

# Underpinning Thinking About Education And Development Of UNESCO And World Bank: A Case Study Of Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** Under the UN umbrella, the UNESCO and the World Bank are working for the education and development issues. They are working for the same targets but have unique working styles, with many similarities and differences. Through this paper, we tried to bring out all the hidden issues of multilateral organizations for the sake of development and educational improvement. This paper is fully based on secondary information from different books, articles, journals, reports and electrical sources and we consider in the context of Bangladesh as a case because both organizations have been working for a long time in Bangladesh and it is one of the rapidly-developing countries. It has a big primary education system due to its over population. Similarly, it tries to implement EFA program in the country. As we find that, to implement EFA in the country both the UNESCO and the World Bank are helping Bangladesh. More specifically, UNESCO is helping on the technical parts of education like- quality improvement, teacher training, policy making and other sections as per needs analysis. On the other hand, the World Bank is helping by donating money in some terms and conditions. Ultimately, due to financial strength, the World Bank is found to have a strong influence in development sector and therefore, in a way imposes policy to the developing nations. On the other hand, UNESCO seems to provide standard education system without any condition.

**Index Terms:** Education, EFA, World Bank, UNESCO.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

After the World War II and cold war contexts, the United Nations (UN) was build up to diminish the new world security threats, facilities cooperation in human rights, economic developments, laws, social progress and world peace with its 193 members and 17 specialized agencies (UN, 2011). Among all these agencies for education, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) plays a major role where others also assist in spite of having differences on policies and programs. UNESCO and the World Bank (WB) both are specialized agencies of the UN but their policies and functions are different in education and development sectors. These are not only UN's principal education agencies but also most controversial agencies among others. UNESCO is influenced by the westernization and globalization and WB is debated by its lending policies which creating periodic inconsistency for the borrowing countries, whose focus was not education on the early period of its establishment (Jones and Coleman, 2005. p.1). However, mission and mandates of UNESCO and WB are working with education for development but they have some similarities and differences on their ways of work and implementation are now also. Like other developing countries, Bangladesh has also strong relationship with both multilateral agencies for its development concern. Thus, these two agencies are working with their full power in Bangladesh. This paper will try to explain the similarities and differences of the UNESCO and the WB on their education policies and practices. It will also try to evoke the underpinning thinking about education and development, base on Education for All (EFA) in Bangladesh.

## 2 OVERVIEW OF TWO AGENCIES

### 2.1 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO was born in 1945, under the same pledge of the UN's creation on that time. To make the peaceful collaboration with the entire world and replace the violent and oppressive resolution of conflict among the nations, it was their working mandate (EQAC, 2009). According to the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS), UNESCO'S mandate is to contribute peace and security through promoting collaboration among nations in the course of education, science, culture and communication with the aim of further universal respect for justice, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the people of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion by the Charter of the United Nations (UN-NGLS, 2009). UNESCO functions are to help and create universal agreements on emerging ethical issues, and to have dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge to build human and institutional capacities in diverse fields. UNESCO promotes international cooperation in the field of education, science, culture and communication (UN-NGLS, 2009). It has strongly focused on achieving the Education for All (EFA) goals through the participation from national and international levels, which promotes "intercultural dialogue" to create multicultural world. Along with 21st century's economy, to facilitate sustainable development, it gives emphasis on higher education for the development of national human resources, promotes social justice and cohesion, enhances personal development, employability (EQAC, 2009).

### 2.2 The World Bank (WB)

The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital programmes. According to Jones and Coleman (2005), basically this bank was established by the United States (US) initiative to form up an inter-governmental monetary stabilization fund along with post-war reconstruction fund. Reconstruction has remained a significant focus of the Bank's work, given the natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies,

