Higher Education Reformation through Teacher Education: A Case Study in Bangladesh Perspective

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ABSTRACT
Teacher education is one of the key strategies to enhance higher education quality and transform from traditional education to 21st-century-oriented higher education in Bangladesh. This paper evaluates the experiences of the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching (PGDHET) program gained through the journey toward developing a higher education teacher professional development program and implementing it. This six-month-long program, titled Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching (PGDHET), was launched by the Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP). The key themes and elements of this teacher education program were academic program and curriculum, teaching-learning in higher education, professional practices in higher education, the well-being of students, ICT in higher education, assessment, research, and supervision in higher education. It offered a focused pathway for quality assurance activities, which is crucial in reinforcing and strengthening a culture of quality teaching-learning in Bangladeshi universities. A comprehensive, rational approach was adopted for developing this paper. Both authors were involved in the development of this program, so their voices were considered a valuable source of data. Their journal entries and conversations with various stakeholders were the primary data collection methods, whereas an intensive review of 86 higher education teaching-learning program programs offered by 80 universities on six continents around the world was supportive of understanding the global trends in tertiary teacher education programs. The analysis revealed that developing such a comprehensive program for tertiary teacher development was not an easy task, as many issues and complexities were involved, like the duration, vision and mission, design, and assessment guidelines during the development phases. The challenges were multifaceted and multidimensional, such as fitting the program content to be applicable across the teaching disciplines and ensuring its suitability for those teaching in face-to-face, flexible, and online learning environments.

KEYWORDS*: Education reformation, professional development, higher education, quality assurance.*

"Life is a self-renewing process through action upon the environment."
(Dewy, 1926, p. 2)

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The higher education (HE) landscape is ever-changing, especially since the change has been dramatic since the rise of the 21st century. As a result of such continual transformation, the life of a teacher in higher education has become challenging to cope with the "opportunities, challenges, and threats posed by the arrival of the 21st century" (Aspin, 1993, p. 326). Teachers must learn new skills on a regular basis to maintain a balance between teaching and the teaching environment (Sife et al., 2007). Higher education in this kind of setting puts extra pressure on faculty members, who must keep improving their knowledge and skills to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. However, the issue of quality in higher education has been a matter of interest and concern (Aspin, 1993) for a long time ago, which is largely related to teachers' ability to create learning experiences. As Spence (2001) said, "We won't meet the needs for more and better higher education until professors become designers of learning experiences and not teachers" (p. 12). With any prior orientation on how to perform, it is quite difficult to ensure significant student learning.

Due to the significance of HE for individual lives and society at large, the response of teachers towards the changing needs of society is of immense importance. Hence, the emphasis changes to the need for up-gradation of faculty competencies with required knowledge and skills with greater value. "The virtues of inter-personal understanding, sympathy, compassion, and humanity—together with their accompanying attitudes and beliefs, are the central concern of the higher education sector, and nowhere more than in universities" (Aspin, 1993, p. 327). Thus, teachers in HE need to be prepared to teach in HE classes. Fink (2013) focused on two approaches to preparing teachers in HE to teach millions of diverse students with a variety of needs. According to Fink, teachers may continue to follow traditional ways of teaching, repeating the same practices that we and others in their disciplines have used for years. Or they may adopt a vision of doing something different, something special in their courses that would significantly improve the quality of student learning. As a response to this enduring question of professional development to adapt to changes, the PGDHET course organized by the Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) could be perceived as a possibility by which the Bangladeshi universities and faculties can ensure maximum adaptability, flexibility, and responsiveness to need, demand, and opportunity, a sensible and far-thinking government (Fink, 2013).

Higher Education Reformation Context in Bangladesh

Higher Education in Bangladesh

In May 1912, the then government of Bengal set up a committee known as the Nathan Committee to recommend a scheme for the establishment of a university. In 1913, the government of India passed a resolution to establish some teaching and residential universities in British India, including one in Dhaka. In 1947, there were six universities in Bangladesh: (1) The University of Dacca, which opened in 1921; (2) The University of Rajshahi, which opened in 1953; (3) The University of Chittagong, which opened in 1965; (4) Bangladesh Agricultural University, which opened in 1961; (5) Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, which opened in 1961; and (6) Jahangirnagar Muslim University, which opened in 1970.

