

Unlocking Student Creativity and Research Potential in Bangladesh: The Crucial Role of Policy Makers in Breaking Deadlocks

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ABSTRACT

There are 53 public universities in Bangladesh, University of Rajshahi is a significant one of them. This study focuses on the student's present condition of creativity and research potential. The researchers in this paper tried to find out the causes of why students are not interested in research, especially in the Social Science and Arts Faculties including an out-of-date curriculum, a dearth of resources, and limited access to technology, Bangladesh's existing educational system frequently stifles students' creativity and restricts their ability to conduct research. This research paper has developed a mixed methodology to collect data and analysis. From 10 departments (856 postgraduate students) 265 respondents take part in this research. Collecting the data, we analyzed them and find out effective ways how the students can cope with the existing problem. Finally, we discuss the role of policymakers including policymakers should give priority to measures upgrading curricula to foster creativity, increasing funding for research and innovation, and allocating money to infrastructure and technology to improve access to information and communication.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh (a south Asian country) is a populous country. As of the 2022 census, Bangladesh has a population of 165 million people. Bangladesh ranks eighth on the list of countries (dependencies) by population. That is why there is an unbelievable possibility of turning this populace into human resources by instilling them as researchers and policymakers. Higher education's type and quality have a significant impact on how modern society develops, and it has the power to significantly increase income in developing nations (Khatun et al. 2022). Universities in other countries change society and remain the center of change and development. But in Bangladesh, the numerous education commissions that have been established to date place a theoretical emphasis on maximizing potential at all societal levels and building a talent pool of highly skilled people who can contribute to the advancement of the country (Monem and Baniamin 2010; Islam 2021). But the country is unable to succeed in the process of making human resources as well. On the other hand, research work engages students to increase their employment and make them efficient for the future, but unexpectedly, the annual report of the University Grants Commission (UGC) shows that 125 public and private universities in the country distributed a total of only 1.53 billion (BDT) and an average of 0.12 billion (BDT) each on research, which is only 1% of their total expenditure (Rahman 2022). According to Professor Manzoorul Islam, our budget for education is very poor, we should have allocated 25% of our national budget or 6% of GDP for education to improve the quality of our universities, and we need a political will for its improvement (Islam 2021). Students are thought of in every country as the future leaders of society. They have a respective role in society because society contributes to them at every step. The countries offer students higher education to prepare them to lead the country empirically and thoroughly. But nowadays students of universities (in Bangladesh) have forgotten the primary purpose of education and its feedback respectively. In this study, we have tried to explore the vital issues of why the students of our country cannot be the real creative Person. On the other hand, students do not have huge job opportunities according to the graduate students, and most of them turn into frustrated and do not get their specific job, we also identified the role of policymakers in society as well as how the students can be enlightened by being self-employed. A study shows that compared to international-level education, Bangladesh's system is not competitive and has critical implications for the overall national development and the lack of a unified curriculum has been detrimental to the education sector for the past 44 years in Bangladesh (Prodhon 2016; Khatun et al. 2023). Students concentrate to get into public or private job sectors most likely Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) and other public services whether they hide empirical study and research. These kinds of job holders' institutes hold an illogical competitive exam. There do not have any productive way. The authority of those institutes sets up a syllabus according to the outdated topics and the students memorize those topics. That is why creative ability dies day by day. All the students tend to be BCS cadre and public job holders. So, they abstain from the rebirth of research and making

policy, especially in the Faculty of Social Science and Faculty of Arts (Islam 2023). On the other hand, the government does not make practical steps to encourage students to be researchers and to serve the country as well as human development. It is an important study for the policymakers to give back to the life of the new generation. It should mention that during Covid-19 one of my friends committed suicide in the impossibility of her life and strict academic studies. She was a student at the department of the political science university of Rajshahi (RU). Her unexpected death proves that the education system of Bangladesh is so much outdated and ineffective, especially in the field of Social Sciences and Arts. However, many students in Bangladesh face a creative and research deadlock, which hinders their thinking and instant problem-solving power. There is no way to deny the fact that funding from the government for higher education and research is not at all satisfactory and the University Grand Commission (UGC) unable to provide funds according to the need of the universities in Bangladesh. The amount of budget provided to the universities is mostly spent on the salary and allowances of the faculty development, research, and establishment of new departments in response to the demand of time. Though recently, the allocation of the budget to the education sector is still insufficient and this budget cannot satisfy the demands of public universities (Monem and Baniamin 2010; Islam and Khatun 2023). In this paper, we have tried to build up significant parameters for the students why they should be researchers, and what the policymakers should be as the panacea in every stage like Universities by ensuring necessary assistance. We also try to show the problems and its remedy (Khatun and Islam 2023). We suggested ways in which students must change and how to set up their Vision and how to accomplish the final steps. Finally, we discuss the results and the conducive assistance for the students and the responsibility of policymakers in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Our educational system is still stuck in the past, even though schools and universities all over the world are putting more of an emphasis on soft skills like teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, negotiation, decision-making (Haider 2022; Islam and Khatun 2023). The quality of education and students' prospects are heavily influenced by the creativity and research potential. The development of student creativity and research capacity in Bangladesh has been hampered by several problems, including a lack of resources, out-of-date curricula, and administrative restrictions. This study of the literature analyzes the difficulties faced by Bangladeshi students and highlights the vital part played by policymakers in resolving conflicts and releasing students' creative and intellectual potential.

