Abstract

This study explores the introduction of national curriculum 2012 from class vi to class xii in place of the 1995 curriculum. This is a descriptive and analytical study conducted through an extensive analysis of documents and reports, government directives, textbooks and journals. An evaluation and need assessment study of the 1995 curriculum had revealed that it didn’t adequately prepare students to face the 21st century challenges. It was mostly teacher-centered, examination-oriented and encouraged rote learning. The Ministry of Education adopted the National Education Policy 2010, which called for the revision of the curriculum. This paper explores the status of the 1995 curriculum, examines the rationale for development of the national curriculum 2012, identifies the factors which influenced the objectives and subject structures of the new national curriculum, and points out its salient features. The national curriculum 2012 is intended to develop among students the required knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits to prepare them to face the 21st century challenges. It intends to give all students the opportunity, irrespective of the streams they follow, to take the same core subjects. The aim is to help all learners develop essential basic skills, common outlook and attitudes and a holistic personality. It also attempts to make a significant shift in pedagogy, formative assessment and public examinations.

I. Introduction

Major advances have been made in the recent years in the provision for secondary education in Bangladesh. Almost 8 million students are now enrolled in about 20,000 secondary schools. The successes rate in the public examination is quite remarkable. Perhaps inevitably, this expansion has been at the expense of the quality of education. The challenges for ensuring quality include the absence of an updated curriculum, good textbooks, effective assessment and examinations, and above all deficiencies related to a joyful, learner-centered teaching-learning process.

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A curriculum at the secondary level was introduced as far back as in 1996 and since then no modification was made in its content or its implementation for a long time until 2012. (NCTB 1995. Secondary Education Curriculum. Dhaka: National Curriculum and Textbook Board.)

The curriculum is the foundation for transmitting learning experiences through an effective teaching-learning process. The development of programs of study, learning and teaching resources, lesson plans and assessment of students, and even teacher education are all based on the curriculum. Its development and implementation are concerns of educators as well as of governments and parents, which have relevance and impact on the development of communities and prosperity of the nation.

II. Background of the Study
Curriculum renewal is usually driven by the desire and the need to adapt the existing education system to socio-economic, scientific and technological progress, and thus produce the human resources equipped with necessary knowledge and skills (Zainusham, 1993). Bangladesh last revisited its secondary school curriculum in 1995. Since then, major changes have taken place in technology, in the job market, and in the local and global socioeconomic conditions resulting in a gap between what students learn and the desired skills and competencies required to prepare for further education, work and life in the 21st century.

In 2012, Bangladesh embarked on revising the then existing grades vi-xii curricula and implementing these in all secondary schools and madrasahs within the national education system. The goal is to equip future citizens with 21st century skills through National Curriculum 2012. (NCTB 2012, SESIP –TA 2003)

2.1 Objectives of the study
The objectives of this study were to explore:

• the status of the 1995 curriculum
• the rationale for development of national curriculum 2012
• the influences which determined the objectives and subject structures of the national curriculum 2012
• the guidelines used in selecting the subject contents, and
• some of the salient features of the national curriculum 2012

2.2 Methodology of the study
This is a descriptive and analytical study. It draws on an extensive analysis of documents, research reports, the old curriculum, curriculum evaluation and needs assessment reports, National Education Policy 2010, contents of the new national curriculum, government directives, as well as papers presented in seminars, workshops and educational journals.
2.3 Significance of the study
The findings of this study is expected to inform and enhance the understanding of education policy makers, curriculum developers, pedagogy specialists, teacher educators, education researchers, teachers and students about the characteristics of the old and the new curricula, the driving forces behind the objectives and the structures of the new curriculum, and the guidelines followed in the revision process to meet the demand of 21st century education.