When India was partitioned in 1947, Bangladesh, which was then a part of Pakistan, had one university, Dacca, established in 1921. By 1947, the year of independence from colonial rule, East Bengal, the eastern wing of Pakistan, inherited a system of higher education that had developed in India, and which gave a prominent role to colleges, catering to most students studying for their first degree at universities. Dacca's role was limited, both geographically and in terms of numbers.

A recent addition to the higher education system in Bangladesh is the emergence of private universities. Although private universities or different types of public universities have existed in other countries for a long time, the first private university in Bangladesh was established in 1992. The 'Private University Act of Bangladesh' was passed in the National Parliament in 1992, and the first private university in the country, the North South University, started its journey in the same year. To construct a comprehensive understanding of the size of HE in Bangladesh, the analysis of higher education statistics shows that the higher education system consists of 135 universities with 28568 faculty members: 1862 colleges with 77936 teachers, and 877 professional institutes with 10816 teachers (BANBEIS, 2018).

Higher Education Reform and Teacher Education

The present state policies of Bangladesh have placed utmost importance on HE, as the Government of Bangladesh sees university education as the engine of growth for economic and social development of the nation. HE is the main producer of a highly skilled labour force equipped with the essential technical and professional expertise essential for the continuing economic growth of Bangladesh. Therefore, the government suggests that all strategies regarding HE must be consistent with the 20-year Strategic Plan for Higher Education (2006–2026), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the National Education Policy 2010, and the government's vision of establishing Digital Bangladesh by 2021.

In recent years, dramatic growth in the higher education system in Bangladesh has been noticed. The experts and researchers recognized the social and market demand behind such rapid growth. Data shows that the number of institutions and enrolled students has increased remarkably. The gross enrolment rate in tertiary education increased from 5.44 percent in 1999 to 13.15 percent in 2011. There has been an expansionist approach, especially in degree colleges under the National University and in the way charters for private universities have been given out (BANBEIS, 2018).

The origin of the Post Graduate Higher Education Teaching program in BUP is deeply rooted in the motto of BUP "Excellence Through Knowledge" and its institutional plea to be a world-class teaching-research university. It is essential to introduce modern, up-to-date teacher education programs at the tertiary level to achieve the goals set in the Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh:2018-2030 in the pursuit of quality enhancement (UGC, 2018). Since its inception, BUP has adhered to the policy of valuing faculty members as the most important resources for the quality enhancement of the university. Thus, BUP has put its highest priority on developing the professional expertise of its faculty members. As a result, BUP initiated a small scale "orientation program and faculty development program (FDP)' to promote professional development and to foster a climate for innovation in teaching and learning as applicable in higher education (pedagogy).

Back in 2010, BUP established the Office of the Evaluations, Faculty, and Curriculum Development (OEFCD) to ensure quality education through developing and monitoring academic programs and faculty development. OFECD regularly offers faculty development programs to prepare future BUP faculty members to address the challenges of achieving the vision and mission of BUP through individual programs. The professional development program is committed to enabling the participants to develop a strong foundation of knowledge about teaching and learning, to display a passion for learning, to engage in reflective practice about one's growth as a teacher, and to inclusiveness, diversity, and pluralism in higher education. From the very beginning, the professional development program was perceived to be of the utmost importance for the individual development of BUP's faculty members as well as for transforming the faculty members into successful organizers in the 21st century. Evidence shows that these kinds of programs are very

helpful for new or less experienced faculty members. This is because faculty development training is meant to help faculty members align with the academic and institutional philosophy, including the core values. After a while, it was realized that the existing program was too traditional to address the needs of the university in maintaining its standards and quality. Moreover, the existing FDP had a narrower focus that was not aligned properly to enrich FM's capability to promote student knowledge and learning, success, and institutional excellence. Therefore, BUP has started searching for a new mechanism for developing its faculty members in accordance with the demands of the 21st century. It became imperative for BUP to search for a new broad approach to faculty development to adjust to the changing learning landscape of higher education. In fact, this Post Graduate Diploma has its roots in BUP's old FDP.

Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching Program: A New Initiative

The rooted philosophy of this program is to produce *SMART* teachers for the 21st century. The imperative of the program is to create/transform university teachers into a creative community in the context of the 21st century that seeks to shape the future by developing SMART students (self-directed, motivated, adaptive, resource-enriched, technology-embedded) through student-centric, evidence-based blended teaching and learning approaches by SMART teachers.

As demand for professional education and training for teaching at the tertiary level is increasing, many tertiary institutions and their faculty members who are already teaching at a university or hoping to do so in the future are seeking to get the appropriate knowledge and skills to adjust to the tertiary system. The proposed PGDHET degree is designed for newly recruited university teachers or potential future tertiary educators seeking to improve their teaching skills and gain the learning outcome for students. The contents are generic in nature and designed to be applicable to all teaching disciplines at the tertiary level, and suitable for those teaching in face-to-face, flexible, and online learning environments. It is expected that faculties achieve knowledge and skills that are essential for teaching in real-world classrooms. This program equipped potential and practicing teachers with modern and conceptual resources, modern approaches for teaching practices and research in curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment in tertiary education. The contents of the program have been designed to be applicable to all teaching disciplines at the tertiary level, and are suitable for those teaching in face-to-face, flexible, and online learning environments.

The duration of the program was six months. Participants were required to do six courses/modules with a research project. It was expected that a significant proportion of students who had completed the course would be provided an opportunity to publish articles based on small coursework assignments or their overall research projects. Academics who participated in the course have gone on to extend their scholarship of teaching or broader educational issues in their respective discipline or field of study and to contribute to broader staff development in their departments. In a real sense, this Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching provided learners with an innovative credential in tertiary teaching and learning, complementing the degree they already have. The criterion-oriented program design focused on the knowledge, skills, performance competencies, and attributes necessary for tertiary educators. It helped participants develop their planning, instruction, assessment, evaluation, and program design capabilities to a higher standard, thus giving them greater employability in the higher education sector.

The mission of the program is to focus on upgrading the basic quality of university teachers in the context of the 21st century. The pillars of the program are effective teaching-learning, academic programs and curriculum, educational research, and professional practices. The program

intends to transform the participants, acquainted with 21st-century oriented pedagogical practices and research, to reflect on their teaching, observe exemplary instructors, and document their instructional skills and development via a teaching portfolio. For this reason, the program was developed in higher education to teach such faculties who will be innovative, entrepreneurial, research-intensive, and output driven.

On the other hand, the aim of this program is to engage novice teachers as well as potential future teachers deeply with effective teaching methods and reflect on the practices, portfolio, and teaching journey in the higher education field. At the same time, the program aims to develop faculty members' skills in the context of the 21st century, equip them with the most modern teaching and learning strategies, help them determine their career paths, and increase their in-depth knowledge and understanding of online and blended learning.

The program is usually offered twice each academic year. The sessions of the six-month program are from July to December and January to June. The curriculum for this program was adopted in accordance with the vision and mission of BUP as well as national priorities to realize the dream of digital Bangladesh through inclusive, quality higher education. The program follows an integrated curriculum to fulfil the demands of developing human resources in the field of higher education in the context of the 21st century. Thus, it emphasizes pedagogical courses, professional courses, technical courses, and so on. Throughout the program, the curriculum also focuses on how teachers teach and how students learn, as well as how teachers do their jobs.

Problem Statement

Higher education has seen a surge in higher educational institutions since the 90s. At present, 153 universities exist in Bangladesh—46 public and 105 private universities (UGC, 2020). The government has permitted private universities to run undergraduate and graduate programs across the country. As a result, many higher education teaching positions have been opened. However, there was not any visible initiative to support this large number of young faculty members by teaching them a natural adoption process that would make them self-learners to run a better teaching-learning practice. On the other hand, the government has launched new public universities every year and there is a plan to open at least one university in each district.

