

Notes form the Editor

The December, 2017 issue of the Journal focuses on early grade reading in Bangladesh primary education, which is the subject of two articles. A third article is about the community involvement in running the primary school. The last one is about the state of public libraries and their role in supporting lifelong learning.

A group associated with the READ project conducted by Save the Children - **Ranak Chandra Mohanta, Shahana Parvin Lata, Emily Richardson, Shahin Islam and Md. Akidul Islam** – reports on the randomized control trial applying school-based and community-based reading interventions with grades one to three students. They found the interventions made a difference, but no special gain was achieved when community-based intervention was added on to the school-based activities. This may be in part due to the quality of implementation of the community intervention and in part due to the larger socio-economic context in which primary schooling is conducted. Although, improvement in reading performance was achieved, it was not enough to compensate for the home-background disadvantages of students, such as family poverty and lack of reading materials at home. Readers may want to refer to the report on baseline findings of this study titled “Baseline Assessment of Early Grade Reading Skill: Khagrachari, CHT, Bangladesh” published in the last issue of this journal (vol. 16, no.1, June 2017).

A snapshot of early reading situation in one upazila is provided by **M. H. Tansen**. Reading assessment of grade 3 students was conducted with a sample of students in 10 primary schools. The interviewed children demonstrated high average letter recognition, but lower word reading skills, and much lower comprehension of a simple text they were asked to read. It is obvious that reading instruction need to be emphasized and enhanced in order to raise children’s level of fluency and accuracy in reading. Benchmarks need to be established for grade level performance in Bangla reading in order to take appropriate measures to improve reading with comprehension.

A team of researchers -- **Muhammad Nazmul Haq, Md. Ahsan Habib, Shadhan Kumar Das, Tanvir Mahmud, and Mostafizur Rahman** – writes about Citizen’s Report Card on service delivery in government primary schools of Bangladesh. The result shows that despite many deficiencies in physical infrastructure, critical research observations about teacher’s quality and performance, and parents having

to pay various official and un-official fees to schools in a supposedly free system, the respondents from the community expressed general satisfaction about the services offered by schools and teachers. The apparent contradiction between perception and empirical evidence was perhaps a matter of low community expectations from schools in the public system and their own concept of quality of services. The findings merit further probe.

Rowshon Akter writes about “Strengthening non-government public libraries in Bangladesh to support lifelong learning.” In Bangladesh, there are only 70 government public libraries and just over a thousand non-government public libraries (NGPLs) serving a population of 160 million. The study describes the countrywide distribution of NGPLs and the government initiatives for the development of NGPLs.