1.1 Challenges faced by students in Bangladesh:

Bangladeshi students' ability to develop their creativity and research capacity is severely limited by a lack of resources, such as access to libraries and laboratories. Furthermore, the antiquated curricula that prioritized

memorization over critical thinking and problem-solving also hampered students' ability to develop these skills. Significant obstacles faced by students in Bangladesh include bureaucratic limits on research activity and a lack of financing options (Khaleda et al., 2020).

1.2 The role of policymakers

In order to overcome the difficulties students in Bangladesh experience and unleash their creative and research potential, policymakers are essential. Assert that governments should concentrate on developing a supportive atmosphere for students that encourages innovation and study. This entails granting access to cutting-edge tools and infrastructure, upgrading curricula to emphasize critical thinking and problem-solving, and removing administrative barriers that restrict research efforts (Hossain et al. 2021). In order to improve teachers' abilities to encourage research and creativity among pupils, policymakers should also prioritize investment in human capital development. Critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative thinking abilities need to be emphasized in teacher preparation programs in order to improve student learning (Islam and Hossain, 2019). The growth of student creativity and research potential in Bangladesh is crucial for the development of a knowledge-based economy and the overall progress of the country. Policymakers play a crucial role in breaking deadlocks and unlocking the creativity and research potential of students by providing access to modern facilities, updating curriculums, removing bureaucratic constraints, and investing in human capital development. By addressing these challenges, policymakers can create an enabling environment for students that promotes creativity and research and enhances their prospects. There is no specific literature based on social sciences and art students. It is the first and most creative work of the master's students at the University of Rajshahi.

Objectives of the Study

This is an empirical study to find out the research state of the students of the Faculty of Social Science and Faculty of Arts in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Arts. We have selected for this article the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. The following objectives are studied accordingly.

1. To identify the research situation and interest of students of M.S.S (Master of Social Science) and MA (Master of Arts) in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Rajshahi.
2. To show the importance of research in every sector in Bangladesh.
3. To find out why the students in these two Faculty are indifferent in research.
4. To put advance recommendations for breaking the reluctance of research and the role of modern policymakers in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, we have implemented both qualitative and quantitative methods to identify the problems of students in research. It has been taken the survey method and collected data by investigating via personal interviews. We have tried to find out the answer to the question "Why the students of social sciences and arts faculties are backward in research?" According to (Lune and Berg 2021) definition they define (1) Qualitative research mentions to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of a particular topic, and (2) Quantitative mentions to counts and measures of topics, the length, and distributions of our desirable matters: like how large a thing is, how many of them there are and how likely we are to encounter one. This is a mixed-type research method. The University of Rajshahi is the second largest University, according to its academic and campus area, and the second oldest (est. 1953) University in Bangladesh. This University is popularly known as the Cambridge of the East. There are 59 departments under 12 faculties but we have chosen 2 faculties for this study the Faculty of Social Science and the Faculty of Arts. The Master's students from both Faculty have been selected as the sample for collecting data in this study. From the 2 Faculties, 10 departments were selected like Economics, Political Science, Social Work, Sociology, and Public Administration, (Faculty of Social Science). On the other hand, Philosophy, English, Bangla, Islamic Studies, and Sanskrit (Faculty of Arts). An effective survey questionnaire has been designed to collect data from the students from both departments respectively. The total students of Masters level students (from selected departments) are about 856. 265 copies of questions have been delivered to the selected departments for collecting data. Then, we collect the answers and analyze them. We also take face-to-face interviews with Masters's level students at the University of Rajshahi. We make sure ethical order to collect data from the students in the selected Departments.

