Online Education in Bangladesh during Covid-19:

An Empirical Study

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the evolved challenges faced by the three key stakeholders; teachers, students and parents of students during the whole period of online education in Bangladesh those were making obstacles to the way of achieving positive outcomes. As online education was the only alternative to keep the process of education ongoing in the time of pandemic like Covid-19 until the situation turns normal, the alternative has been used to continue the process of education in Bangladesh like other countries on that particular time. But Bangladesh was not a highly blessed country in the aspect of skilled people and technology like other developed countries in the world. The system created here so many complexities and even hampered the article no. 17 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. A number of probable remedies those should have been taken by the government and other concerned authorities are also discussed in this study that would have made the field of online education effective minimizing the losses of the students.

I.   Introduction:

Online education is a process of education where teachers and students use computers or smart phones in teaching-learning activities staying away from educational institutions connecting through internet. Since the March of 2020, the spread of deadly Covid-19 (Coronavirus disease 2019) has been disrupting the regular activities of people all over the world. Almost all the sectors are affected by this epidemic. Education sector is one of the most upsetting sectors among them(Rahman, 2020). As a developing country Bangladesh is also a clear victim of such disaster. The damage done to the economic and other sectors would have been recovered soon, but irrecoverable damage was done to the education sector. Though the government tried to tackle the situation by commencing online education program; but right then, a bunch of challenges started to evolve. According to the article no. 17 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, education up to a certain level was free and compulsory for all(Ministry of Law, n.d.). But after the beginning of online education, it seemed an impossible task to many. This study is about identifying those challenges properly and implicating possible measures those should have been taken till the educational institutions were totally open.

II.   Research objectives:

2.1 General objective:

The general objective of this study was to find probable remedies of the challenges emerged in the aspect of newly introduced online education system during the period of Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2 Specific objectives:

The specific objectives of this study were-

> ➢ to identify and analyze the level of consciousness about online education among the teachers, students and parents of students;
> ➢ to discover the existence of practical knowledge about online education among the teachers and students;
> ➢ to justify the effectiveness of online examination and assignment system which were followed during the period of Covid-19;
> ➢ to measure the quality of utility services related to online education and affordability of those utility services by the general people;
> ➢ to seek the level of promptness for online education by the media, representatives of local government institutions and higher government officials; and
> ➢ to find the progress of vaccination before opening all the educational institutions.

III.   Rationale of the study:

When Covid-19 attacked Bangladesh for the first time in mid of March 2020, like other sectors all the educational institutions were instantly declared closed. After a few days, the government initiated the program of online education to continue the procedure without even analyzing the capacity of the stakeholders. When everybody was thinking that unlike other sectors education sector remained unharmed by the touch of online education in the time of Corona pandemic; right then a number of limitations were restricting equal opportunity for all towards easy access to online education service which even raised question about the capability and effectiveness of enforcing 'Digital Bangladesh' by this year as declared by the present government in the manifesto of 9th parliamentary election 2008 (Islam & Inan, 2021). This study focused on implicating practically experienced challenges related to online education by the stakeholders and the probable measures those would have been changed the scenario. The government and other authorities still now have the opportunity to work on those issues to avoid any future hazard.

IV.   Research methods:

The study was both qualitative and quantitative in approach. Primary and secondary both sources were used here. To collect primary data 120 respondents were randomly selected. But, not more than one respondent was selected for each category from the same institution. Among the total 120 respondents, 40 were teachers (teachers of primary schools 10, teachers of high schools 10, teachers of colleges 10 and teachers of universities 10), 40 students (students of primary schools 10, students of high schools 10, students of colleges 10 and students of universities 10) and 40 parents (parents of school and college level students). Parents of university going students were not included in the list as the students were matured enough and understand which thing was good or bad for them. Some more data about the selected respondents are shown in the table 1.

Age Group	Category of Respondents			Gender	
	Teachers	Students	Parents	Male	Female
06-10	00	08	00	05	03
11-15	00	09	00	04	05
16-20	01	17	00	09	09
21-25	07	05	02	06	08
26-30	11	01	12	09	15
31-35	09	00	11	13	07
36-40	06	00	07	07	06
41-45	04	00	05	06	03
46-50	02	00	03	04	01

Table 1: Gender and category of the respondents on the basis of age group.

4.1 Geographical location of the sample areas:

The research work was conducted in Bangladesh which is a South-Asian country. The country is situated between 20°34' to 26°38' north latitude and 88°01' to 92°41' east longitude(Chowdhury, 2021). Precisely, all the primary data were collected from the respondents who are permanent or temporary residents of two eastern districts of Bangladesh namely Brahmanbaria and Comilla which are also sharing borders with the neighboring country India. The number of respondents were equally divided on the basis of category for each district and the process of their selection was random.

4.2 Data collection and analysis:

All the data were collected from the respondents over mobile phone and by the help of social media platforms. Information related to their practical experience of almost one and a half years about online education and answers of the pre-determined questions of the author which were related to the challenges of online education were gathered from them. The period of data collection was from March 2020 to September 2021. All the data were analyzed in Microsoft Excel 2016 and percentage of several particulars were presented using pie charts, bar charts and line chart in Microsoft word 2016. Besides, some data from recently published secondary sources like journal articles, online news portals, websites, reports and other online platforms were used to bring a completion to this work.

V.   A brief historical background of online education:

The traditional concept of a teaching-learning activity was limited to a classroom where a teacher used to teach a number of students either individually by himself or staying under an institution. Since the mid of 20th century, the use of a number of electronic machines for educational purposes like- radio, television, slide projector etc. started getting popularity. However, after the invention of internet, the University of Phoenix (Arizona, USA) started offering fully online bachelor's and master's degrees for the first time in the world in 1989(Sarkar, 2020). That was the start and now it is one of the most popular teaching-learning method in about all the developed countries of the world. In the perspective of Bangladesh, since the 90th decade, several educational programs have been telecasting and broadcasting through Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar(Radio). After bringing internet in this country, a number of online educational platforms like- BBC Janala, 10 Minute School etc. got much popularity. But then, it was not mandatory for the students to learn from those platforms. In the period of Covid-19, when almost all the countries of the world closed their all educational institutions to stop the spread of Novel Coronavirus, Bangladesh also did the same. But this time, it was not optional for the students. As there was no any other option to run educational activities, Bangladesh followed the other countries and initiated obligatory online education service for all. This study was all about finding and analyzing the issues linked with online education initiated in Bangladesh during Covid-19.

VI.   Results and discussions:

6.1 Challenges of online education in Bangladesh:

We all know that, there are many opportunities and advantages of online education. Such as- better time management, comfort, flexibility, learning self-discipline and many more. But from the aspect of socio-economic context, Bangladesh is not ready for this yet. Considering the condition of teachers, students and parents of immature students; a number of challenges have been identified since the commencement of online education in this country during Covid-19 situation. Some of them are discussed below.

