

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY: A CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AGENDUM TOWARDS THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROPAGATION OF BANGLADESH

Muhammad SHOEB-UR-RAHMAN*

University of Dhaka, Faculty of Business Studies,
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh;
e-mail: shoeb_mgt@yahoo.com

Muhammad ISHAQ-UR-RAHMAN

School of Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University, Clayton Campus, VIC 3168, Australia
e-mail: mir76bd@yahoo.com, mirah3@student.monash.edu

Md. Shakib HOSSAIN

School of Business, East West University of Bangladesh (EWU), Dhaka;
e-mail: hossain.shaki@gmail.com

Abstract: Both the scientific and negotiating community has recognized Bangladesh as one of the most vulnerable countries to Climate Change effect which in future is likely to face more frequent climatic adversities. This paper emphasizes on putting the theme of ‘Education in Emergency’ in all climate change adaptation efforts in the country which can enable it to safeguard country’s important education sector during any disaster or in the recovery phase. Education has received inconsiderable amount of importance in those efforts and ultimately encompassed all the spheres of social, emotional, cognitive and physical ground which decelerate multifarious predicaments and adversities. In preparing this paper the authors highly rely on secondary sources of data. In the era of globalization, a vast number of populations remain untouched or being detracted from the light of education. It is particularly fact for country like Bangladesh where natural calamity is an incessant event due to the intrusion of globalization. Bilateral, multilateral, regional and global affiliation and association can be undertaken to the depletion of hindrances. Besides, substantial and congruous strategies, plans, policies and programs within the internal infrastructure may assist to mitigate this endanger and also comply with the commitment of education for all even in the cataclysm. For accomplishing responsiveness and flourishing prowess, an integrating approach to the management of Education in Emergency (EiE) requires coordination and collaboration among government departments or ministries and agencies, designing and upgrading courses (including issues like Need for Sustainable Development and Actions for Environment Protection, Environmental Management Tools & Environmental Assessment, Environment Pollution Management, Progress in Environmental Science, International Environment Laws etc.), as well as superior and immaculate information technology to resolve this consternation and vulnerability. Propitious and admissible approaches can ensure eco-balance and sustainable socio-economic development in a vulnerable country like Bangladesh with a proper accentuation on education in emergency. This paper will be highly

* Muhammad Shoeb-Ur-Rahman (Corresponding Author)

helpful for policy makers both in private and public sectors to ensure sound education opportunity in the highly disaster prone i.e., coastal areas. However, this piece of effort might also cut attention of the human rights workers.

Key words: Education in Emergency (EiE), Globalization, Climate Change, Sustainable Development, Information Technology.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

On average, a major flood occurs every four to five years, and a severe tropical cyclone hits Bangladesh every three years (Bangladesh Government Report, 2009). No month in the disaster calendar of Bangladesh is free from risk and 46 out of its 64 districts are prone to all types of disasters (HPN Event Reports, 2010). Natural disasters are causing massive humanitarian crisis and significant impact on the country's budget through incurring huge recovery cost. When these environmental mishaps are affecting the overall socio-economic condition of the country, the damage to education services caused by disasters happens to last much longer than the storms themselves (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2011). On average, 900 schools are devastated each year by natural disasters like flood and cyclones mainly (Save the Children, 2010). In between 1971 to 2007, over 120 000 primary schools were damaged by floods and 50 000 by cyclones and during 2007-2009 education of more than 1.5 million children have been disrupted particularly by cyclones (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010). Country's budget had to allocate BDT 11 196 million in just three years- 2004 to 2007 as recovery cost (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010). UNICEF reported in 2010 that about 9000 of Bangladesh's 82 000 primary schools have been affected since 2007 (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2011). What is more to ongoing trend of these disasters in Bangladesh, it has been recognized as one of the most vulnerable countries to Climate Change effect by both the scientific and negotiating community and in future it is likely to face more frequent climatic adversities (Bangladesh Government Report on Adaptation Programme, 2005). This, on the other hand, means Bangladesh is exposed to more disruption in its Education system.