Problem statement

It may be said that a good student can be a good researcher and research increase the problem-solving capacity of the students. A study shows in 2016 that there are 6 motivational ideas that help the faculty students in research these are 1) Achievement 2) Enjoyment 3) Recognition 4) Work itself 5) Pressure and 6) Rewards (Tamim, 2021). In Bangladesh, students escape research in order to prepare themselves for a public job. On the other hand, economic and technological developments depend on research in every country in the modern world but in Bangladesh research is backward due to financial constraints, appropriate policy, and political will (Alam 2016). In 2019, University Grand Commission (UGC) allotted 80.88 billion BDT to public universities in Bangladesh which is only 1% of funding for research and a lack of opportunities for research in our country, students are not illegible for higher education abroad (Tahsin 2021). Bangladesh is a developing country; it is the 8th most populous country in the world. But this country is not doing adequate research because of the positive will of the policymakers and students. A country cannot be successful without advanced knowledge and research. We got independence

in 1971, and we celebrated our golden jubilee but we have not got enlightenment from research. On the other hand, South Korea is the best example, they create in the top 10 countries by ensuring higher research quality like Research and Development (R&D) program (Tahsin, 2021). In Bangladesh, students are admitted into universities from the middle classes and lower classes than the higher classes. Consequently, above all students dream to get higher jobs and their families expect their respective job as soon as they finish their graduation. For this reason, students also never think to be free thinkers or writers. Family pressure hit them to install their mind to be job holders, but insufficient jobs hurt them strictly. A research paper shows that students and supervisors are disconnected and students do not understand their topics because they do not read their selected topics carefully (Matin & Khan, 2017). Consequently, students are not interested in their research and empirical study. In the research field students could create an unbelievable contribution to Bangladesh. At the University of Rajshahi, there are huge historical monuments that may be our main resource to accomplish research but there are huge toxic behaviors that damage the wills of students. We try to run research activities but the constraints throw us in the bin. Here in RU, have numerous historical monuments like the Varendra Research Museum (established in 1910), Rajshahi University *Shaheed Smriti Shangrahshala* (a museum about the liberation war in 1971), Rajshahi University *Baddhavumi* (symbol of the brutality of the then West Pakistani Military), and the heroic leader like Shaded Dr. Shamsuzzoha (were killed at 18 February 1969). We have a huge opportunity to discover the hidden truth by undertaking more and more research on them. But we have a huge barricade to get access to because of the unwillingness of the directors of those national assets. The administration and policymakers can be the spokesman to us for doing this. On the other view, in Bangladesh, the students never get opportunities in research like financial support, proper guidance, mentorship, political support, and administrative help.

RESEARCH QUESTION

There are 3 fundamental questions that have supported us to build research goals and outcomes. These have given below:

1. What specific policy changes can be implemented in Bangladesh to better support and encourage creativity and research among students at all levels of education?
2. How can educators and policy maker's work together address the systemic barriers that currently prevent many students in Bangladesh from pursuing research and creative projects?
3. What role can international partnerships and collaborations play in promoting creativity and research among Bangladeshi students, and how can policymakers leverage these opportunities to create more supportive and dynamic learning environments?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

After collecting the data, we have an analysis of the data. There are numerous data have been collected from 265 respondents under the two selected faculties. There are several noticeable findings that will help the students and policymakers to find out the problems and to make a roadmap to cope with the problems.

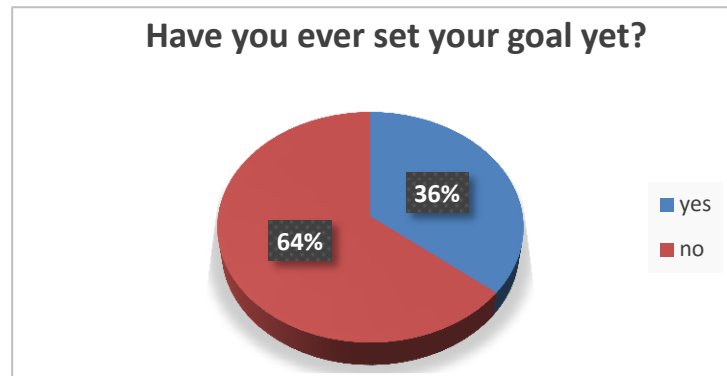


Figure 1. Shows the goal of the respondents

The figure shows from the 265 students only 36% have set up their goals and 64% of students do not make their future goals. The largest number of students are not serious about their future. That is not satisfactory for a nation.