6.1.1 Lack of awareness:

One of the most common problems of online education was lack of awareness and interest about it among all the stakeholders(Arora & Srinivasan, 2020). Although it was seen that the students of graduation and post-graduation levels were too much concerned about their studies because of facing session jam, but totally opposite scenario was observed among most of the students of primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. Because in normal situation, they used to remain under strong supervision of their teachers and parents respect to their studies. But it was a matter of sorrow that during the Covid-19 situation, teachers' and parental supervision largely declined and the students of those levels got free. As they were not matured enough, they kept themselves out of studies and started passing time by doing nothing remarkable. Side by side the system of

auto promotion did nothing but oiled the situation. As a result, the students did not concentrate much on their studies and missed the lessons. Talking with the students it was found that out of 40 students 12(30%) were aware and 28(70%) were unaware about their studies. No students of universities were found in the list of unaware students. All the unaware students were from schools and colleges. On the other hand, out of 80 teachers-parents, 21(26.25%) said they kept supervising their students/children as they used to do it before and 59(73.75%) said no, they didn't. Figure 1 and 2 shows below the percentage of both of those criteria.
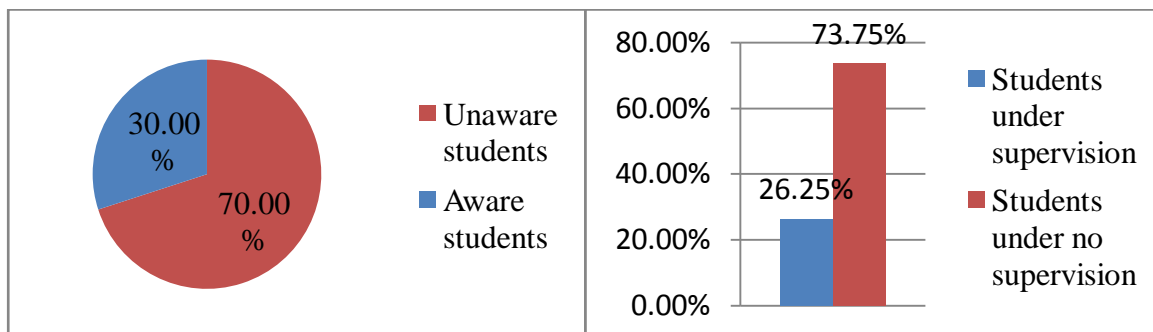
Figure 1: Condition of awareness among the students about their studies in Covid-19.
Source: Primary data.
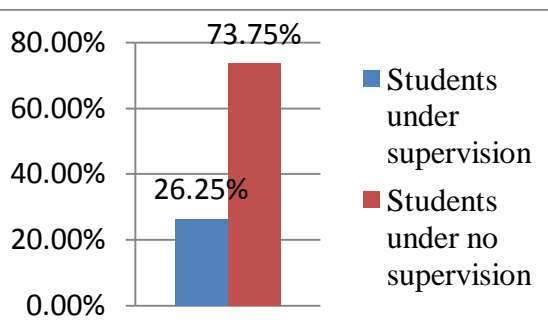
Figure 2: Condition of teachers and parental supervision during Covid-19.
Source: Primary data.

6.1.2 Lack of practical knowledge about online education:

Though the government of Bangladesh initiated the program of online education since the very beginning of lockdown but didn't get expected success. Because it did not focus that a large number of stakeholders like teachers, students and parents were ignorant of online education related knowledge. Many teachers were not even introduced to online education. Here, most of the teachers used to remain busy with their own subjects. On the basis of that, skill on ICT used to be observed only among the teachers of ICT. How significant the knowledge of ICT to other teachers could be was felt in the time of Covid-19 when the government decided to provide online education service. A huge number of teachers in grass root levels were not involved with online education throughout the Covid-19 situation for having gap of knowledge related to online education. A huge number of students still don't know how to attend an online class, how to get home work and where and how to submit them after completion. Besides, ICT related knowledge among parents was also so meager. On that situation expecting a successful online education program was nothing but folly. Testing the practical knowledge about online education among all the 120 respondents, it was observed that 25(62.50%) out of 40 teachers, 29(72.50%) out of 40 students and 34(85%) out of 40 parents of students didn't have any type of practical skill about online education but rest of the other respondents didn't have any problem with it. Figure 3 shows the percentage of them below.
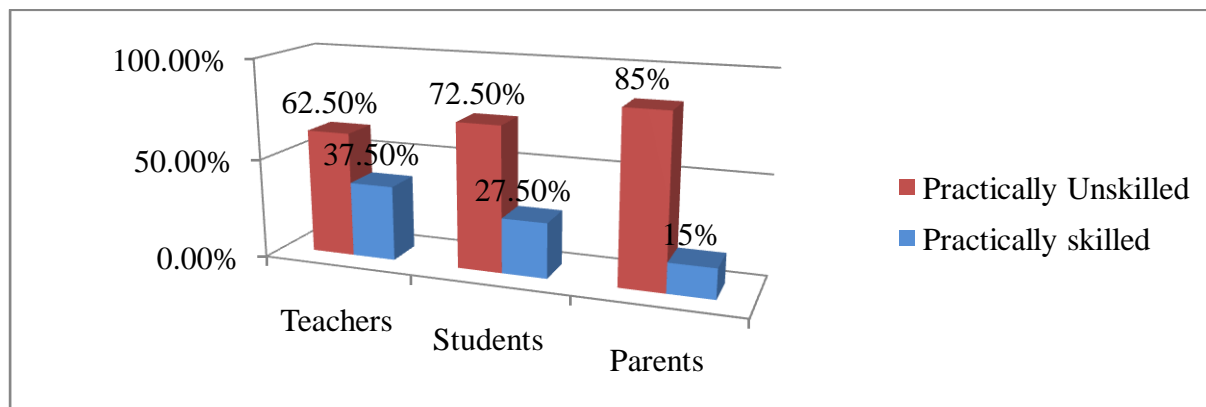

Figure 3: Practical knowledge about online education among the three main stakeholders.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.3Absence in online classes:

It was observed that, about 40-50 percent students used to remain absent in each online class. Initially the absence ratio was much higher. It was not like all of them didn't know how to attend online classes rather a remarkable number of them did it intentionally. They were inattentive students. They liked to avoid studies. And it was almost impossible for the teachers to control them online. Besides some students remained absent for having various limitations too. Figure 4 shows the average percentage of attendance from the March 2020 till the September 2021 as given by the teachers.
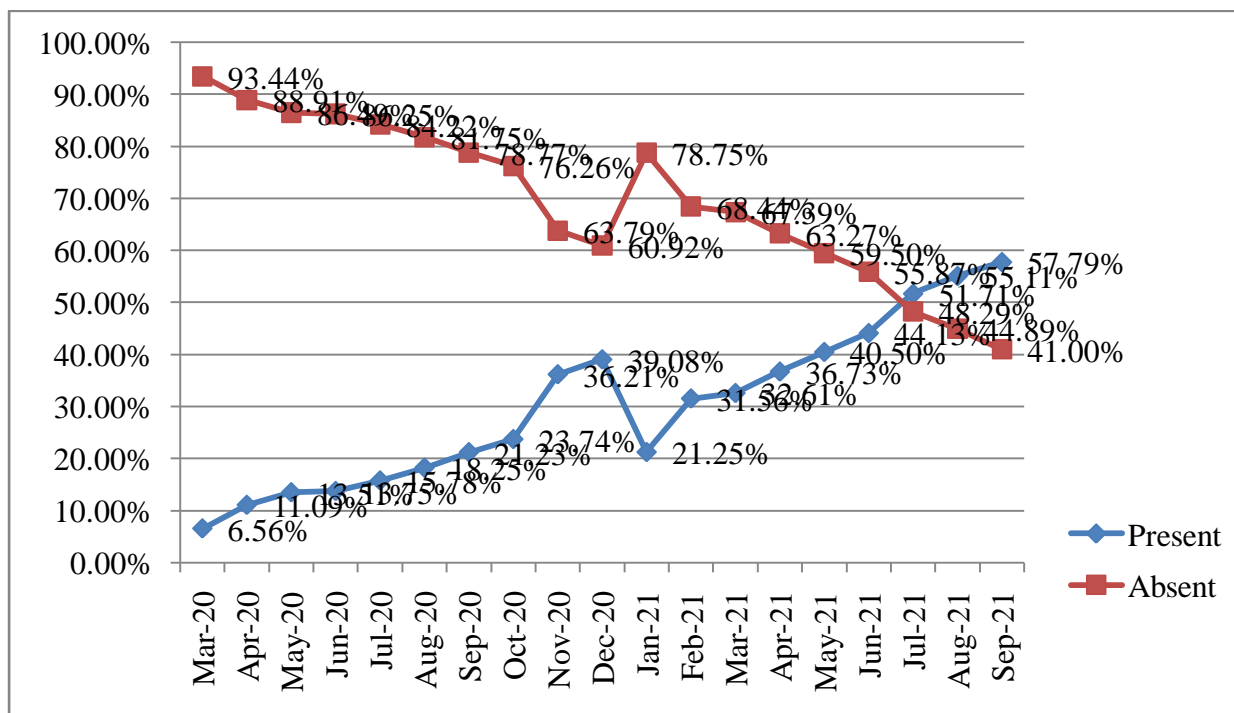
Figure 4: Percentage of the students' attendance in online classes during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.4 Tendency to play online games:

Most of the students were fond of playing online games than doing studies. Tendency to play excessive online games was seen among all the levels of students. Day by day the addiction to play online games had been increasing among the students at an alarming rate. It was not that high before. In Covid-19 situation the students got more access to smart phones to have their online education, but many of them remained busy with online games instead. Though the students of other countries had been staying busy with innovating new programs of ICT and being self-reliant, but our students were being addicted to PUBG, Free Fire, Call of Duty, Clash of Clans, Mobile Legends etc. and spending a huge amount of money to buy in-game items. A number of suicidal cases occurred for those games(Observer Correspondent, 2021). Those games also encouraged gambling. Even the students stole parents' money and tuition fees of their teachers for those purposes. Besides TikTok, Likee, Vigo Live and many other such applications inspired the youngsters to go astray. As the figure 5 shows below, 37(92.50%) were addicted to online games and other apps 3(7.50%) were not addicted out of 40 students.
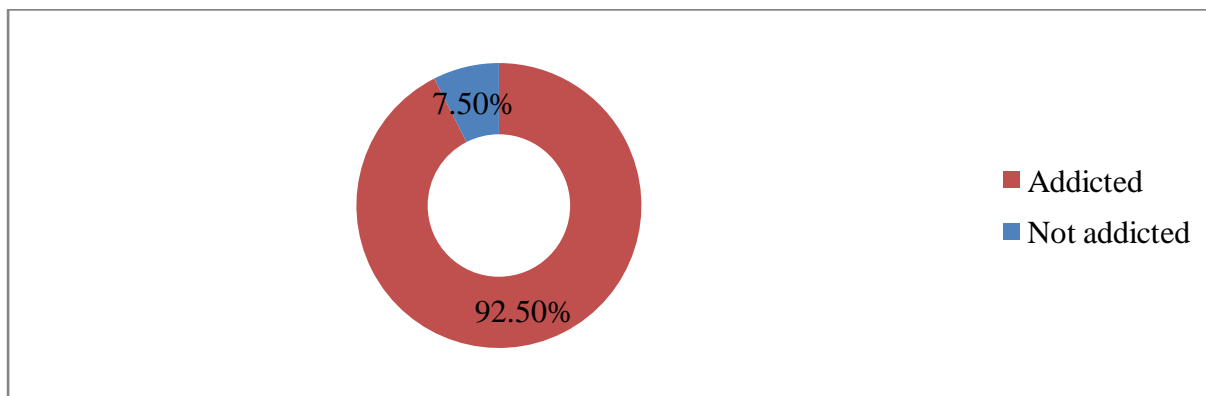
Figure 5: Students' addiction to online games and other apps during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.5 Defective system of online examination:

Though the students of schools and colleges got auto promotion, but crisis of examination in public universities increased session jam (Badhon, 2020). The online examinations taken by some institutions raised many questions. Basically the system was not transparent. It had many scopes to spoil the system of examination. Pure justification was not possible to be done by this system of online examination. Involvement with copy-pasting, giving proxy and many other uses of unfair means were common problems here. By this type of online examination, the authorities only could justify the skills related to ICT not subject wise knowledge. Besides, in some contexts it was seen that one minute was allotted for per MCQ (Multiple Choice Questions). But in the perspective of online MCQ examination, the time was too much except mathematical terms. Students used to choose the learned answers quickly and rest of the time they used seeking answers of other questions from books and internet. Tendency to be engaged with unfair means in the time of online examination was seen among all the students (100%) as shown in the figure 6. As a reason of such act, they said that if they remained honest they would get less marks than others. Because, all the students who participated in online examination, got involve with unfair means.
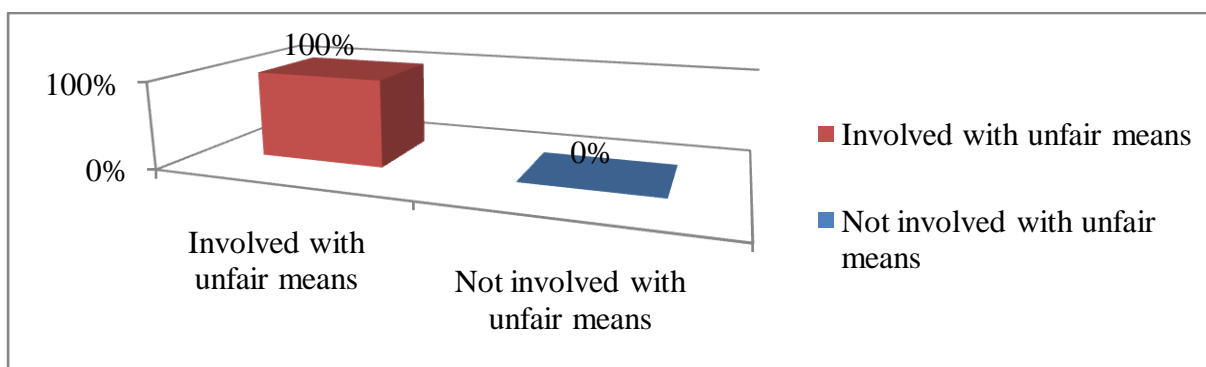

Figure 6: Involvement of students with unfair means in online examination during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.6 Centralized system of assignment:

The Ministry of Education (MoE) decided to take assignments from the students of schools and colleges by their educational institutions since the end of 2020. But the problem was; every time they provided same assignments to all the students of same classes all over the country. Taking this opportunity, some teachers and owners of coaching centers started uploading the answers/solutions of those assignments on their websites, Facebook pages/groups and YouTube channels before the date of submission. They used to do that disgusting work for

their publicity. On the other hand, finding it an easy option the soft minded students just copied their assignments from those platforms and submitted to their institutions. Even some people started selling homework and assignments to the students (Halder, 2021). Though the government initiated the process to justify the creativity and enhance the report writing skills among the students, but it was proved as a failed attempt for the reason of some evil people. 35(87.50%) out of 40 students were fond of copying their assignments from several sources and other 5(12.50%) tried by themselves. Figure 7 shows the percentage of plagiarism in completing assignments.
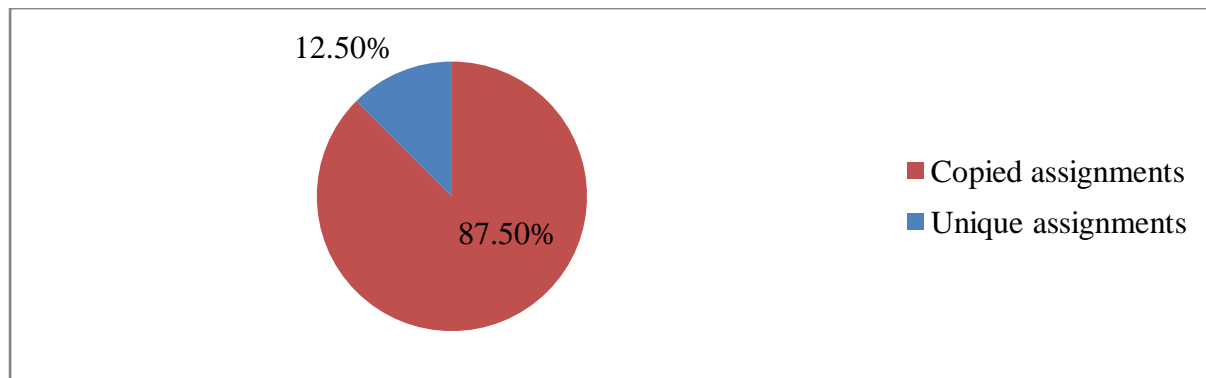

Figure 7: Plagiarism in completing assignments during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.7 Lack of proper guidance by uneducated parents:

There are many uneducated parents who want to make their children educated. So, they use to keep house tutor to guide their children at home. In Covid-19 situation it had been quite impossible for the tutors to serve those students legally going to their home because of lockdowns. But the need of them was so significant on that situation to provide proper guidance in managing online classes and making them understand about their online tasks which were not made possible. Out of total 40 parents,26(65%) found who couldn't guide their children in educational aspect for the reason having no education and other 14(35%) didn't have any issue with it which is shown in the figure 8.
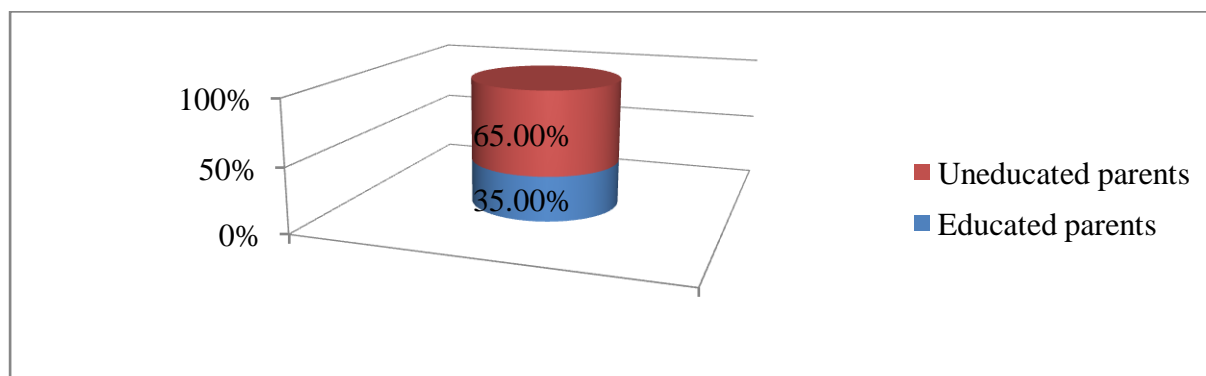

Figure 8: Parental guidance to their children at home during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.8 Inactive educational institutions for a long time:

A remarkable number of educational institutions like some private schools and colleges were kept themselves closed for a long time. Some of them were totally off for the year of 2020 and some of them had been taking only assignments which were provided by the ministries but not serving any online educational services by themselves. On the other hand, students of public universities had been suffering from complexity related to

examination and were being the victim of session jam. In this situation students of those institutions got lazy and inattentive towards studies. Besides, the government ordered schools and colleges to temporarily stop taking assignments from the students in the lockdown of Covid-19's second wave(Tribune Report, 2021). Then those institutions got complete functional shutdown again. 9 out of 40 students' educational institutions were not open during the whole Covid-19 and didn't do anything but took assignments only. It means 22.50% institutions were inactive in the aspect of online education as shown in the figure 9. Though the number of inactive institutions seems less than the active institutions, but if we consider all the inactive institutions throughout the country then it could be said easily that they did nothing but threatened the education of a huge number of students.
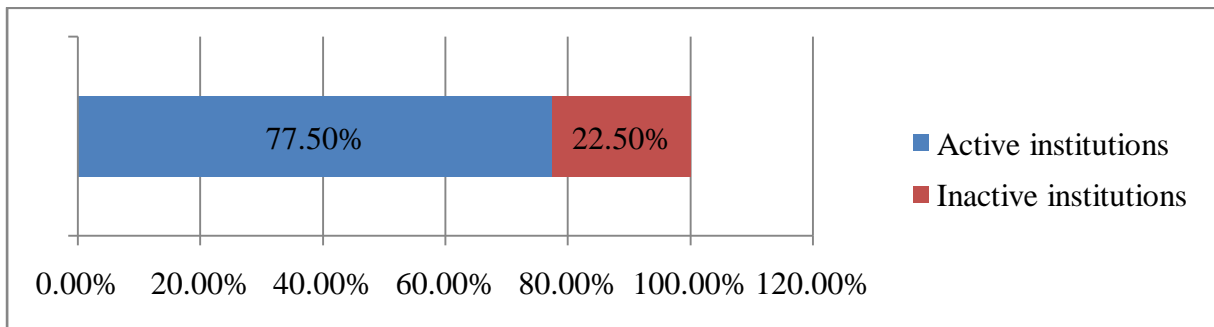

Figure 9: Active and inactive educational institutions in Covid-19 situation.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.9 Complex e-payment system of tuition and other fees:

In the time of first lockdown in Bangladesh, some private educational institutions developed e-payment systems for the students to pay their tuition and other fees. It was definitely a great initiative to protect their stakeholders from Corona virus. But the problem rose with the complexity of the systems. Some institutions did not provide any educational and other services, but took the fees of them. Besides a huge number of students and parents were not skilled enough to pay tuition fees through e-payment methods. This situation had been making contradiction between institutions and students/parents. It is to be added that a remarkable number of students got dropped out for having such contradictions. 7 out of 40 parents which were 17.50% as shown in the figure 10; said that they felt complexity in paying tuition and other fees as their children's educational institutions initiated complete e-payment methods.
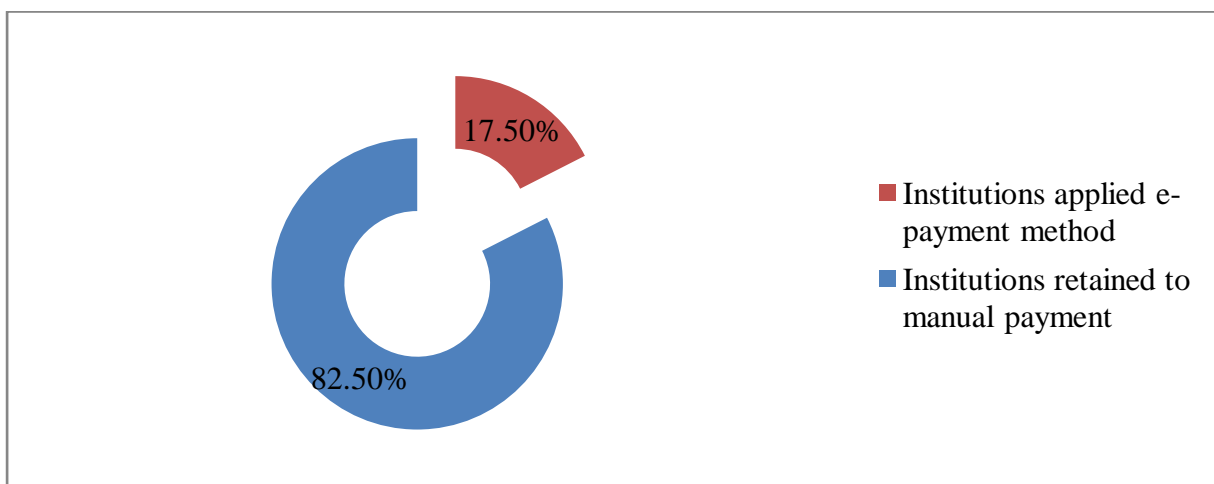