III. Observations on the 1995 curriculum
A secondary level curriculum evaluation and needs assessment undertaken in 2010 revealed that the 1995 curriculum was overloaded with factual learning. It was difficult for teachers to complete the instructional activities specified in the curriculum within the stipulated contact hours for learning. It was completely teacher-centered and examination-oriented. The evaluation revealed that 1995 curriculum didn’t prepare students for the world of work and didn’t develop the necessary life skills. It failed to develop among students the requisite numeracy and literacy skills. Most of the learning outcomes were lower order cognitive abilities related to rote learning. Although mention was made in the curriculum about activity-based classroom teaching and student centered learning activities, the study revealed that class teaching encouraged memory-based learning and there was little scope of learning by doing.

The curriculum did not meet contemporary needs of students in achieving skills in science, English, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). It did not develop self reliant, skilled, and productive human resources for the world of work. It failed in inculcating attitudes and values to function effectively in the contemporary society. (SESIP-TA 2003)

IV. Rationale for development of national curriculum 2012
Providing quality education at the secondary level is primarily the responsibility of Bangladesh Government and is a major challenge for it. The barriers to quality education include the absence of a skills-based curriculum, quality textbooks, an effective assessment and examination system, and above all the absence of student-centered pedagogy. The 1995 curriculum has not been subjected to any modification since its inception in 1996. The world has changed since then; students need new skills, knowledge and habits to cope with the demands for further education, work, and life in the 21st century.

It has been determined that the 1995 curriculum is out of date in many areas and needs to be revised and modernized so that it is more work and life skills based and promotes active and joyful participation of students in the teaching-learning process. The new curriculum must be a “curriculum for the future”—one that raises standards in all subjects and equips all learners with the personal, learning, and thinking skills they will need in the new world. The Ministry of Education (MoE), in association with the Secondary Education Sector
Development Project (SESDP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) aided project, directed the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) for taking necessary initiatives to update and modernize the 1995 curriculum. (SESIP-TA 2008)

V. Influences on objectives and the content structure of national curriculum 2012

The following elements contributed to determining the objectives and the subject structure of national curriculum 2012.

5.1 National Education Policy (NEP) 2010

NEP 2010 is a milestone in educational development in Bangladesh. The policy acknowledges the need of education befitting the contemporary time. The aims and objectives of secondary education, according to NEP 2010, are to:

- help develop learners’ latent intellect and inner faculties;
- equip learners with competencies necessary to compete in the job market and the economy;
- impart quality education to extend and consolidate the knowledge acquired during primary education to help students acquire a strong foundation for quality higher education;
- make efforts to mitigate disparities among various secondary educational institutions and among various socio-economic, ethnic and social groups; special steps have to be taken to support advancement of education in the backward regions and groups;
- design, develop and implement a uniform core curriculum and syllabus for selected areas of knowledge, irrespective of streams;

For all streams, a degree of uniformity will be maintained through stipulated compulsory subjects, such as Bangla, English, Bangladesh studies, Mathematics, science and ICT. Examinations of each of these subjects in all streams will be held with identical examination papers. The Education Policy requires initiatives to be taken to integrate conventional streams of education into a unified system based on core curricular contents and minimum common standards in operating schools. (MOE 2010)

5.2 Curriculum evaluation and needs assessment

The SESDP curriculum specialists conducted a study on ‘Curriculum evaluation and needs assessment of secondary level’ in 2010. The study was conducted by a team working in 16 districts. In the 16 districts, two upazillas in each were carefully selected to represent a cross-section of society and regions in Bangladesh. Four secondary schools and 2 colleges were surveyed from each upazilla. A grand total of 192 institutions consisting of 64 colleges and 128 secondary schools were covered in the survey. In the study the respondents were head teachers/principals, subject teachers, students, guardians, and school managing committee members. The study team made the recommendations to introduce a standard curriculum at secondary level with the following features (SESIP-CDU 2010):