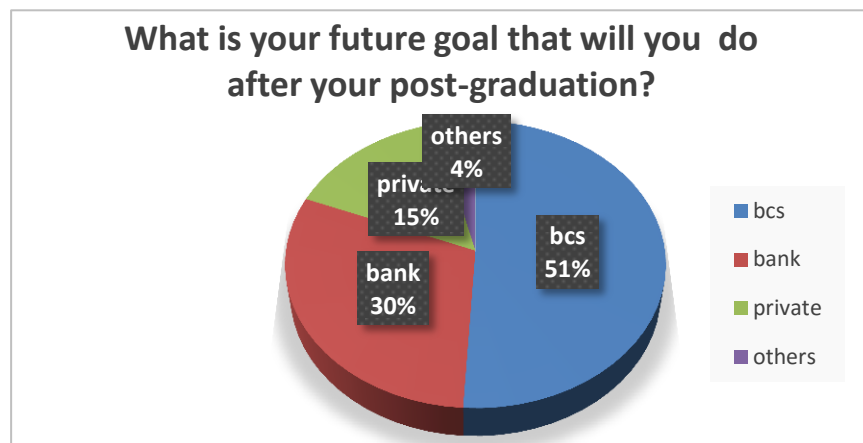


Figure 2. The sequence of Choices

In Figure 2 the respondents select their choices accordingly. Only 15% of the respondents were selected for private jobs and 4% for others which is the lowest number. On the other hand, 51% selected Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) which shows the highest of the choices. And only 30% wanted to be bankers. Ultimately most of the students like the BCS job that is articulated in the figure.

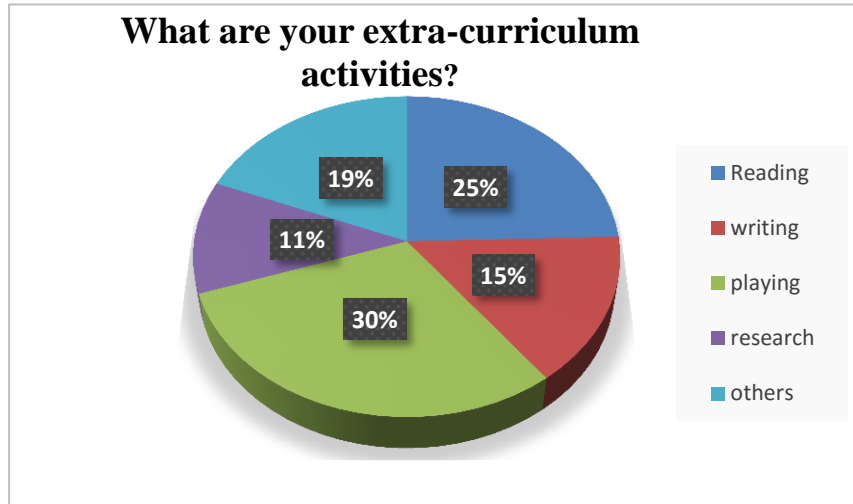


Figure 3. The extra-curriculum activities

Students spend their time in different ways in their daily life which may be the indicator of their hobbies as well as their priorities. The above figure shows that students use their time only 11% on research in academic life. And 30% of their time for Playing is the highest number on the diagram. Gradually they spend for reading 25%, for others 19%, and writing 15%.