At the same time, a total of 31,752 teachers are teaching to 11,72,901 students (UGC, 2020). Among them, 4,432 professors, 2,541 associate professors, 5,161 assistant professors, and 3,150 lecturers, and 240 in public universities. On the other hand, private universities run their programs with both full-time faculty members and part-time faculty members. A total of 16,070 faculty members are teaching 3,49,160 students. There are 805 professors, 800 associate professors, 2,868 assistant professors, and 7,145 lecturers working as full-time faculty members. On the other hand, 1,308 professors, 603 associate professors, 743 assistant professors, and 1,328 lecturers are working as part-time faculty members. However, there are a few challenges to this huge number of faculty members: (1) Graduate students have no teaching degree or professional training; (2) Young teachers have no professional development in higher education academic programs and curriculum aside from their experience as students; (3) There is insufficient opportunity to learn higher education instruction and pedagogy; and (4) Higher education has not provided teachers with ICT to transform their practices.

The government implemented the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) from 2009 to 2019 with the help of the World Bank. The Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission have taken key responsibilities to implement the program. The primary focus of this project was to improve the relevance of teaching and research environments in higher education institutions by encouraging both innovation and accountability within the

universities and by enhancing the technical and institutional capacity of the higher education sector. There were four components to the project: (a) promoting academic innovation, (b) Building institutional capacity, (c) Connectivity capacity building for universities and research centres, (d) Support to the operation of the project implementation unit. As part of this project, the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) was established in more than sixty universities to enhance academic programs and faculty members' quality. Several training and workshops were conducted to enhance the quality of faculty members too. Therefore, this post-graduate program was a time-bound and appropriate approach to launch an academic program on higher education teaching and move on to the quality higher education movement in Bangladesh. This study is part of this initiative to measure its success, failures, and how to move it forward.

Research Question

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent the post-graduate diploma in higher education teaching is effective for higher educational reformation?
2. To what extent the program has accomplished its purpose to enhance quality higher education?
3. What are the challenges of the post-graduate diploma in higher education reformation?

Research Methods

This study was conducted by the two researchers who designed this post-graduate program, implemented it, conducted sessions, worked as supervisors, and finally evaluated the program. As a result, this study design is based on qualitative data and the experience of the researchers. This postgraduate program is studied as an exemplary case study based on qualitative data. The justification for case study research is that it is primarily issue-driven and entails the examination of one or more instances within a defined framework (Creswell, 2012). The study seeks to understand the success, challenges, and implications of this post-graduate program.

To do so, the study is designed and examined in a qualitative manner as a single case. This innovative post-graduate teaching program is the first professional development degree-oriented in Bangladesh. That's why this evaluation study examined the qualitative aspects of the program. They tell stories about their lives with others and provide their personal accounts of classrooms, schools, educational issues, and the settings in which they work. Also, researchers describe their individual lives, collect, and tell stories about people's lives, and write narratives of individual experiences.

The study collected data in diverse ways, such as summative assessment, discussing informal exams as well as informal observation of classrooms. The research also utilized a few formal documents and tools such as midterm exams, homework, assignments, term papers, individual presentations, group presentations, group discussions, workshops, and interviews for collecting data. Data is analysed thematically based on the program curriculum and classroom practices.

Results and Discussion

A Journey to Reality

We have mentioned that one of the major challenges for the post-graduate diploma program was its innovative idea since there was no previous experience in the field for the expert as well as for the university. It is a very new idea for most of the stakeholders—the tertiary level teachers, curriculum designers, and administrators—to accept this kind of professional development program that educates and provides professional development on higher education teaching-learning and designs a program for them. Accepting these persisting challenges, we have been able to run our program for six months and we have gathered our experience in different areas.

An academic degree in teacher education for university teachers is no longer a dream but a reality in Bangladesh. The Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching (PGDHET) program was introduced by a formal inaugural program on the Faculty Development Program (FDP) in BUP. From the very beginning of the PGDHET developing concept till today's operation, the authors gained vast knowledge and understanding regarding academic courses on higher education faculty development. The journey was not easy, and there were challenges at every step. The following section presents the lessons learned through this journey. The result has been designed based on several concepts—Higher Education Teaching Program Design; Translating Curriculum Theory into Practice; Curriculum Implementation Challenges; Teaching Learning in Higher Education; Information Technology in Higher Education; and Professional Practices in Higher Education.