- The curriculum should be unified for general, madrasa and technical education up to secondary level (grade ten). The national ideology and the spirit of the language movement and liberation war should be reflected in the curriculum
- Curriculum should be written considering the mental age and different ability levels of students
- Science education should be life oriented and interesting to learners
- The curriculum should be designed to develop moral, social, and religious values among the students
- Information and communication technology and vocational education should be included in the curriculum
- Student-centered teaching-learning approaches should be incorporated into the new curriculum
- Implementation of formative assessment practices is necessary to help student learning and improve quality of teaching.
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5.3 Secondary curriculum development workshop 2010

A Secondary Curriculum Development Workshop was jointly organized by NCTB and SESDP. The findings of the ‘Secondary curriculum evaluation and needs assessment study 2010’ were presented. The participants of the workshop were renowned educationists; intellectuals; university professors; high officials from Ministry of Education and Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE); principals, headmasters, and teachers from schools and colleges; education administrators; and journalists. The major recommendations of the workshop were as follows:

- Modern, standard, and time befitting curriculum should be developed on the basis of national education policy.
- Attention should be given in those areas that will enable learners to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate for the changing technologies, economy and society.
- Curriculum should be life-oriented, science based, supportive of modern attitudes, and should promote non-communal and democratic values (SESIP-TA 2010).

5.4 Industry and Community survey on secondary curriculum

A number of interviews were conducted in 2008 and 2009 with selected stakeholders in the community by the Curriculum Specialists of SESDP for the purpose of identifying deficiencies and weaknesses in the secondary curriculum and obtaining advice on measures to be taken to improve learning outcomes of the secondary school system. The interviewees
included individuals from the university sector, private sector, government agencies and ministries, secondary school teachers, college principals, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and NGOs. The major recommendations emerging from the survey are presented below:

- The curriculum should stress job and work-oriented skills
- One or two periods in a week should be allocated for technical, vocational and hands-on activities for those who will not go for Higher Education. They stressed that higher education must be selective.
- More emphasis should be on developing higher order thinking skills & market-oriented education
- More emphasis should be given to skills in communicative English
- More emphasis should be on moral education
- Bangladesh leap-frogs into a new communications age by using the mobile phone. Bangladesh should also make a quantum jump into the 21st century. (SESIP-TA 2008)

5.5 Review of overseas curriculum
The curriculum of a number of countries was reviewed to learn from their experience. The countries were India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia (states of Queensland and Western Australia), and Canada (provinces of Ontario and British Columbia). The specific purposes of this review were to identify the aims, objectives and the structure and organization of curriculum in secondary education of the selected countries as the basis for revising and updating the aims, objectives and subject structure of the national curriculum in Bangladesh. Reference? (SESIP-TA 2008)

5.6 Changing technology and economic conditions — nationally and internationally
All countries are facing the challenge of updating and revising their educational systems to meet the ever-changing human resource development needs. Bangladesh is no exception. We are living in a world where technology and national and global socio-economic conditions are constantly changing and affecting the way we live and work. Technologies are becoming more sophisticated and the demands of the workplace are becoming more complex.

In the next 10-20 years, there will be a shift in the labor force with more people working in industry and services and less people working in agriculture. Bangladesh Vision 2021 envisages that by 2021, industry will have to account for a larger share of the GDP, around 40 per cent, while agriculture’s contribution will fall further to perhaps around 8-10 per cent (CPD 2009). This structural shift will result in increased demand for more highly skilled and trained people. Our secondary education will need to meet this challenge.
5.7 Education for the 21st century
The term 21st century skills refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits especially important for success in today’s world. (P21Skills 2009) People in the 21st century live in a technology and media-suffused environment, marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools, and the possibility to collaborate with others and make individual contribution on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers need to be equipped to make productive use of information, media, and ICT. 21st century skills can be categorized as follows:

5.7.1 Learning and innovation skills:
The learning and innovation skills are focused on developing higher order cognitive skills and social and communication skills. Critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking and innovative thinking skills are the raw materials that facilitate the mastery of the other 21st skills.