As Government and other stakeholders have developed and continually working towards developing appropriate climate change adaption policy and programs for the country, this paper implies that the theme „*Education in Emergency (EiE)*” should be incorporated as priority in this effort in order to focus on „*Education*” during emergency situations in an era of increased environmental turmoils.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The necessary data from secondary sources were collected through document analysis. For this purpose a thorough literature survey has been conducted. In order to obtain the reliable secondary data various journals, periodicals, books, acts, regulations, policies of Bangladesh, websites, annual reports, papers of different agencies were consulted carefully.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY (EIE)

Save the Children Alliance Education Group (2001) defined Education in Emergency as „*Education that protects the well-being, fosters learning opportunities, and nurtures the overall development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical) of children affected by conflicts and disasters*” (Sinclair, 2002). The theme of „*education in emergencies*” (EiE) has received prominent attention since 1990 in connection with the concept of „*complex humanitarian emergencies*”, situations that are „*man made*” and are often caused by conflicts or civil unrest (Kamel, 2006). Further to „*complex emergencies*”, the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) defines emergencies along another dimension „*natural disasters*” that include, among others, hurricanes/typhoons, earthquakes, droughts and floods (Kamel, 2006).

Emergency, regardless its types i.e. man-made, natural or occurred otherwise, cause diverse humanitarian crises. But crises for food, shelter, health and livelihood among all are seen to be addressed by preparedness and response effort immediately and thoroughly, education remains as an afterthought. Recognition of this fact through different forum by the worldwide education sector stakeholders increasingly stressed upon need for providing educational response in emergency and reconstruction settings. Thus although the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) pointed the issue first, it is believed to be making only limited reference to education in emergencies when the World Education Forum held at Dakar in April 2000 is credited for putting education in crises on the international agenda successfully (Kamel, 2006).

LINKAGE BETWEEN EIE AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Climate change „*adaptation*” is as important as the other main human response to climate change i.e. „*mitigation*”, however, adaptation to the already existent impacts from climate change so far is essential and of critical importance because even imposing the toughest mitigation efforts and targets won't be able to avoid further impacts of climate change in the next few decades (NCCARF, 2012). „*Education*” despite being dubbed as the backbone of a nation and recognized as one of the most significant human rights tend to attract inadequate focus at a period of crisis which makes educational system especially pre-primary, primary and secondary to suffer large scale devastation and irregularity in any emergency (CLAP, 2008). Hence, as „*adaptation*” consists of actions undertaken to reduce the adverse consequences of climate change on human and natural system (NCCARF, 2012), incorporating „*ensuring education in a crisis situation*” into adaptation action plan of different stakeholders can ensure a planned and coordinated effort toward safeguarding education system during any disastrous situation.

BANGLADESH SCENARIO

With 8th highest population in the world (CIA, 2012), Bangladesh has one of the largest primary education systems in the world but it is still largely unprepared to meet disaster challenges (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2011). Resource diversion (e.g. turning school premises into shelters) during a disaster resulting into delay of reopening school, children caught by physical and mental trauma tending to dropout from school are some of the major challenges the education system face during or after any disaster.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken steps to address the issue through building school premises able to cater for disasters; introducing preparedness plans in school kits etc. (HPN Event Reports, 2010), but still there is a huge need for policy incorporation in this regard as National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and other relevant policies, guidelines make a very limited or no reference to ensuring education in an emergency situation.

Non-Government sector is considered as the third force in country's development after Government and Private sector which has successfully contributed towards maintaining the country's achievement in health and poverty alleviation. The sector's coordinated effort started through establishment of Education in Emergency (EiE) Cluster by few agencies active in the field of education after the super cyclone 'Sidr' that struck the country in late 2007 (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010). The Cluster, one of the active clusters out of 42 clusters established globally lead by UNICEF mainly as of March 2011 (Global Education Cluster, 2011), has now turned into a forum with around 30 members from Government, UN Agencies, INGO, national and local NGOs, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children UK (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010). Initially its coordination mechanism was aimed at ensuring restoration of children's education at the earliest opportunity and effective, more coherent and coordinated response of the agency to avoid duplication and gaps while it also vowed to work towards building education system-wide capacity and preparedness at both local and national level (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010). The cluster is now advocating with the Government of Bangladesh to put Education in Emergency as national priority (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010).