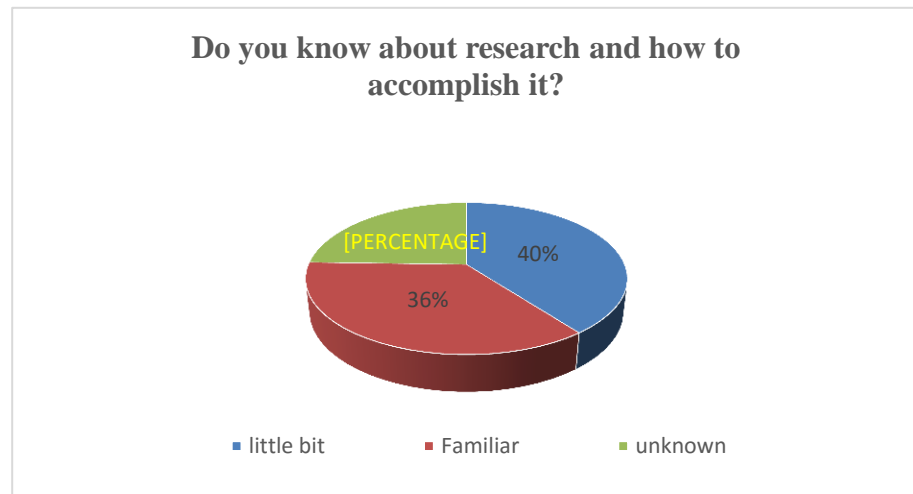


Figure 4. The condition of research

Figure 4 reflects the research interest of the students but it shows 36% of students are familiar with research and how to run it. On the other hand, 24% of students are unknown of it and do not work on it. It is 40% which is the highest number in the field. In this field students a little bit knows how to execute it and read sometimes for education in their academic study. This result is not satisfactory for enriching research.

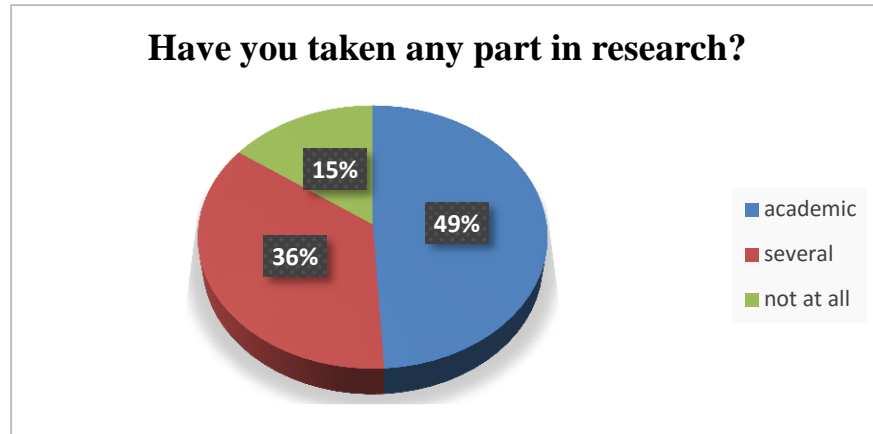


Figure 5. It shows the research experience of students

In figure 5 we have seen that most of the students take part in research for an academic curriculum which is 49% of the total respondents. On the other hand, 15% of the respondents do not take part in any research in their academic life and are not interested in it. The rest 36% of the total respondents are partly connected with it.

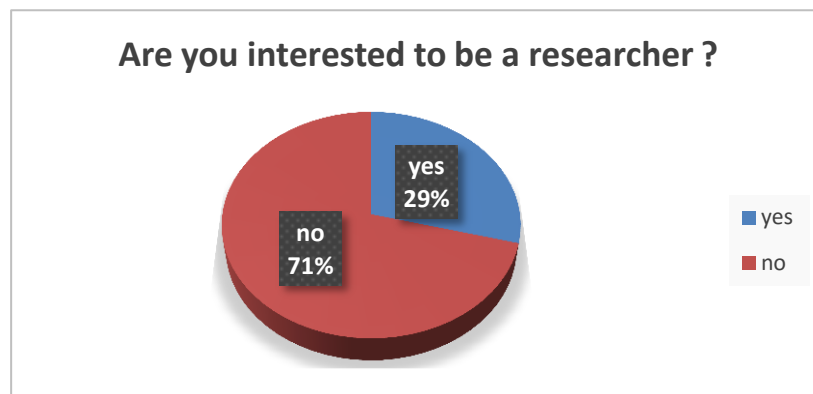


Figure 6. It represents the interest level of the students

It is unfortunate that only 29% of respondents like research. But 71% of respondents were totally not interested in research which is negative for our development.

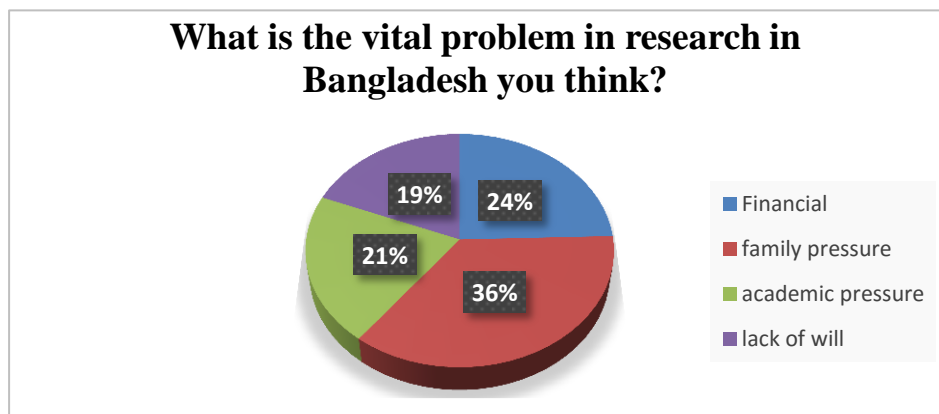


Figure 7. This Figure shows the intention of the students in research

The above figure indicates that about 36% of respondents are under the pressure of their family. And the lowest number of respondents is only 19% who are not willing on it. 24% are in financial crisis and 21% are under academic pressure.