5.7.2 Life and career skills:
Academic and cognitive skills, essential as they are, are not all that’s sufficient for a successful life. Life and career skills are sometimes called “soft skills” and most countries are placing more emphasis on students learning soft skills at school. Today, employers recognize that personal qualities such as responsibility, self-management, and integrity are essential to successful job performance. Life and career skills include: (i) being flexible and adaptable, (ii) possessing social and cross-cultural skills, (iii) being accountable and showing a positive work ethic, (iv) showing leadership and responsibility, and (v) demonstrating initiative and utilizing time efficiently (self-management skills)

5.7.3 Information, media, and technology skills:
Every country is faced with the dilemma of dealing with the expansion of information in the world today. In every hour, the amount of electronic information doubles according to the American Association of School Librarians. Citizens need “information literacy” more than ever before and the skills and abilities to function in an increasingly technological world. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills advocates that the worlds of work, higher education, and personal life increasingly demand the ability to: (i) access and communicate information efficiently and effectively, (ii) evaluate information critically and competently, and (iii) use information accurately and creatively. (P21 2009)

VI. Guiding Principles
The following were the detailed guiding principles, determined on the basis of all influencing inputs, followed by the respective subject curriculum committees.

- The national curriculum needs to provide students with an understanding of the past that has shaped the society and culture in which they are growing and developing, and with knowledge, understandings and skills that will help them in their future lives.
The curriculum should make clear to teachers what has to be taught, and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them in each stage of schooling.

The curriculum needs to be flexible. It must allow jurisdictions, systems and schools the ability to deliver national curriculum in a way that values teachers’ professional knowledge and reflects local school and regional differences and priorities.

The curriculum should relate classroom learning to students’ life outside of school (their experiences at home, in the community, and with the environment) and provide opportunities for students to visit and experience nature outside of the school walls.

The curriculum should ensure that students gain essential skills in key areas such as Science and Technology, ICT, English, Bangla, Bangladesh and Global Studies and Mathematics needed for 21st century preparation.

The curriculum should emphasize developing attitude towards work and suitable work habits to adequately prepare students for new millennium.

The curriculum should provide ample opportunities to assess learners’ knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes using formative assessment techniques.

The curriculum should instill values into learners so that they develop a spirit of patriotism and national pride, a respect for our cultural heritage and natural environment, and know how to act morally and responsibly in society.

The learning outcomes must be explicit to students, guardians, teachers, and the general public.

The curriculum should provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning where students make connections with other subjects and understand how 21st century themes cross subject boundaries.

The curriculum should be student centered and promote participatory and joyful learning approaches that encourage student to think creatively and independently, to solve problems, to communicate and work cooperatively with others, and to learn by doing.

The curriculum must be coherent with proper sequence of topics and themes between age levels to ensure that learning at the higher grade builds on student learning achieved at a lower level with no overlapping. (NCTB 2012)

VII. Subject Structures
Subject structures and time allocations for grades vi-viii, ix-x and xi-xii recommended and incorporated into the national curriculum are shown in Table 1 (NCTB 2012) (See Tables 1, 2, and 3)
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#### Table 1: Subject structure (Classes vi-viii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division of Subject</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Exam Marks</th>
<th>Periods in a week</th>
<th>Periods in a semester</th>
<th>Periods in a Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Subjects (all streams)</td>
<td>Bangla</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangladesh and Global Studies</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core subjects (general stream)</td>
<td>Religious and Moral Education (Islam and Moral education/ Hindu religion and moral education/ Christian religion and moral education/ Buddhist religion and moral education)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical education and Health</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work and life-oriented education</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts and crafts</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional subjects (one or none)</td>
<td>Arabic/Sanskrit/Pali</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small ethnic group’s language and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>1260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2: Subject structure (Classes ix-x)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division of Subject</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Exam Marks</th>
<th>Periods in a week</th>
<th>Periods in a semester</th>
<th>Periods in a Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core subject</td>
<td>Bangla</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious and Moral Education (Islam and Moral education/ Hindu religion and moral education/ Christian religion and moral education/ Buddhist religion and moral education)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Subject</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Exam Marks</td>
<td>Periods in a week</td>
<td>Periods in a semester</td>
<td>Periods in a Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career education</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical education, Health science and Sports</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Groupwise core subject