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and post conflict rehabilitation needs that affect developing and transition economies (World Bank, 2011). World Bank contains two institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA), whereas the latter includes these two in adding together to three more: International Finance Corporation (IFC), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). In the early years, it vigorously intensified the infrastructure investment projects along with social sector lending projects, poverty alleviation, and the Comprehensive Development Framework over time (The World Bank, 2011) and strategy was to give loans for infrastructure and vocational education (Jones and Coleman, 2005). Recently, WB's official goal is the reduction of poverty through issuing loans. However, after the 1980s, its lending policy is reformed and underscored on structural adjustment. Then it put the priority on the basic education for youths and adults and education relating to the environment. In the decade of 1990s and 2000s, the bank had given sector strategies on equity, sector wise approaches; Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for every lending country who borrowed loan, promoted school autonomy, encouraged basic education to support EFA goals and strengthen knowledge economy, did collaboration with other donors and maintained the momentum of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and EFA (Jones, 2004). In the year 2011, World Bank launched new education strategy for the next decade, with a focus on preparing youth for the job market. "The new strategy calls for the stronger system to improve the quality and reach of education, including prioritizing and financing reform of countries' education systems as a whole to improve the quality of student learning, matching new education financing with results, and building an evidence base of what works and what does not in education reform" (The World Bank, 2011).

### 3 SIMILARITIES OF THE TWO AGENCIES

#### 3.1 Creating world agenda and trend of education

As the representative multilateral agencies in education sector, UNESCO and the World Bank have worked together under some world agenda periodically. The World Conference about Education for All (EFA) in the 1990s and the World Education Forum in 2000 have common goals and targets for education. After the conferences, UNESCO and the World Bank have focused on basic education. According to Samoff (2007), in order to meet the particular goals, UNESCO, the World Bank and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were collaborating for the EFA. They built a global consensus in the world for basic education. The funding agencies wanted to support those countries who were committed and running programs for to achieve EFA goals. There is an argument that basic education expands and improves the social rate of return, which implies the economic productivity and the social good. It is socially more efficient to invest primary level rather than subsidizing the secondary and university level (Carnoy, 1999. p. 40). In the early 1960s and 1970s, the WB education program had focused on building infrastructure and vocational technical education support and most of the developing countries emphasized it. Jones and Coleman (2005) stated that, every project of WB was mainly focused for improvement of equipment and furniture facilities in education rather than other educational goals because the WB believed that,

education is a tool for the poverty alleviation, which they can lend money to developing countries by investing in education (Jones, 2004). Meanwhile UNESCO, which is the lead agency for UN's education program and monitoring EFA program, promotes periodic influence in education time to time. As a peace keeping and resolve conflict agency, UNESCO is prominent in international efforts in promotion with adult education in 1949, adult literacy in 1965, higher education in 1998 and most importantly EFA in 1990 through the design to promote peace, international understanding, the consolidation of democracy, human rights and elimination of discrimination (Jones and Coleman, 2005). Currently, UNESCO weighs emphasis on higher education for investment in education in order to achieve economic growth (UNESCO, 2011) and the World Bank provides loans for the project related to higher education (The World Bank, 2011). Therefore, UNESCO and WB are collaborating with the educational goals and issues that global society requires and desires by leading multilateral policies in their own way.

#### 3.2 Multilateral organization for the country's policy-making

The role of UNESCO and the WB are similar in a way, they work for the policy-making of the country. Firstly, the World Bank works for multilateral education, which branches for economic development by lending money with investment in education. According to the Jones and Coleman (2005), "Much of the World Bank's prominence in multilateral education stems from the scale of its lending for educational development." With providing the lending and technical support to development, the WB has the keenest interest in the content of country's policy. The bank is particularly promoting firm views of how education policy should relate the fiscal, economic, and social dimensions of public policy (Jones and Coleman, 2005, p.94). Soudien (2002), reminded that the WB document illustrated that its policy was intensely influencing the opinions of countries' policies in last two decades (Soudien, 2002 as cited in Crossly and Watson, 2003). The WB had the preeminent interest in developing countries and a robust influence on setting the agenda for educational policies (Crossly and Watson, 2003). Accordingly, its main contribution is to help governments in order to develop education policies, which are suitable for the nation and bank's policy (Samoff, 2007). This idea brings about the neoliberal ideas of structural adjustment. Secondly, UNESCO, with its technical assistance spreads its multilateral functions all over the world with the schooling of everybody and the redistributive form of multilateralism at an international level (Mundy, 1999). Also, UNESCO has associated with countries' policy-making process as the WB. Mostly, UNESCO plays a crucial role in educational planning of the countries. Especially, the reason why they establish the regional offices of UNESCO such as Bangkok, Beirut, Dakar and Santiago is that they want to work with countries more closely. Thus, these UNESCO's regional offices produce noticeable programs and networks by collaborating with the countries in each region (Jones and Coleman, 2005). They usually discuss with the country personnel under the educational theme and support the country stakeholders. Furthermore, they made regional conferences and meetings with high officials of the countries to advocate and encourage them to develop country's policy based on the world issues. Although the WB is more associated with the educational policy-making than UNESCO