WHY PUT EIE IN PRIORITY LIST?

Education is a right for the children and ensuring this right in any circumstances including an emergency situation is a legal binding for states that are signatory of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Save the Children, 2008). Also the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, MDG etc. stressed upon universal children's education. Ensuring education for children in emergency situation can ensure children's protection, continue their psycho-social development and can promote peace, prosperity and stability in the society (Save the Children, 2008).

Even after so many disasters, reopening schools is an afterthought to emergency responses which results into diverse loss in educational sector including damage of infrastructure, incompleteness/under completion of curriculum etc. This happens due to absence of preparedness about any potential future disaster. The government's apparent limited capacity and scanty resources to respond to the massive scale of disasters seen to be contested and further aggravated by the unprepared situation of the concerned bodies. Therefore it calls for „proactive adaptation” measures for education in climate change agenda which instead of responding merely aftermath a disaster would enable the Government, stakeholders in development and community to remain prepared beforehand. And this is possible by emphasizing it in relevant policies, strategic and action plans of both Government and Non-government organizations.

THE ROLE OF EIE TO FACE THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION

At present, the entire global community is facing a dilemma of strikingly different environmental landscape and emerging growth pressure than ever. The globalization viewpoints see the whole world as a single unit rather than multiple parts where the strength of one place might be exchanged with another in consideration of mutual benefits. Globalization in its essence should contribute equally to the development of all the parties involved. But it's a matter of fact that the weak or small economy being dominated by the stronger one. Hence, the curses of globalization are highly experienced and carried forward by the weaker parties. This scenario is highly evidential for countries like Bangladesh. A recent review of country profiles based on environmental vulnerability indicates Bangladesh is in highly vulnerable zone securing 340 points.

Such vulnerability, to a great extent is a product of globalization as acknowledged by the scientific and negotiating communities. Here, we try to develop a self-descriptive model that focuses on the globalization impacts which necessitates the incorporation of EIE concept towards the enhancement of socio-economic portfolio in a sustainable way. The self-explanatory model illustrates how the very concept of EIE (Education in Emergency) can decelerate the agony and dreadfulness that result from the intervention of globalization.

Table 1. Indexes showing endanger position of Bangladesh.
(Data source: Accessing respective web pages.)

Name of Index (and its source)	Rank for previously available year	Rank for the latest available year	Direction Improvement (+) or Deterioration (-)
Environmental Performance/ Sustainability Index YCELP and CIESIN (Web browsed in sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/es/esi/)	125	139	-
	(out of 149)	(out of 163)	
	2008	2010	
Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) Germanwatch (Web browsed in www.germanwatch.org/cri)	8	58	-
	(out of 128)	(out of 181)	
	CRI 2011 (2009 data)	CRI 2012 (2010 data)	