#### Science
- Physics | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Chemistry | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Biology/Higher Mathematics | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Bangladesh and Global studies | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96

#### Humanities
- History of Bangladesh and World Civilization | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Geography and Environment | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Economics/Civics and citizenship | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Science | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96

#### Business Studies
- Business Entrepreneurship | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Accounting | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Finance and Banking | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96
- Science | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96

### Groupwise additional subject (One or none)

#### Science
- Biology/Higher Mathematics/ Agriculture education / Home Science/ Geography and Environment/ Arts and Crafts/Music | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96

#### Humanities
- Economics/Civics and Citizenship /Arts and Crafts/Agriculture Education/ Home Science/ Small ethnic group’s language and culture/ Arabic/ Sanskrit/Pali | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96

#### Business Studies
- Geography and Environment/Music Bangladesh and Global Studies/Agriculture Education/ Home Science/ Small Ethnic Group’s Language and Culture/Arts and Crafts | 100 | 3 | 48 | 96

| Total | 1300 | 36 | 576 | 1152 |
Table 3: Subject structure (Classes xi-xii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division of Subject</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Exam Marks</th>
<th>Periods in a Year</th>
<th>Total Periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangla</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Info &amp; Comm Tech</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stream-based core subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biology/Higher Mathematics</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanities</strong></td>
<td>History/Islamic history &amp; culture</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civics and Good治理/Economics/Logic</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geography/Social work</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Studies</strong></td>
<td>Business Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finance, Banking &amp; Insurance/Production management &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Science</strong></td>
<td>Child Development</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food &amp; Nutrition</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home management &amp; Family Life</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>Classic Music</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Light Music</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History/Economics/Civics and Good治理</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Islam Studies</strong></td>
<td>Islam Studies</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Islamic history &amp; culture</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stream-based additional subjects (Any One or None)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Biology, Higher Mathematics, Agriculture Education, Geography, Psychology, Statistics, Engineering Drawing &amp; Workshop practice, Sports (only for BKSP)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Studies</strong></td>
<td>Finance, Banking &amp; Insurance, Statistics, Economics, Production management &amp; Marketing &amp; Geography</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
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VIII. Salient features of the National curriculum 2012

8.1 Common outlook
The national curriculum 2012 gave the opportunities to Madrasha students to study the same core subjects as general education students from class vi to class viii. Madrasha students of classes ix –x also have the scope to study the same core subjects as general education students except religious and moral education. This will minimize the existing discrepancies and educational gap between the students of the two streams. It is expected that the common core study will help students to develop a common outlooks, attitudes and holistic personality.(NCTB 2012)

8.2 Integration of knowledge, skills and values
The national curriculum 2012 was designed to help students develop in a balanced way and holistically. Integration of the elements of knowledge, skills, values suitable for the 21st century and effective use of language have been incorporated into the curriculum and across the curriculum. The curriculum is expected to help students develop intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically in a balanced and harmonious manner. The curriculum has given appropriate emphasis to all significant aspects of growth of the human personality and intelligence. The values infused in the national curriculum in an integrated manner are discipline, patriotism, leadership, honesty, cooperation, active participation, tolerance, and punctuality. The national curriculum promotes national integrity and unity through the use of a single medium of instruction (the national language) and the provision of the same core subjects for all students in all Schools and Madrashas within the national education system.

8.3 Incorporation of 21st century skills
The National curriculum 2012 gave the opportunities to students for achieving the 21st century skills and enable them to cope with the challenging global situation. The learning
outcomes include higher order cognitive skills, creative and critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills as well. To develop students’ personal traits, social, cooperative and personal skills are built into the national curriculum.