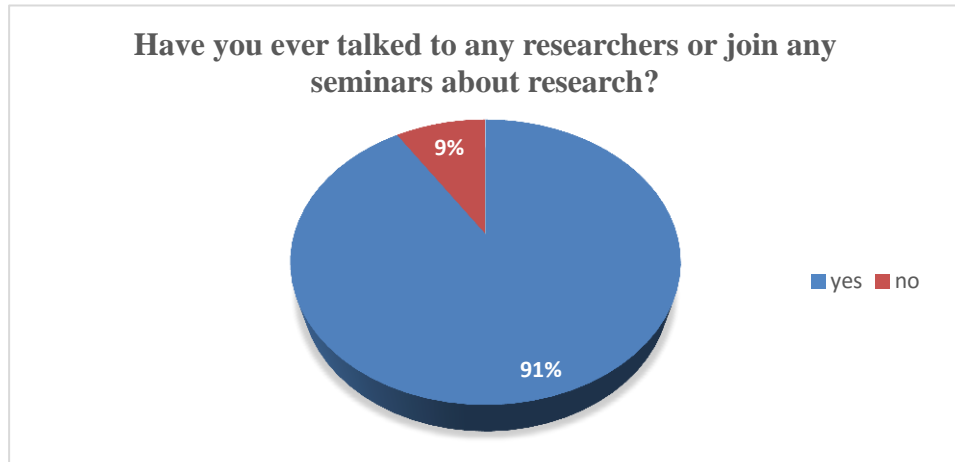


Figure 9. The figure shows eagerness to know about research

The result that is shown in figure 9 is really fragile for our development. Only 9% students of the respondents have taken steps to know about the research and 91% are reminded indifferent about it. Consequently, the condition of research is not seen in light of improvement.

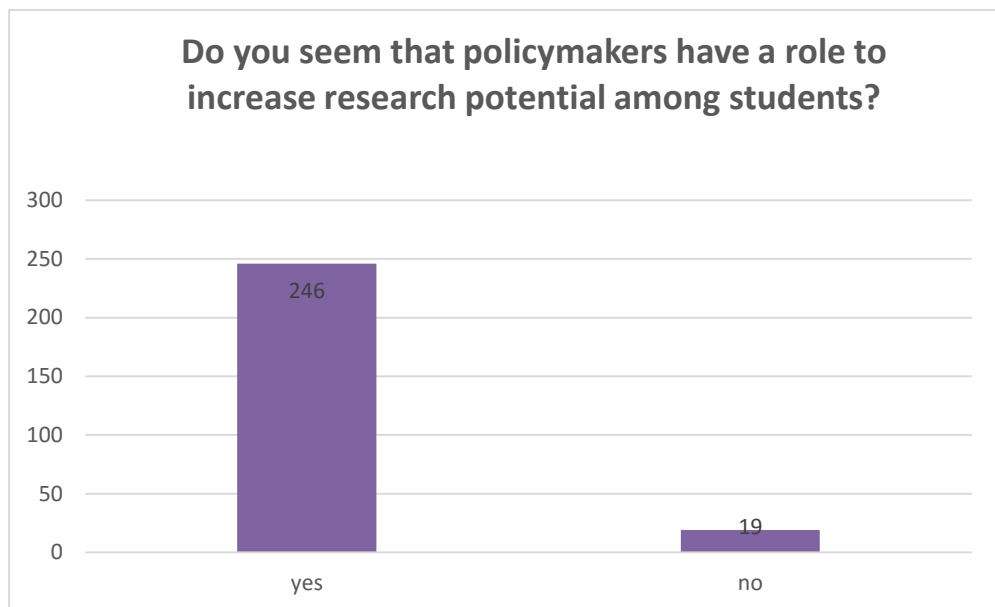


Figure 8. It shows the role of policymakers in research

In the chart, it is clear that policymakers have huge authority on the breaking unlock research potential and to give back the life of research. 19 (7%) respondents do not agree with it. 93% (246 respondents) believe that policymakers can take a key role in increasing research activities.