Figure 10: Payment system in educational institutions during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.10 Slow speed of internet and load shedding:

Slow internet and load shedding had been ruining the system of online education since the beginning. Both of those problems were causing exquisite sufferings in the countryside areas. Though Bangladesh started 4G network service in February 2018, but experiencing true 4G all over the country is not so good yet. According to the mobile internet speed test report of July 2021 published by Ookla, Bangladesh ranked at 135th out of 139 countries and Bangladesh is only ahead of Afghanistan in South Asia(Ookla, 2021). The speed of broadband internet is average in Bangladesh but the problem of slow internet is common in remote areas either it is broadband or mobile internet. Students of those areas faced extreme disturbance at the time of online live classes. On the other hand, our government has been trying it's best to increase the electricity production, but load shedding still remains. It tremendously hampered the online education of those students who used broadband internet connection.81(67.50%) out of 120 respondents faced the problem of slow internet speed and 117(97.50%) faced load shedding in the time of online class and examination. Figure 11 and 12 shows the percentage of respondents who faced the problems of slow internet speed and load shedding.
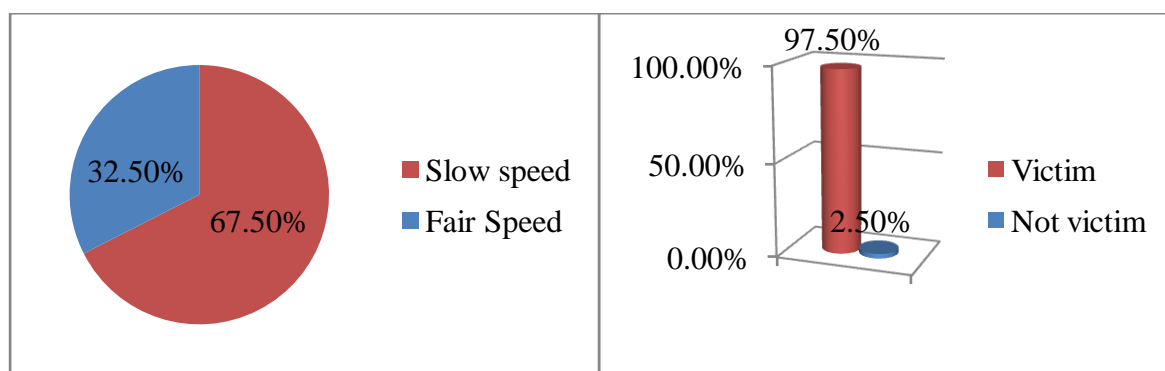

Figure 11: Observed level of internet speed during Covid-19.
Source: Primary data.

Figure 12: Stakeholders victimization by load shedding during Covid-19.
Source: Primary data.

6.1.11 Inability to pay for internet:

Poverty is a common issue in Bangladesh. According to the Economic Review 2021, the estimated (2018-2019) poverty rate in Bangladesh was 20.5% and rate of extreme poverty was 10.5%(Finance Division, 2021). Though the government has been trying hard to reduce the rate of poverty as much as possible but in Covid-19 situation some middle and lower-middle class families suffered from poverty for losing their jobs which turned into a great problem. If we focus on the time of lockdowns, the need of food can be observed deeply. When jobless people couldn't manage food to mitigate their hunger, then how they could manage internet bill to educate their children. Although recently Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) fixed the rate of broadband internet on the basis of speed titled 'One Country One Rate' after multiple meetings with International Internet Gateway, Nationwide Telecommunication Transmission Network, International Terrestrial Cable and Internet Service Providers(Star Business Report, 2021). But many operators are not enforcing the decision yet in countryside areas. Out of 80 (40 students+40 parents of students), 36(45%) said that they were not capable of paying internet bill for online education. Figure 13 shows the capability of students-parents to pay for internet.
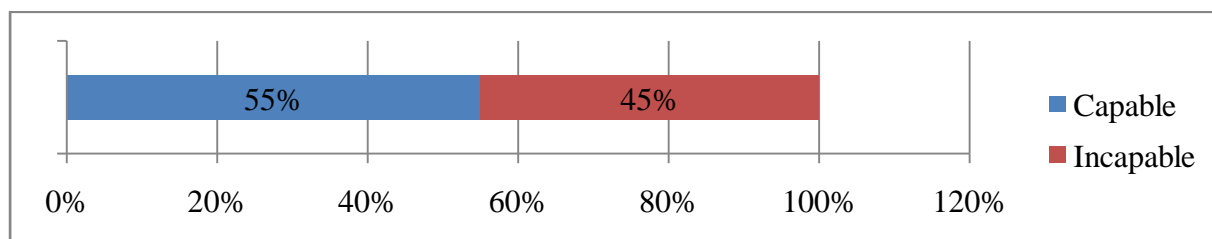

Figure 13: Capability of students-parents to pay for internet.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.12 Lack of available smart phones among poor students:

Generally, it is seen in the villages and slums that, it is too tough for the extremely poor people to live even hand to mouth. They do hard works all day long to ensure sufficient food for themselves and their family members. And in the time of Covid-19, their condition was more devastating. On that situation, buying a smart phone for their children's education was quite impossible while they were not even confirmed about their next time's food. In question of availability of smart phones among all the 120 respondents, it was found that 25(20.83%) had no phones, 33(27.50%) used button phones, 55(45.83%) used smart phones and 7(5.84%) used computers. Figure 14 shows the percentage of availability of smart phones and computers among the three main stakeholders.
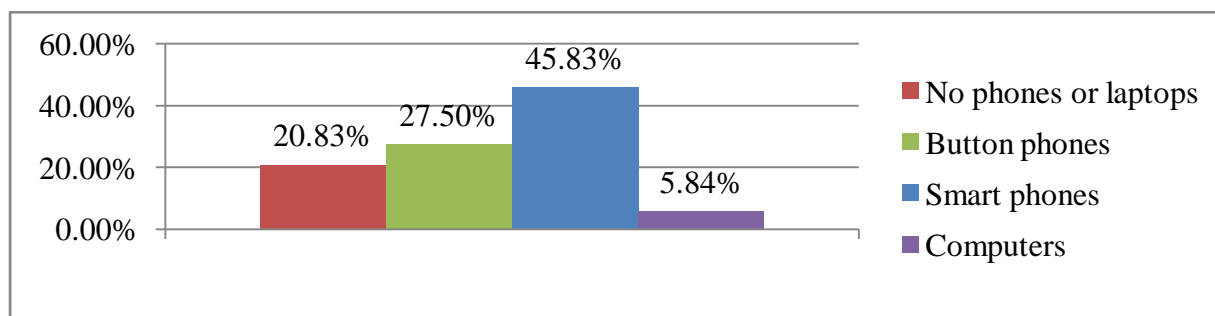