The learning outcomes are so designed as to enable students to learn about state policies, the social system and a basic understanding of the requirements and needs of the local and national job market. They will understand the role of Bangladesh in a global and competitive world economy. Students will achieve basic practical skills needed in the workforce and know how to prepare for and apply for jobs. They will be able to assess their personal strengths and aptitudes and identify potential career paths matched to their interests and abilities. Students, it is intended, will be able to act responsibly and morally in the workplace, society and family. They will be able to demonstrate positive attitudes towards family, society and situations with honesty and integrity. They will be socially responsible and contribute to the community. (NCTB 2012)

8.3.1 New learning Areas (NLA)
As mentioned in the partnership for 21st century’s framework and NEP 2010, the national curriculum incorporated ICT as core subject from classes vi to xii to develop among students the information and communication literacy as basic tools in the knowledge economy and the information society of today’s world. Bangladesh and global studies, core subject for classes vi to viii, was developed as an interdisciplinary subject comprising history, geography, civics and economics. It is expected to give students the opportunity to know the current global issues and be knowledgeable about environmental and climate issues and global citizenship in the 21st century. The other new subjects such as life and work oriented education, career education, Physical Education, Health Science and Sports; and Small Ethnic Group’s language and culture also found room in the new curriculum structure. Business studies stream has been strengthened by incorporating Finance and Banking at grade ix-x and Finance, Banking and Insurance at grades xi-xii. In addition to new subjects, new contents were incorporated in the new curriculum. The new contents are climate change and our responsibilities, adolescence and reproductive health, life skills related contents, conservation of energy and energy security, use of instruments in medical diagnosis, and water resources and its multidimensional use. (NCYB 2012)

8.4 Reduction of content load
The contact periods for each subject have been given in the curriculum. Subject curriculum was developed on the basis of allocated class periods. The subject committee distributed the total class periods between the chapters and designed the chapters’ learning outcomes on the basis of those periods. In classes ix-x and xi-xii, the class periods for science, humanities and business studies streams are the same. The content load of the subjects of these streams remains the same. There is a balanced development of subjects’ curricula in terms of class periods. Textbooks were designed on the basis of class periods and each period counts as a
lesson. In the national curriculum, content load match with the class period and it is expected that all learning outcomes would be achieved within the stipulated school working days. (NCTB 2012)

8.5 Activity based learning process and integration of ICT in class teaching
Students learn best when they are actively involved in their own learning rather than being passive recipients of knowledge and facts. The newly developed curriculum emphasizes the importance of students learning ‘how to learn’ rather than simply ‘what to learn’. To make learning more interesting, meaningful, stimulating and motivating for the students, the national curriculum recommended that student-centered classroom practices should be adopted as much as possible instead of the conventional teacher centered classroom practices. The teachers are encouraged to use digital content and multimedia in their lessons.

In a participatory learning approach, students are expected to be engaged actively in projects, group discussions, and investigations to construct their own knowledge. Teachers are expected to relate classroom learning to real life and experiences of students outside of school. Teaching methods should help students to develop creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills. Students should encourage using ideas and information from many sources and subjects in solving problems or researching issues in an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Interesting, stimulating, and attractive textbooks and learning aids are intended to be developed and used to support quality teaching and learning. The recommended pedagogic approaches include question and answer, inquiry-discovery, experiential learning, cooperative learning, group discussion, experimentation, constructivism, demonstration and investigation, (NCTB 2012)

8.6 Class period management
The school and madrasah calendar coincides with the Gregorian calendar year starting January 1 and ending December 31. The academic year will be divided into two semesters. First semester will start in January and end in June and the second semester will start in July and end in December. Students have to sit for a terminal examination at the end of each semester in place of existing three examinations in a year. According to the new curriculum, school working days increase by twelve percent.