2. Analysis of the Interviews

We have taken several interviews based on the study objectives from the perspectives of the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. These interviews followed the ethical rules and the pseudonyms is been visible in the interviews because of their personal request.

Robin is a student of the department of political science, he states that he had a lugubrious history before being admitted to the University. He wants to be a job holder as soon as possible. Because his family background is very poor, he mentioned. His mother stays at home while his father works as a day worker. His father bears half of his educational expenditure. Robin now obtaining 2 tuitions in his campus area. He is concerned about his future until he gets a job. That is why he cannot think of anything beyond a job. So, he reads regularly his job-related books as well as academics. He does not spend time on research as usual.

Arshad is a student of the department of Sociology he defines, my family is in dilemma because of me. My parents always suffer more from dealing with our big family. We are five siblings. I am the elder of them. So, I have numerous responsibilities to them. I cannot think without supporting my family. My mother always cries into the phone because of our dept. I must be a part of the income in my family as soon as possible. Accordingly, I am focusing on my career more than others. I have taken part in an academic thesis but it does not inspire me.

Nirob is Masters's student he says, He is very concerned about his future because his graduation is at the edge of the line. he is very fond of fieldwork and dissertation. But he does not have any mentors. His will is now in the bin because he found that these types of work never help to qualify for the preliminary exam in the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) or Bank Jobs. So, now he admitted to a BCS coaching center in his living area.

Mukul is a Master's student in the department of Economics he shared his experiences with us, and he told us that he is the 3rd son of his parents. He competed in the 44th BCS but failed. He is now in a great depression for his future. He mentioned that he prepared for 2 years for BCS but he failed now he cannot go to the village and could not visit his relative's houses because everybody wants to know about his job.

Urmi Shaha states that she was from a middle-class family. Her father is a Ready-Made Garments (RDM) employee. After the Covid-19 pandemic, her father lost his job. Now, he is staying with his village family and working in his brother's vegetables and paddy fields. Her father cannot serve her monthly academic expenditure as well. So, she is finding a job and preparing herself for govt. job as well as private jobs.

Rahul is Masters's student, we take his interview, and he mentioned to us his present condition. He mentioned that he is busy now ensuring his career and his future. He earns from tuition. He serves 2 home tuition and his father is unable to help him. So, he wants to join a job as soon as he finished his graduation. Now he is being prepared not only for BCS but also for Bank jobs (especially for Bangladesh Bank). He also mentioned that our academic syllabus

is not well-furnished because we have miscellaneous courses than academic time. He told us he cannot think of anything without academic and professional preparation.

3. The present situation of the linguistic department like English, Bangla, Islamic Studies, and Sanskrit

According to Harun, he told us, English is an International Language. It has a huge market value. I wish to pursue higher education abroad. So, I am trying for International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to get opportunities for higher education in reputed Universities. My father is a Primary School Head Master Teacher. He influences me to seat for BCS in order to be the quick successor in my career rather than a higher degree.

Tommy is a student of Sanskrit he says In Bangladesh, there is no subjective job like in other countries. So, we have no substitute for BCS and another job. I would join a private job in my locality.

Parvez Chowdhury a student of the Islamic Studies department states that higher education is necessary but without a job, in our society, we have no value. So, my family wants to see me in a high-quality job. But I want to continue a business.

Habibur states, My Father is a Rickshaw puller. My father is not able to give me my educational support. But I am constantly struggling to complete my graduation and to vivid my future. I do not waste my time. I have been admitted to a coaching center for my job preparation. I am not so interested in research because I do have not much time to pursue any research base activities.

Ashique Ikbal mentioned that he is a little bit fond of empirical activities. He wants to be a researcher but after his academic life, he would take part in the research-based task. He was influenced by his best teacher and he has a little bit of will to tack part in any research-based task. But in our country, nobody respects researchers. So, I want to be a successful man and enrich my knowledge in every stage of life. I am also concerned about his career.

In the above discussion, we have noticed that all the students of the selected faculties are so careful about their careers. But they are not focusing on the research activities whether empirical research. In the above two faculties students are more confused about their job. In the whole interviews, some students ensure that they have taken part in an academic thesis but it never inspires them because, in the job market, there is not any practical value. Most of the students trying to be employed but are not careful about the empirical activities. The students who are eager to go for higher education but indifferent to research and empirical work. The students of arts faculties don't believe that they have mammal opportunities in the research field. Even though the department of Sanskrit has a positive impression on research (Islam, 2023). But the students are being narrow-minded in lack communication skills. Family pressure is the most crisis in improving research and dissertation activities. Students also have a lack of will in this field. They should not be conservative-minded.