Figure 14: Availability of smart phones and laptops among the stakeholders.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.13 Lack of updated smart phones:

A remarkable number of old smart phones were found among the students and their parents. Those smart phones were not capable of running updated versions of applications those were useful to enjoy uninterrupted online education service. Most of the 4-5 years old smart phones literally couldn't run latest significant applications for online education like- Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Slack, Lifesize etc. So, those students wouldn't have access to that type of applications with such devices. Even on that situation, no tendency to buy a new smart phone was noticed among them. As it was found that 55 smart phone users among the 120 respondents, 32(58.18%) of them used backdated smart phones. Condition of updated and backdated smart phones among the stakeholders is shown in the figure 15.
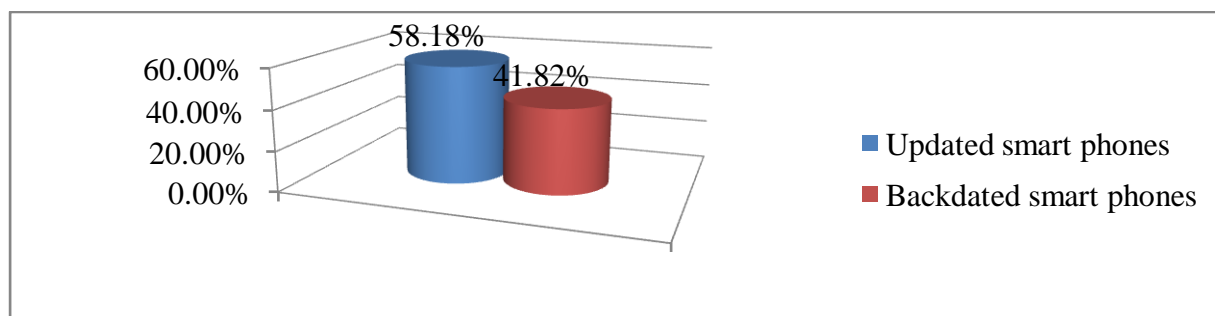

Figure 15: Condition of smart phones among the smart phone owner stakeholders.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.14 Lack of regular inspection:

From the beginning of Covid-19 situation, our government started online education program to keep it sound. But no one seemed concerned about how it was going on. The Upazila/Thana Nirbahi (Executive) Officers (UNO/TNO), Executive Magistrates and other higher government officials were hardly seen inspecting the

educational institutions under their region to observe the condition of online education. Though some of the government and prominent private educational institutions were facing periodical inspections, but a mentionable number of them were staying out of that process. Later, conducting virtual inspection by the Upazila/Thana Education Officers was seen but physical(direct) inspections were so less in number. And we all know that real situation couldn't be justified by virtual inspections. As a result, those institutions did not concentrate much on successful completion of their responsibilities related to that government initiation. If we consider that at least 4 inspections in every month was logical, then total estimated inspections stand; (18 months×4 inspections) = 72. Out of 72 logical inspections 58(80.56%) were vacant (no inspections were conducted), 10(13.89%) were virtual inspections and physical (direct) inspections were 4(5.55%) only. The percentages are shown in the figure 16.
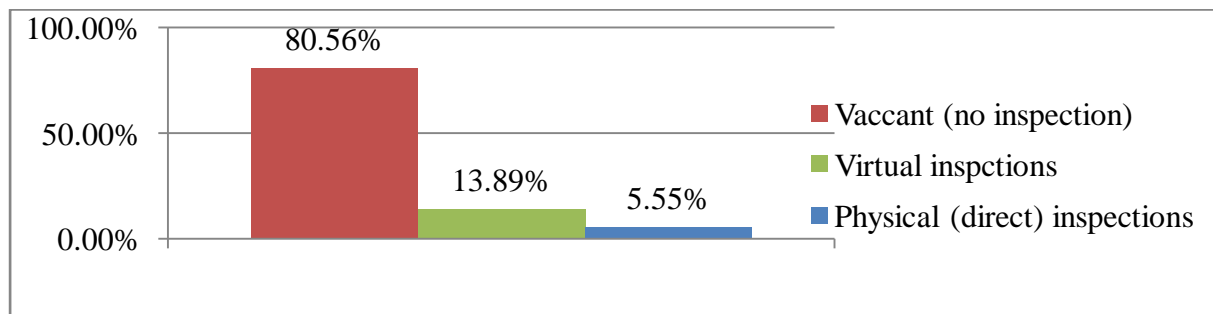

Figure 16: Condition of inspections done by the Upazila/Thana Education Officers to the schools and colleges during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.15 No promptness by the representatives of local government institutions:

Representatives of local government institutions have a great value in local areas. People respect them and try to follow their directions. But in Covid-19 situation, their contribution towards online education was not mentionable. Chairman and members of Union Parishad did not go to the educational institutions and students belonging to their areas to observe the condition of their online studies. They did not encourage and support them in this regard. When no pressure and care work from the local representatives, no government undertaking can get proper implementation with true sincerity. Promptness related to online education by the representatives of local government institutions was observed 0.00%.

6.1.16 Lack of media coverage:

From the beginning of Covid-19, all the media had been keeping themselves busy with raising awareness about Corona virus. But they forgot that education is the backbone of a nation and it should have been continued properly. No remarkable propaganda by them was visible so that teachers, students and parents would give true importance to online education. Though government owned TV channels Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Sangsad TV started telecasting recorded educational program at the initial stage of Covid-19 named 'My School at My Home' for the students of Sixth to Tenth grade(Prothom Alo English Desk, 2020). After a few days, it started for the students of Third to Fifth grade(Islam S. , 2020). But that extremely helpful TV program did not get expected popularity and effectiveness for the reason of having no proper campaigns by other satellite TV channels and social media platforms. Besides, the program had some limitations too. As all the educational institutions remained close from March 16, 2020 to September 11, 2021; the total estimated number of off day was 545. But promotion of online education was seen on an average not more than 30 days. So, the figure 17 shows below the promotion of online education by media which was not more than 5.50%.
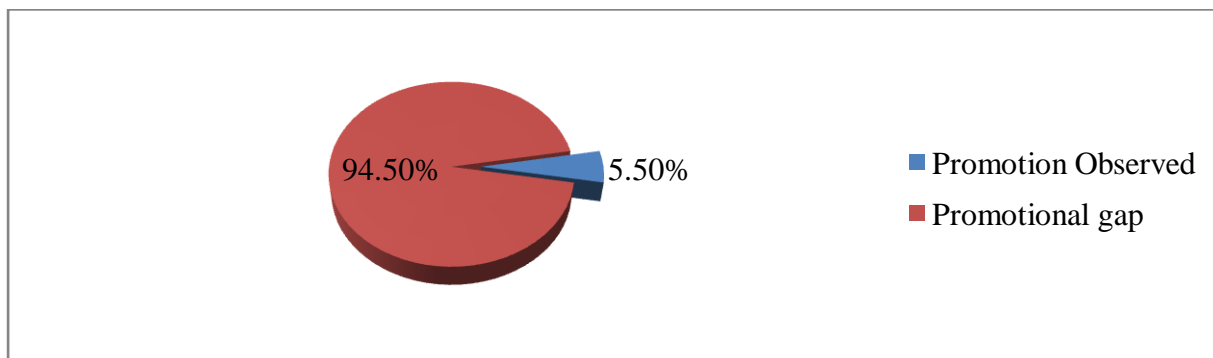
Figure 17: Promotion of online education by media during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.17 Spread of misconception:

It was another common issue in the time of Covid-19. After every certain period the Ministry of Education (MoE) used to declare a possible date to open educational institutions. But every time the effort went unsuccessful. In this way a common sentiment grew among the students that whatever the ministry states, the educational institutions were not going to be opened soon and such thinking kept themselves away from studies. Besides some dishonest people spread in the social media that the students were going to get auto promotion this year too. This kind of misconception also highly de-motivated the students towards their studies. Out of total 80 students and parents, 77(96.25%) said that they were the victims of misconceptions spread by several sources. Figure 18 represents the percentage of such victimization.