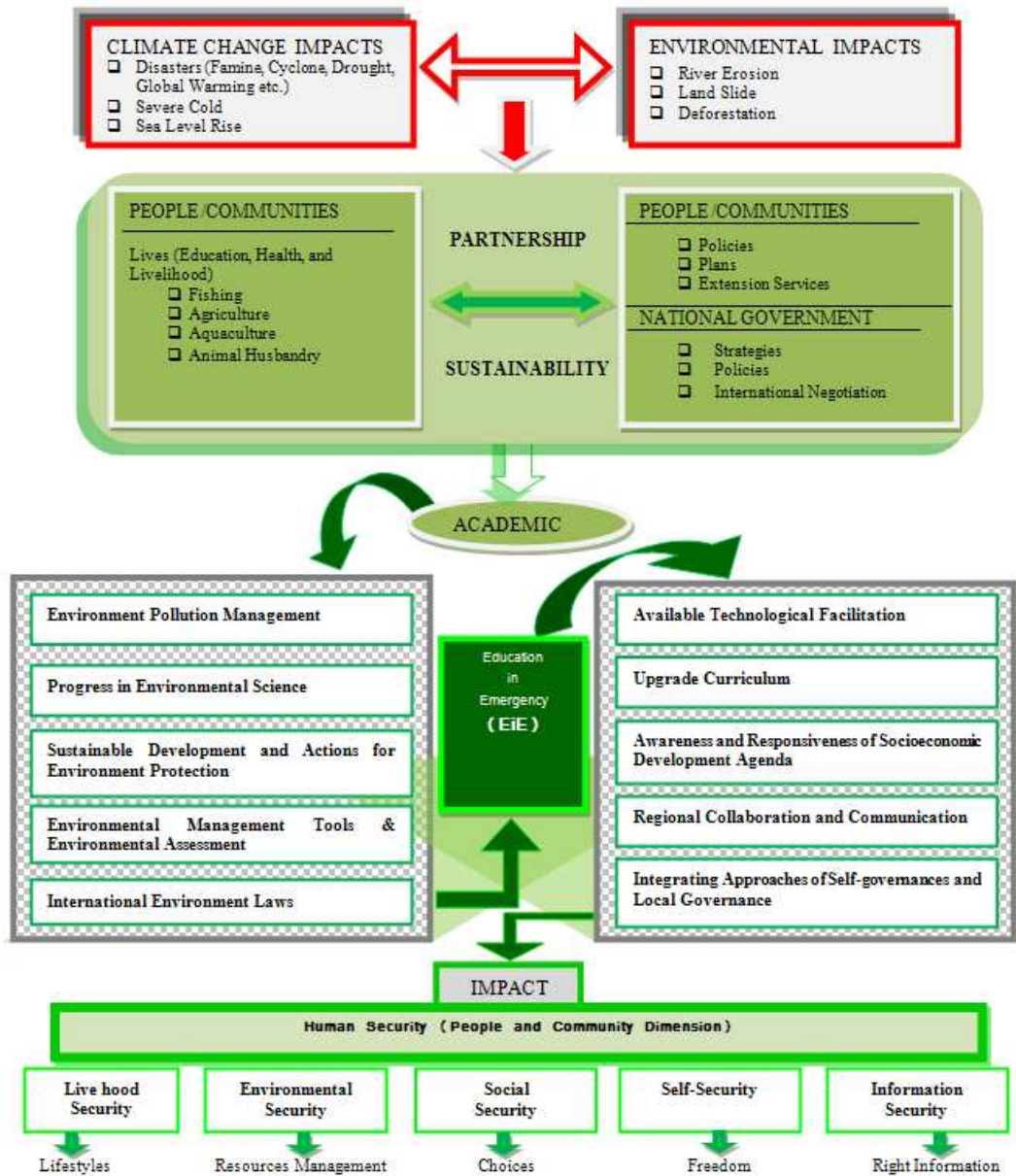


Figure 1. The concept of EiE in climate change adaptation.
(Source: Produced by the authors.)

The ultimate products of globalization in the form of climate change and environmental degradation are contributing to the atrocious and predicaments situations which make our social life miserable and gruesome. The transformation can be well observed through continuous events like famine, cyclone, drought, river erosion, land slide, and deforestation. This immeasurable and enforceable problem can be abated by the proper and substantial collaboration between local and national government and also by furnishing awareness of the general people through the inception of education in emergency. If we can do so, this will in turn facilitate human security like live hood security, environment security, social security, self-security and information security.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT EIE

The authors suggest three sorts of activities based on the model developed initially which bear utmost importance in the implementation of the concept „*Education in Emergency (EiE)*” considering the scenarios of Bangladesh.

Firstly, an integrated approach to the management of EiE requires coordination between government departments or ministries and agencies or non-government organizations concerned with such programs. Such coordination demands a high degree of intersectoral and interdepartmental coordination at all levels of government, from the national to the local level. And successful coordination between government departments and agencies can result in effective planning and policy development which will in turn ensure the success of EiE.