The national curriculum 2012 recommended to reduce the number of holidays and increase the duration of existing contact periods. The curriculum framework suggested 50 minutes class periods in place of existing 40 minutes with the exception of 1st period. The duration of 1st period is 60 minutes. School remains open 220 days in a year and six days a week. Students of grades vi-viii will get 34 periods, first five days six periods, in a week. Students of grades ix-x will get 36 periods, six periods a day, in a week. Every working day, single shift schools will open at 9:30 am and close at 4:30 pm with 50 minutes break after 4th period. In double shift schools, morning shift will open at 7:00 am and close at 12:30 with 25 minutes break after 4th period. The day shift schools will open at 12:30 pm and close at 6:00 pm with
25 minutes break after the 4th period. The daily school assembly is mandatory for all schools and madrashas. (NCTB 2012)

8.7 Assessment
The National curriculum 2012 adopted an integrated model of assessment system, which includes continuous assessment; terminal examinations and public examinations. Assessment involves learning, teaching and schooling and not a discrete activity. (NCTB 2012).

8.7.1. Continuous Assessment
Continuous assessment, as mentioned in the national curriculum, is an integral part of the teaching learning process. Continuous assessment is aimed at monitoring students’ progress in achieving the learning outcomes. Assessment includes all activities that teachers and students undertake to get the information that can be used diagnostically to alter teaching and learning. Students will be assessed throughout the year inside schools by the teachers. This means that a student’s progress shall be monitored continuously.

8.7.2 Public examinations
According to national curriculum 2012 instruction, students’ have to sit for three public examinations from grades vi to xii. Students’ will have to sit for Junior School Certificate (JSC) examination at the end of grade viii, Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination at the end of grade x and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination at the end of grade xii. To make examination valid and reliable, all public examinations would be based on the principles of “creative questions” which imply structured questions to assess learners’ competencies in knowledge, use of knowledge to solve problems and reasoning abilities. (NCTB 2012; SESDP-CDU 2012)

8.8 Co-curriculum activities
The co-curricular activities are regarded as an integral part of the secondary school curricula. In national curriculum 2012, co-curricular programs were included as a set of planned activities. These activities would be the extension of the classroom teaching learning process. Co-curricular activities are designed to produce well-disciplined individuals who will be cooperative, self-confident, responsible and caring, and possess leadership qualities with high moral values. The National Curriculum encourages “uniform groups” (such as Bangladesh National Cadet Cops, Girls’ Guide, and the Rover Scout) as well as clubs and societies in schools, such as, debate club (Bangla & English), recitation club (Bangla & English), music, drama, dance, science club, sports (football, basket ball, cricket, volleyball, table tennis, kabady, etc), plantation club and cleaning club. Students will take part in at least one event and their participation is to be assessed through continuous assessment. (SESDP-CDU 2012)
IX. Concluding Remarks

Curriculum implementation is the process of putting a change into practice. While the National Curriculum and Textbook Board is the focal point for development of the curriculum and preparation of learning content and materials, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), guided by MoE, is responsible for implementing the curriculum. This is the most crucial and the most difficult part of the curriculum process, since an ideal curriculum not put into use in the classroom effectively is of little value. All stakeholders including MoE, DSHE, head teachers, teachers, students, guardians, SMC’s, education officers and development partners clearly have a stake and a responsibility to make their contribution to operationalize the curriculum as designed and developed.

After 17 years, National Curriculum 2012 has begun to be implemented since 2013. Systematic and careful planning is necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the national curriculum. The school obviously is the locus for this task where a conducive environment has to be created for encouraging excellence in education through effective curriculum transaction. Head teachers and teachers have to be supported by all in the education hierarchy to carry out their vital tasks. Parents and society at large also have to be made aware of what is at stake and how they can play their role. Ultimately, it’s the learners who have to be inspired and supported to succeed.

References

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- NCTB: Unitrack Curriculum (grades ix-x), 2006
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- SESDP-TACT: Secondary Curriculum Need Assessment: Feedback from interviews with selected stakeholders, 2009
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