CHAPTER-21
COVID-19: HOW THE CLOSURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BARISHAL IMPACTS ON THE STUDENTS

I am Abdul Karim Gazi, Studying BSS in Sociology at the University of Barishal, Bangladesh. Besides academic studying, I have conducted a few pieces of research, published in different international journals. And, I have already contributed to three books. Typically, I feel glad to conduct researches on different social phenomena.

gazikarimbu@gmail.com

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6660-7791

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 brings a lot of problems, signalling everyone is affected by this pandemic more or less. In this process, almost every country declared the closure of the academic institutions what created more pressures than ever on the students, especially Bangladesh. Accordingly, it is sad but true that the students of the University of Barishal deteriorated in many ways. In consequence, the junior-level students mainly lost the opportunities of the campus and became bored by staying at home for many days. And, the senior-level students failed to continue their studying properly what created pain, anxiety, and tensions among them. Equally important, job seekers who just completed their degrees were worried relating to the preparation and the circular of the jobs. Above all, students lost the severity of the study at home that means they feel a fish out of water. The matter of optimism is that online classes reduced the motion of losses of the students. So, both teachers and students should make a good environment for

continuing the process of study. It is not just the students of the University of Barishal who are suffering; the students of other universities are suffering because of the pandemic

Keywords: COVID-19; Students; University of Barishal; Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

In reality, the novel Corona virus disease is the cause of a harmful virus, named the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Bender, 2020). At first, this virus was traced all on a sudden in Wuhan city, Hubei province, China at the end of December 2019 (Saadat et al., 2020). In the meantime, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that COVID-19 is a pandemic all over the world on March 11, 2020 (Sanodiya, 2020). As a matter of fact, this deadly virus appeared in many countries by leaps and bounds. Especially- this virus first appeared in Bangladesh on March 8 and a patient died for this virus on March 18, 2020 (Kamruzzaman and Sakib, 2020). As ill-luck would have it, in spite of

taking all effective actions by the authority, 359,148 people are infected and 5,162 patients died for this virusin Bangladeshas of September 28, 2020 (Worldometer, 2020).

Worse, the education sector of Bangladesh suffered irreversible damages by the pandemic and the authority was waiting for the decision of the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research of Bangladesh (Tithila, 2020). Since the authority didn't close the education institutions after tracing the virus in Bangladesh, more than a few students from different universities of Bangladesh boycotted their exams and classes for the closure of the academia (Akhter and Rahman, 2020). Afterward, the authority closed all types of educational institutions for sake of ensuring social distancing and protecting the students from being infected of this virus from March 17, 2020 (Kamruzzaman and Sakib, 2020). In this particular case, the authority can't say for certain when they reopen the education institutes as the outbreak of COVID-19 is ongoing. Thus, all academic activities of the

University of Barishal were closed in the direction of the government and the students were pushed to leave the hostels on March 17, 2020. So, the COVID-19 made a serious concern in various matters after the other for the students of the University of Barishal.

Result and Discussion

a. 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ-year students:

Matter of fact is that the 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ-year students get an open environment after completing 12 years of restricted studies in the context of Bangladesh. To begin with, the closure of the university made a chance to pass time free for them at all events. But most of the study missed the environment of the campus and visiting new places with friends and classmates. It is worth nothing that the pressure of seeking a job doesn't make them worried but the 2ⁿᵈ year students felt the loss of study for academic and job preparation. After a few months of the closure, the implication is that the junior level student felt anxiety by studying for many days. Since the situation was at stake, they had no way to attend the university.

Nonetheless, they posted often about their passing of boring time at their Face book profiles. Even their contact with friends and classmates was ongoing at all hazards via the Messengers, Whatsapp, etc. on the other hand, according to the declaration of the Bangladesh government, the university authority started the study-gap-reduction targets and strengthening the will of students by the online class system for every department. Consequently, most of the students learned the use of modern technology for the reason of taking online classes at the point of all barriers. But, it is mentionable that every student had no sufficient materials to take online lessons. To speak frankly, a few students used online devices borrowing from others because they had the existential crisis during COVID-19.

b. 3rd and 4th-year students

It goes without saying that 3rd and 4th-year students lost more than 1st and 2nd-year students beyond all doubt in four years of academic life of the under-graduate level education. Because they have

aims to engage in seeking a job after one or two years later and competing against a vast number of candidates by way of taking jobs. The longest time closure of campus is a crucial issue for them because it raised the pre-existing tensions for jobs. Subsequently, although they attended online classes by force of the perilous situation, they missed the environment of the campus and the direct lectures of the teachers by all means. Simultaneously, with a large time staying at home and losing face-to-face contact, visit, and group study; they became disappointed at home by this time. Most importantly, they felt that they are becoming deprived of the job opportunity because studying at home is not sufficient to get a job in the future.

