 2008-09-05. Time 12:30.

Appendix 7, The People's Republic of Bangladesh.⁷⁷



⁷⁷ http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/bangladesh_pol96.jpg 2009-01-18. Time 19:16.