because of the power of loan and specific strategies for education, as mentioned above, it is self-evident that UNESCO and WB both have powerfully been in conjunct with the educational planning of the countries.

### 3.3 Inclusion for policy dialogue

The two multilateral agencies have a common pattern that they share idea on education with the advocacy at country level as policy dialogue. In effect, since 1990s, while the force of non-governmental actors have radically increased in multilateral education, UNESCO and the WB cannot help accepting their idea and negotiating with them. In this context, the WB's newest policy of inclusiveness put the precedence on country level, with formal mechanism put in place of government to consult with civil society organizations, local communities, opposition political parties and local stakeholders about bank's operations and policy framework (Jones, 2004). For the UNESCO, the contribution of the civil society for advocacy and technical assistance makes the synergy with the civil society for local partners, community involvement and strategies addressing (Jones and Coleman, 2005). Therefore, today UNESCO and the WB are in the same context in a way that they carry out their work in the partnership with NGOs depending on the cases.

## 4 DIFFERENCES OF THE AGENCIES

### 4.1 The World Bank gives loan and UNESCO provides technical assistance

One of the differences between UNESCO and the WB is their direction and work to support developing countries. At first, the WB is a specialized agency of United Nations but it also works to bridge the gap and turn 'the resources of rich countries' into 'the growth of poor ones'. It is one of the largest sources of world development assistance (World Bank, 2011). According to the Jones and Coleman (2005), we need to understand the WB as a bank in functional terms, as a borrowing-and-lending financial institution dedicated as survival in volatile financial world. Hence, education is not the main concern for this lending agency but with its financial helpings purpose, it is emerging as the strongest player in the world of multilateral education. As a result, the primary role of the WB is providing the repayable loan for development and poverty reduction process. The education loans are bound up with the banks ideas on education and policy operations, which countries have to do on (Jones, 2004, p.188). The bank is an inflexible, domineering and uncaring institution and but, its intent has been covered by giving collaborative and financing with conditional covenants with a wide range of strategies to confirm the banks preferences and borrowing countries might have little option but to sign (Jones, 2004. p. 189-190). On the other hand, UNESCO is created with the mandate promoting education as a fundamental right, facilitating the policy dialogue and improving the quality of education. UNESCO carries the expert assistance for the world education program and continues its advocacy for world education order. Jones stated, "It was never concerned with providing funds for educational, scientific or cultural development. Rather, its work was to identify, disseminate and popularize new ideas, any action funded through its own regular budget limited to a core of demonstrative pilot projects" (Jones, 1999. p.22). After the cold war period, UNESCO started practical work as the technical assistance with the change. Under its strategy, it

works for capacity building, clearing house, technical assistant and guidance for educational reform and national regulation of its member states including developed and developing countries (UNESCO, 2011). Consequently, in terms of supporting developing countries, while WB pursues its profits through the investment in education, UNESCO helps the development of those countries with its professional assistance based on their mandate with materialistic condition as WB.