On the contrary, a few students started to learn to use several important and essential software and online materials for rising skills of the online system. Also, more than a few students attended different online webinars, workshops, conferences, training, and congress. It is mentionable that those started the researches that have experience and

knowledge about research, even someone spent much time for learning the research methodology with aiming to conduct research in the future. For the most part, the new entrepreneurs weren't stayed without thinking and decorating their businesses during the closure. As a consequence, online businesses were ongoing come whatever may and someone initiated their new business on a number of points, such as-clothes, cosmetics, books, etc.

c. The post-graduate students:

The author took those students in this section that completed graduation and got admission for a master's degree except engaging in job seeking. Truly, they have two types of pressure that attending online classes and preparing for a job competition. As the case may be, since they will have to compete with thousands of job seekers afterward, they tried to continue their study more substantially than junior-level students.

Who had ambitions to pursue a higher degree from abroad they used their time for research and

learning effective knowledge in that direction. Meanwhile, many graduate students have published their researches during the closure of the university. Others were aiming to conduct and publish their researches over the past two or three months. Correspondingly, someone was engaged in the preparation of taking IELTS and GRE examinations for the purpose of getting scholarships and admissions abroad.

d. Fresh graduates and post-graduates:

In this section, the author indeed mentioned those students who have just completed a bachelors or master's degree at the University of Barishal and are trying to take jobs as soon as possible. It is clear that they are unemployed but prepared for competing with a vast number of job candidates in Bangladesh. During COVID-19, they were pushed to stay at home because their hostels and messes were closed as the sign of national lockdown. For this reason, they felt anxious and worrying situation about their study because they lost the severity of studying at home for

the longest time. Generally, they are habituated to study with friends at the library and under suggestions of the coaching centers. It is a tragedy that someone gave up their master's degree only for taking income sources but the pandemic stopped everything. Also, the circular of jobs was postponed by all means due to lockdown. It is a matter of horrifying that someone lived on the income as the home-tutor who was totally deprived of income sources due to the closure of educational institutions for a long time.

Conclusion

At the eleventh hour, it is a major concern that the pandemic forced to close the educational institutions, and around 1.5 billion learners in 190 countries were out of their classes for more than a few months (Askari, 2020). In the same process, the students of the University of Barishal couldn't attend their classes as always. For this reason, it makes perfect sense that they felt many psychological pressures by turns. In reality, they shouldn't be disappointed because the situation will be free from

the pandemic and they will attend their classes after a year or so on. The authority tried to tackle systematically the impacts of the COVID-19 and the students have a vital role to combat the situations consciously. Because they can be aware and make people aware of the outbreak of COVID-19. Also, students should attend their online classes with all attention to take lessons no matter the circumstances. We need to wake up to these realities because things can't be allowed to go on like this. What is hearting to see, however, the Bangladesh government initiated to give Smartphone those poor students who have no material to take online classes during national closure? If they got the Smartphone, they can able to take lessons from online systems and the sweeping impacts will be reduced as much as possible. More importantly, the Bangladesh government should make easy the availability and affordability of access to the internet for all students during the closure of education institutes. Last of all, the teachers should make classes

attractive and motivated for raising students' attention as long as the pandemic is stopped.

References

Akhter, S. & Rahman, A. (2020, March 16). Bangladesh University students boycott classes, exam. *The New Age Bd.* Retrieved from https://www.newagebd.net/article/102355/bangladesh-university-students-boycott-classes-exams

Askari, R. (2020, May 8). The Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education in Bangladesh.*The Dhaka Courier*. Retrieved from http://www.dhakacourier.com.bd/m/news/Column/The-impact-of-COVID-19-on-higher-education-in-Bangladesh/2397

Bender, L. (2020, March).Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and control in schools.The UNICEF. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/key-messages-and-actions-for-covid-19-prevention-and-control-in-

schools-march-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=baf81d52_4#:~:text='CO'%20stands%20for,types%20of%20common%20cold

Kamruzzaman, M. & Sakib, N. (2020, July 5). Covid-19: Infections in Bangladesh pass 160,000 mark. ANADOLU AGENCY. Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/covid-19-infections-in-bangladesh-pass-160-000-mark/1900418

Saadat, S., Rawtani, D., &Hussain, C. M. (2020).Environmental perspective of COVID-19.*Science of Total Environment*, 1-6. doihttps://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138870

Sanodiya, R. (2020, June 16). Positive side of COVID-19.*The Indian Times*. Retrieved from https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/positive-side/positive-side-of-covid-19-2-21651/

Tithila, K. K. (March 12, 2020). School Attendance Drops amid Coronavirus Fears. *The Dhaka Tribune*. Retrieved from

https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2020/03/12/school-attendance-drops-amidst-coronavirus-fears

Worldometer (2020, Sptember 28).The Coronavirus Update. Retrieved from https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/bangladesh/