4. Recommendations

In recent years, Bangladesh has advanced significantly in the area of education and economics. Nonetheless, there are still numerous problems that require attention for the betterment of the nations. Unlocking students' capacity for creativity and research is one of the biggest problems. Policymakers must play a key role in breaking deadlocks in order to meet this challenge. This study explores the significance of fostering student innovation and research capacity in Bangladesh as well as the function of policymakers in accomplishing this objective. Bangladesh's entire development depends on the ability to unleash student creativity and research potential. Students who are innovative and possess good research abilities are more likely to break new ground and establish themselves as leaders in their industries. In turn, this might support the nation's economic expansion. A research-oriented curriculum also increases students' likelihood of developing critical thinking abilities, which are crucial for success in any career most significantly for the betterment of countrymen. In Bangladesh, students are not aware of their academic topics because of focusing on the job market (SK Choudhury 2009).

Students in Bangladesh encounter several difficulties that limit their ability to be creative and do original research. The policymakers can take a key role to solve the deadlock of research and potential in the students. The recommended solution must have been taken by the authority and its part. The solutions are given below:

- Confirmation of resources: Many students may not have access to the tools they need to conduct research, including computers, books, and journals. The authority like the administration of the University can deliver loans for purchasing laptops, books, journals, and required tools.
- Ensure direction: Teachers frequently fail to give students the advice they need to undertake research and create original projects. The authority must ensure that the teachers will mentor the students who are fond of research.
- Rote learning: The Bangladeshi educational system frequently emphasizes rote learning, which discourages critical thinking and innovation. It is seen in the research data that most of the students are going to be prepared for BCS which is an absolute example of rote learning. Students set their minds from the first year for getting jobs. So, they emphasize job preparation rather than academic learning. So, teachers should take numerous seminars on the topic of empirical learning.
- Take quality over quantity: In Bangladesh, our universities have huge courses and exams but we do not have much time for thinking outside of the box. Exams frequently do not assess creativity or research abilities. So, the authority should immediately take effective steps to prepare the students not just for exams but also for problem-solving. To be clear Education Ministry should take steps like decreasing academic pressure, shortening the syllabus, and keeping an eye on students' activities.

- Financial support: Financial support can be increased, particularly for projects and initiatives that are research-focused. The authority should create projects for students so that students can be influenced by research and project-based activities.
- To foster creativity and research, policymakers can encourage collaboration between students, instructors, and researchers.
- Curriculum redesign: Policymakers can change the curriculum to place more emphasis on research and innovation than on memorization.
- Change the examination process: Policymakers might alter the examination process to gauge students' originality and research skills.
- Fieldwork: Here course teachers can take a significant role by taking fieldwork. Teachers should avoid class tests (midterm exams) by converting field work and assessing them based on their field reports.
- Job market: In Bangladesh, the job recruitment system is back warded. Because here the highest mark taker holds the job which is memorized-based questions. Sometimes the bias is seen. The policymakers must remove kinship in the recruitment process which decreases the mindsets of researchers. And should add extra facilities for researchers.
- The authority of our country (administration and Political Leaders) must allocate additional funds for projects and territorial funding should create. And yearly prizes should announce based on research quality.
- International partnerships and collaborations need to make sure for improving more projects. And students should be affiliated with the projects.
- The university authority must make sure technical and accessible support who are conducting research.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a significant part of development in Bangladesh depends on students' ability to unleash their creativity and research potential. In this study, we tried to show the research condition of two faculties students the faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Rajshahi. It is difficult for Bangladeshi students to acquire critical thinking abilities and become innovators in their disciplines because of the lack of resources, supervision, and education that is exam-focused. But, by raising financing, giving resources, promoting collaboration, altering the curriculum, and changing the exam system, policymakers can play a significant role in resolving deadlocks. By doing this, policymakers may assist in maximizing the potential of Bangladeshi students and support the nation's economic development. To make Bangladesh's future more promising, it is critical that policymakers give students' creative and research potential top priority. If the recommended solutions are implemented, Bangladesh should be the best country. The students would be able to serve the country more effectively and they would be able to be forward-looking.

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Conflicts of Interest

This article's authorship and authenticity are both affirmed to be free of any conflicts of interest.

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