### 4.2 Practice process

Another difference of UNESCO and the WB is their practice process in supporting countries. The World Bank offers funds for developing countries under some certain demands which consistent with neo-liberal ideology and are known as structural adjustment programs (Lauder et al., 2004. p.39). Also, Mundy (2002) asserted that World Bank's policy is that it want international development and its own development itself by leading the policy. The Bank wants to improve structural adjustment and policy-based lending for the growth of education. Moreover, it insisted for the privatization of state services including welfare, health and education, and open domestic market for the foreign competition. Hence, the bank's main philosophy is strongly connected with neo-liberal idea. This neoliberal idea rarely applied in pristine form and failure to "one size fits all" (Lauder et al., 2004. p.39). This makes other sorts of privatization and decentralization of public policy and structural reform along neoliberal lines. In that moment, its major concern was reforming as "Knowledge Bank" and was building the relations among the agencies and poverty works with banks' new notion of development and policy focus. In contrast, UNESCO has conducted its work with the projects fit to its goals such as basic education capacity building and ICT in education over time. As mentioned earlier, the practical process of the projects mostly has carried out by the regional offices of UNESCO. After being set comprehensive goals of UNESCO, under the projects, its regional offices have supported countries by working together with NGOs of the countries (UNESCO, 2011). This project consists of a range of interconnected projects in six areas such as policy, training of teachers, teaching and learning, monitoring and measuring change, research and knowledge-sharing. In addition, in order to perform this project, they have to be collaborated with the country and the NGOs and then, the country office can maintain the projects on its own way of implement.

### 4.3 Finance

The last difference of UNESCO and WB is how they get finance to support the countries. The funding for the World Banks comes from different countries and it depends on the country basis. Technically, the World Bank is a part of the United Nations system, but its governance structure is different: each institution in the World Bank Group is owned by its member governments, which subscribe to its basic share capital, with votes proportional to shareholding. The WB has raised its money by lending its money to developing countries. WB's group agency IBRD has sold their bonds to private and institutional investors in North America, Europe, and Asia. This capital consists of reserves built up over the years and money paid in from the bank's 187 member country shareholders. IBRD income also pays for WB operating expenses and has contributed to IDA and debt relief. Shareholders support is also very important for the Bank. They have US\$178 billion in

what is known as "callable capital," which could be drawn from the shareholders as backing. Thus, the WB retains a tremendous amount of money to support the developing countries (The World Bank, 2011). On the other hand, UNESCO collects money from the member states of the UN. However, the financial situation is not sufficient because of the following reasons. In terms of the financial resources of UNESCO, one source comes from the regular budget, which comprises the contributions paid by member states, calculated according to the economic strength of each country. Another source of funding is extra budgetary funds from bilateral government donors, UN funds and programs, multilateral development banks, and the private sector (UNESCO, 2011). Nonetheless, UNESCO cannot secure abundant money from those sources. Mundy (1999)'s idea projected this argument that structural changes of the multilateral institutions are dominated by rich countries of the world. During the time, under Washington Consensus, specific multilateral agencies such as the WB and IMF have raised their power with neo-liberal idea. Hence, western countries favoring neo-liberalism have far more donated those agencies rather than UNESCO. Finally, UNESCO cannot generate more funds like the WB.

## **5 THE GENERAL INFORMATION ON MULTILATERAL AGENCIES IN EDUCATION OF BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh has focused EFA and MDG goals to get out of the poverty level since 1990s. As a developing and highly populated country, it needs education to reduce the poverty. As a matter of fact, multilateral agencies and government are deeply concerned about the primary education and adult literacy for reaching the goals. UNESCO and WB's works are totally intensified on the EFA and poverty reduction through education development because country cannot get the economic development without the education. Bangladesh has mandatory and free primary education and its enrollment rate is over 98% and gender disparity level is 47%, which is related in the EFA and MDG goals (BBS, 2009). Nevertheless, despite high achieving result, the figure does not illustrate the actual results in a qualitative aspect in education. Especially, in rural areas, half of the children cannot complete primary education because of poverty. They tend to work with parents in farming, do day labor in order to earn money for the food. Thus, to solve this, different multilateral agencies are working in Bangladesh, especially for poverty alleviation and education expansion. However, in spite of the common goals, their process is different.