Secondly, by designing a special course or curriculum and introducing this curriculum at different levels of the education systems as mandatory basis might engender a greater response in favour of EiE. The role of education could be well observed as follows:

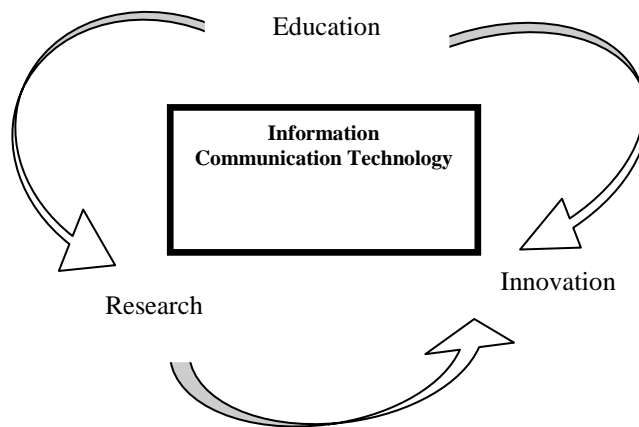


Figure 2. The education base for implementing EiE
(Source: Developed by the authors)

As this is the age of globalization, the central role should be carried out by the Information and Communication Technology. This theme also justifies the current government’s catchphrase i.e., „*Digital Bangladesh*”. A well planned ICT infrastructure will help to update the curriculum as per the national as well as international requirements and disseminate required information on timely basis. The participation of young as well as expert researchers should be ensured so as to achieve innovative ways in implementing EiE concept. However, theoretical education itself will contribute to find out the innovative ways.

Lastly, an alternative access program might be designed so that the growing drop-out ratio could be controlled. The numbers of drop out become rising because of the inconsistent lifestyle experienced just after the disaster, through such a program students might be offered with a second chance to keep pace with the formal level.

CONCLUSION

In a national consultation during April 2010, both the representatives from Bangladesh Government, the Education Cluster and education specialists from different organizations agreed upon inevitable need for prioritising Education in Emergency in the national Agenda. But it seems to achieve yet any noteworthy advancement in national adaptation strategies, policies or plans. NGO’s in Bangladesh have played a significant role in increasing national literacy rate during last decades with successful formal, non-formal and alternative education models, hence, incorporating

„*Education in Emergency*” theme in strategic goals of the NGO’s practicing in education sector can result in viable education programs. Besides, advocacy for national policy integration, NGO’s can act as trailblazer in ensuring education in emergency situation by devising their disaster preparedness, response and climate change adaptation effort especially with „*Alternative Curriculum Provision*” that may focus on exclusively different kind of disasters and preparedness and „*Alternative Access Program*” that may provide a second chance to the drop-out or victims of a disaster to catch up the formal level after a disaster.

REFERENCES

- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2012), *The World Fact Book*, Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html>. [Accessed on 09 March 2012].
- Child Project Committee for Legal Aid to Poor (CLAP) (2008), *The Right of the Child to Education in Emergency Situations (Article 28 & 29 of the UNCRC)*, Written contribution to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the Day of General Discussion, Orissa, India.
- Global Education Cluster (2011), *Country Implementation*: March 2011.
- Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh (2005), *National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)*.
- Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh (2009), *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan*.
- Humanitarian Practice Network (2010), *Education in emergencies*, HPN Event Reports, Available at: <http://www.odihpn.org/hpn-resources/hpn-event-reports/education-in-emergencies>. [Accessed on 05 March 2012].
- Kamel and Hania (2006), *Early childhood care and education in emergency situations*, Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education.
- National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF). (2012), *Climate Change Adaptation*, Available at: <http://www.nccarf.edu.au/climate-change-adaptation>. [Accessed on 08 March 2012].
- Save the Children (2008), *Delivering Education for Children in Emergencies: A Key Building Block for the Future*, International Save the Children Alliance, London, UK.
- Save the Children (2010), *The Vital Debate- Education in Emergencies*, Available at: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/blogs/2010/07/the-vital-debate-education-in-emergencies/?TW>. [Accessed on 07 March 2012].
- Sinclair, M. (2002), *Planning Education in and after Emergencies*, Paris: UNESCO, p. 81.
- UNICEF Bangladesh (2010), *Ensuring education of children during emergency is a priority*, Available at: http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/media_6152.htm. [Accessed on 07 March 2012].
- UNICEF Bangladesh (2011), *Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition*, 2010 Report Evaluation.
- Web browsed in www.germanwatch.org/cri. [Accessed on 25 March 2012].
- Web browsed in www.sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/es/esi/. [Accessed on 25 March 2012].

Submitted:
November 20, 2012

Revised:
January 07, 2013

Accepted and published online
February 20, 2013