Figure 18: Victimization of misconceptions during Covid-19.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.18 Lack of maintenance of schedule:

There were some mentionable numbers of teachers who did not maintain their online class schedule. They used to provide a fixed time to their students for classes but they themselves frequently remained unavailable on that particular time. Students used to go offline waiting for them for a long time. On the other hand, the teachers suddenly came online and took classes with a few students whom could be informed instantly. Therefore, a large number of students missed their important classes. And it's a matter of sorrow that some teachers couldn't even feel how detrimental such acts of them were for their students. 7(17.50%) students out of 40, said that their teachers did not follow the schedule of online curriculum properly which was so disappointing. Figure 19 indicates the percentage of sufferer students for not maintaining the schedule properly by their teachers. The percentage seems little but if we consider the same scenario in the whole country, it was huge.
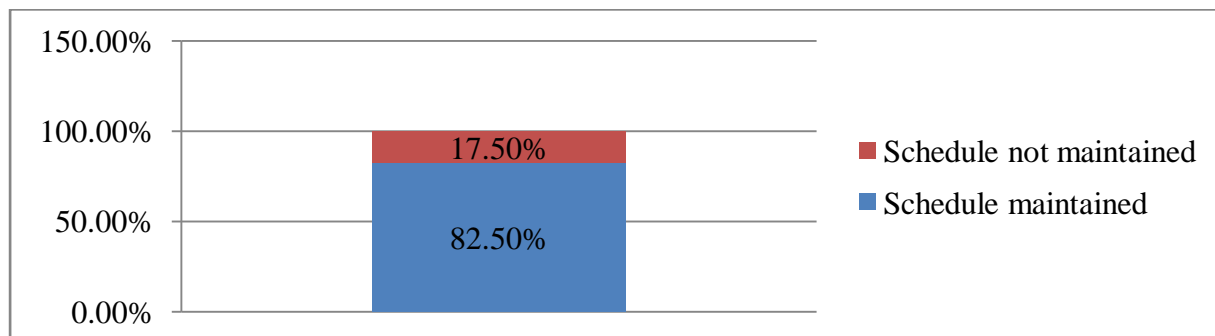
Figure 19: Maintenance of schedule by the teachers.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.19 Lack of proper visibility:

When online classes used to be continued, the teachers did not have the option to have a look on actually what their students were doing. Camera of laptops or smart phones covered only face or up to the chest at maximum. On that situation, it was too hard for a teacher to assume either the students were attentive in class or doing something else by their hands. Sometimes the students used to keep camera off and roam here and there. They returned near the devices when the time of attendance came. When they gave attendance at the end of classes, the teacher couldn't even think that the students were not present throughout the whole class session. Out of 40 teachers, 21(52.50%) said that they faced the problem of visibility in online class and exam, 6(15%) teachers said that they faced no problem with the visibility and 13(32.50%) teachers didn't want to make any comment on this matter. The percentage of teachers' opinion related to visibility problem is shown in the figure 20.
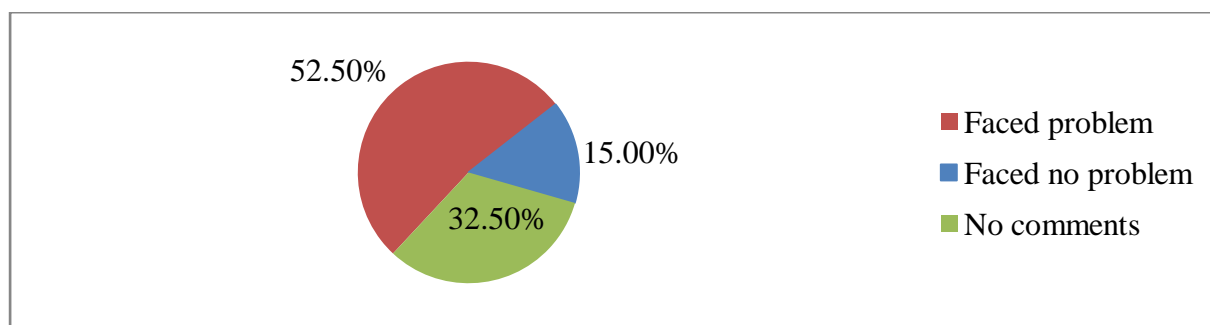

Figure 20: Problem of visibility faced by the teachers.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.20 Misuse of 'mute' and chatting options:

When teachers started to keep taking online classes on Google Meet, Zoom or other apps, generally all the students used 'mute' option so that the teachers can remain undisturbed. But different reality happened around the circumstances of students. When they were muted, some of the students used to start gossiping with their family members and relatives. Therefore, they couldn't concentrate on their classes. Same thing happened when they started chatting with their friends using chatting option. Misusing both of those options were harmful for the purpose of serving online education service. Asking the students to provide honest answers, it was observed that 23(57.50%) students out of 40 misused the options, 8(20%) said no they didn't and the other 9(22.50%) didn't make any comment. The tendency among the students to misuse 'mute' and chatting options in the time of online classes is shown in the figure 21.
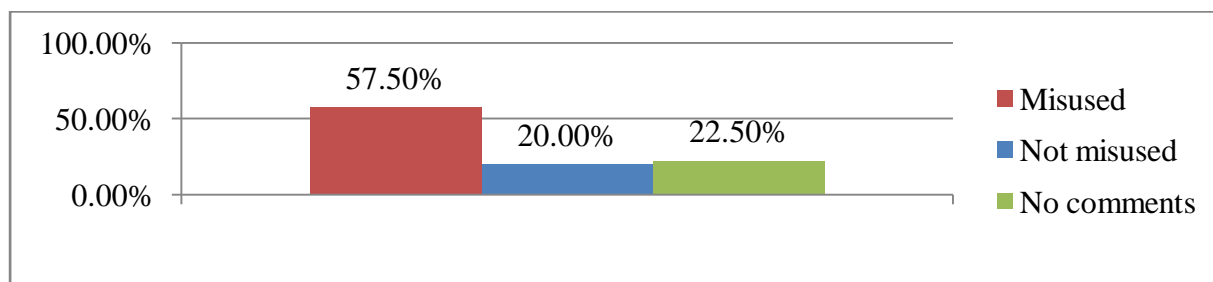
Figure 21: Tendency among the students to misuse 'mute' and chatting options.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.21 Problem related to mental health:

The teachers and the students were used to with the traditional system of education. They literally had a great life where they used to go to their educational institutions and maintained direct contact with each other. Students used to meet/study/play and so on with their friends. They used to come back home with a happy mind having lots of memories. Completing their homework, the students used to start another beautiful day of their student life. But in Covid-19 situation, they were captive at their own homes. The newly introduced online education seemed so boring to many of them. Neither they heartily adapted the system nor did they concentrate to their studies. Staying at home for a long time, they were suffering from mental stress and anxiety. In a question of mental acceptance towards online education 11(9.17%) out of 120 respondents said that they were happy with it, 87(72.50%) said that were not being able to accept it mentally. And the other 22(18.33%) didn't make any comment. Figure 22 shows the mental acceptance of online education to the stakeholders.
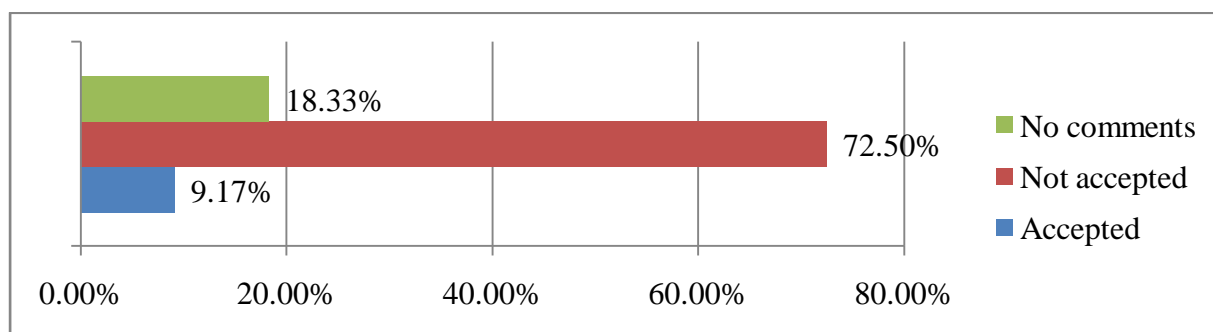

Figure 22: Mental acceptance of online education to the stakeholders.

Source: Primary data.

6.1.22 Re-opening educational institutions without confirming vaccination:

On 3rd September 2021, the Education Minister Dipu Moni announced that the government decided to re-open all the schools and colleges from September 12, 2021 on phases but not universities as they were depended on syndicate meetings(TBS Report, 2021). The government kept close all the educational institutions for a long time to avoid the spread of Covid-19.According to UNICEF, Bangladesh was having 2nd highest closure of schools in the world for the reason of Coronavirus epidemic (UNB News, 2021). Of course the decision was taken to protect the nation. But re-opening all the educational institutions without confirming 100% vaccination to all the three main stakeholders could be suicidal. Whereas all the educational institutions remained close in afraid of spreading Covid-19, so all the parties should have kept little more patience till the confirmation of 100% vaccination. Among the respondents, till 11th September 2021 (including the first dose receivers);31(77.50%) out of 40 teachers, 5(12.5%) out of 40 students and 23(57.5%) out of 40 parents of students were vaccinated as shown in the figure 23.
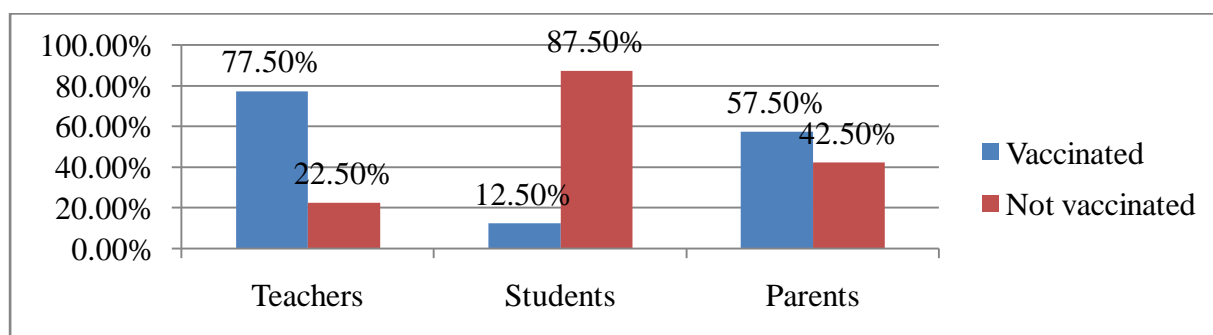
Figure 23: Condition of vaccination among the three main stakeholders.

Source: Primary data.

6.2Probable remedies:

Though opening all the educational institutions was the best solution, but at that circumstance it couldn't be a great decision until the vaccination was ensured to all the people of Bangladesh. So, till then all the problems discussed above needed to be resolved to ensure a sound and successful online education program. The possible remedies should've taken by the government and other concerned authorities to resolve those problems are discussed below.

❖ The Government should have taken propaganda to increase awareness among the stakeholders promoting the value of online education by media and representatives of local government institutions.
❖ The Ministry of Education (MoE) should have issued an order so that all the ICT teachers of educational institutions organize practical training sessions about online education for the other teachers.
❖ All the students of schools and colleges should have been remained under the same supervision of teachers and parents as they used to remain previously.
❖ The parents should have given smart phones to their children only for the educational purpose and observe them re-presenting the badeffects of addictive online games and apps involved with social degradation. Side by side the government should have banned those games and apps permanently to maintain social peace.
❖ The government and other concerned authorities should have established a strong, trustworthy and safe system of online examination removing all the loop-holes of it.
❖ To ensure uniqueness and creativity, decentralized system of assignment should have been enforced instead of centralization so that assignments differ from institutions to institutions even students to students and actions should have been taken against the assignment sellers and uploaders to the web.
❖ All the teachers should have spent little more extra time in online classes so that all the students would clearly understand their lessons and home works.
❖ The government should have taken strong legal actions against all the educational institutions which kept themselves totally inactiveeven in the matter of online studies.
❖ All the educational institutions should have maintainedboth manual and e-payment method for paying tuitions and other fees.
❖ The educational program 'My School at My Home' should have been live with question-answer session instead of pre-recoded version.
❖ Load shedding should have been stopped at least at the day-time so that all the activities of online education could be done without interruption.
❖ The government should have insisted mobile operators to enhance the network and speed of internet. Besides, necessary measures should have been taken for broadband operators to implement 'One Country One Rate' initiative.
❖ The government should have given subsidy to the technological sector to decrease the price level of some particular smart phones and introduce interest-free loan facility for the poor students so that they could buy them and continue their education.
❖ All the schools and colleges must have been inspected physically on a regular basis at least once in a week by the Upazila/Thana Education Officers to observe the realscenario of online education.

❖ To prevent the spread of rumors, cyber wing of law enforcement forces could have kept strong surveillance to take severe legal actions against them so that nobody dares to do that again.

❖ Certain rules and regulations should have been imposed by the educational institutions to prohibit all the misuse of devices by the students in the time of online studies.

❖ Students data pack should have been introduced by the mobile operators to make online educationaffordable for all the students equivalently.

❖ All the teachers should have maintained proper schedule. If not, they should have informed it in a particular online platform at least one hour prior to scheduled time so that all the students get easy access to the updated information.

❖ As the government already opened all the educational institutions, they should arrange vaccination for all the stakeholders on a priority basis to keep all the educational institutions safe.

VII.   Conclusion:

Undoubtedly the decision taken by the government to provide online education service in the situation of Covid-19 was great. But it faced a number of lacking and complexity in a developing country like Bangladesh. As the situation was not going to be fixed soon, so that to avoid any more sufferings the government should have taken all the necessary steps as early as possible to solve the problems related to online education service to make it sound and friendly to all the students equivalently. Otherwise, the government should have gone through the process of vaccinating all the stakeholders of the educational institutions in whole Bangladesh on a priority basis and normalize the situation urgently. As the government waited for a long time, they should have shown a little more patience in the aspect of opening all the educational institutions till the confirmation of 100% vaccination. However, the government still have opportunities to work taking all the identified challenges under consideration to keep Bangladesh ready for the future.

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