### **5.1 UNESCO in Bangladesh based on EFA**

Generally, UNESCO raised the different issues and advocacy with the ideas in country level. Bangladesh has the national commission of UNESCO (BNCU), which is the liaison agency with government and UNESCO headquarters. UNESCO has different goals; among them, one is EFA. UNESCO Dhaka jointly works with BNCU, monitoring and supporting the EFA programs, early childcare and education, literacy and non-formal education, in policy dialogue advocacy, national to Asia Pacific level with strategic action plan, civil society and stakeholders' activities, information and communication for education, media, culture, and professional development, social and human sciences (UNESCO, 2011). Mostly, UNESCO builds the capacity and ideas of plans to achieve the targets. With the help of government, UN specialized agencies, development banks and bilateral organizations,

these issues are implemented under the project. According to the Dhaka Biennium Report 2008-2009, UNESCO activities in Bangladesh cover early childhood to adult education in both formal and non-formal mechanisms. It is monitoring the process of the project time to time. It runs one program about 'Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). ECCE programs include developing policy framework, development of simulation tool, workshop and meeting and advocacy. As mentioned above, UNESCO is collaborated with the Government of Bangladesh under ECCE in order to achieve EFA goals. UNESCO Dhaka provided technical input through several workshops and meetings as well as training as the core group members for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). It made a simulation tool for ECCD and a policy was confirmed at the national non-formal policy framework (UNESCO, 2011). Moreover, National Plan of Action (NPA) is covered with ECCE and education policy of Bangladesh acquires the pre-primary education on its education system (MOE, 2007-08) and UNESCO supports for the teachers in order to help to work on this sector (MOPME, 2003). Thus, this process relating to ECCE shows how UNESCO works with the government and other agencies.

### **5.2 The World Bank in Bangladesh**

The relation between the WB and Bangladesh is almost conditional. In order to reduce poverty and achieve the EFA and MDG goals, the government needs financial help from the WB, by submitting the country Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) to the WB. According to the CAS (2006-2009), the WB supports country's PRSP for education reforms and governance (World Bank, 2006). Generally, under a project, the WB provides the money for poverty alleviation to Bangladesh and the government needs to follow the WB guidelines and its intent in planning and policy-making and project process. One example of the project of WB is 'Primary Education development Program II (PEDP II). It wants to improve quality of education especially in the rural areas and across all elements of the primary education sector, from schools to supervision, from management to monitoring—PEDP II translates the poverty reduction strategy into action-oriented interventions (ADB, 2003). Meanwhile, the WB launched CAS for five years, which they have been working through. As regards with primary education, the WB worked together with bilateral agencies, such as Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) under PEDP in Bangladesh. The duration of the project was from 2004 to 2010. The main objective of the project was to access the all children complete primary education in accordance with governments' EFA program. In addition, improving quality learning and performance outcomes were included. According to the CAS (2006-2009), the WB's money lending is policy based lending (World Bank, 2006). Hence, during project preparation, WB improved project design, strengthened implementation oversight, and enhanced information disclosure. PEDP II project underpinned to strengthen the policy relating to poverty reduction and encourage the sector wide approach to support EFA and MDG agendas. In this project, Bangladesh had to abide from the requirements and procedures of development partners of PEDP II under WB's management such as reporting, procurement, audits, monitoring and evaluation (ADB, 2003). Consequently, although WB supports the government of

Bangladesh in primary education by giving financial support however it is a bank loan government to maintain the project under WB.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Among the United Nations specialized agencies, UNESCO is the leading educational agency and World Bank is the powerful agency for the multilateral education. They have similarities such as creating world agenda of trend of education, supporting the education policy making for a country but to do that these agencies are imposed their own ideas, goals, policies, mottos and believes. Both agencies have strong belief that education can change the world and all the developing countries need to have strong educational system for improve their own status. These organizations help the countries for development but way of helping always bound by their own underpinning believes. Where UNESCO shows more motivational approaches to convince local government by providing different technical supports however, WB tries to impose it with stick conditions because it provides them economical supports. For Bangladesh, foundation reflection is also same for them, which sometimes ultimately create negative views for these organizations.

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