Higher Education Teaching Program Design

The Higher Education Teaching Program is very innovative and contemporary for Bangladesh. It is both critical and complex in structure. Traditionally, primary and secondary teachers are informed about the syllabus, curriculum, or academic programs. Additionally, in tertiary or higher education, teachers have been getting maximum freedom in traditional teacher-centric education. However, outcome-based student-centric higher education requires more knowledge and skills about student ability and academic programs compatible with student learning. As a result, teachers need more knowledge about what to teach in academic programs and curricula.

The participants spent almost one-sixth of the program on academic program and curriculum development. The core focus of these modules was academic planning and curriculum development. Participants have easily identified the differences between a teacher-centric syllabus and curriculum development. The young faculty members understand and experience the academic program and curriculum development context, external and internal influences of the academic program and curriculum development process, how to create an academic plan, support student learning with appropriate instructional tools, and assess their learning. The program has also introduced an Academic Program and Curriculum Development Template based on Outcome Based Education (OBE) recommended by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The participants demonstrated a strong preference for memorizing the template's components but demonstrated less performance in designing and planning a new academic program and curriculum design. few showed better skills in writing a course outcome or course design, it was difficult for most of the participants since all of them have less teaching and professional experience. However, it is found that writing institutional to program, the program to course, course to a unit, and unit to lesson-level outcomes is not easy for young participants usually. Additionally,

the young faculty members wrote a good outcome statement for the program, as outcomes are both difficult to write and contemplate. Therefore, we have to kick off the program to understand what they have learned from their previous education and how they can transform their teacher-centric experience into student-centric outcome-based education.

Translate Curriculum Theory into Practice

The program took several months to devise this curriculum and design it to make it approachable. Therefore, the PGDHET academic program and curriculum module focused on both theories and practices in the program. The participants managed their own course portfolio and e-portfolio. As a part of their assessment, each participant also turned in their portfolio and e-portfolio at the end of the program. As they were young teachers, these practices helped them in their future classroom practices.

The program is primarily concerned with academic programs for higher education and curriculum development. Therefore, it must depend more on the other graduates from other universities who have very diverse academic backgrounds from home and abroad. On the other hand, BUP is a very specialized public university that has a deep mission to become the top higher education institution within a very short period with a unique and innovative group of graduates and researchers that depends solely on innovative academic programs and curricula. Therefore, synchronizing the diverse graduates to accomplish the vision and mission of the university while aligning with their academic program is the primary focus of this course.

The academic program and curriculum development part taught basic concepts and practices of academic program and curriculum development. It introduced the basic concepts and process of academic programs instead of providing transmissive education since our traditional nature of higher education solely focuses on transmissive education. As a result, most universities replicate or copy the course curriculum from top local universities or other international universities. Therefore, the universities are neither following the program nor achieving the mission and vision of the universities. On the other hand, there is barely any relation between the prescribed and practiced curricula of the universities.

In this circumstance, this program introduced academic program and curriculum development theories, designs, and practices. It also focused on curriculum development templates guided by the University Grants Commission (UGC). In the theoretical aspect, the course focused on the internal and external influences of academic programs in higher education programs. It also covered the socio-cultural context, educational environment, educational process, and educational outcomes in higher education.

Curriculum Design is another aspect of the course. It has focused on basic curriculum theories from Tyler to Eisner to Fung. The program has also focused on how to design a course and prepare them for teaching a new course. It has also focused on certain course development templates by the university. Both theoretical and practical aspects of understanding academic programs, development curricula, and courses will help the participants to transform their teaching-learning practices from transmissive to constructivist teaching-learning practices.

The program also focused on an outcome-based curriculum, which has been recommended by UGC. There was an exclusive session taken by curriculum experts and practitioners. Both the theoretical and practitioner aspects provided the participants with a very strong background and hands-on skills to design, develop, and practice an outcome-based curriculum across the disciplines in higher education. Besides this, it also covered the higher education accreditation process. The

participants have experienced how to design an outcome-based curriculum to achieve certain accreditation in higher education.

Teaching Learning in Higher Education

Student-centred higher education teaching-learning in the 21st century is very much more innovative and challenging than the traditional one. Teaching is more than telling stories and understanding is more than listening. In the 21st century, higher education has transformed from a behaviour-based educational system to a constructivist-based educational system. In other words, the teaching-learning practice has shifted from disseminating content or generating more content to preparing the students as competent graduates for both industry and academia. This teaching-learning transformation requires more teaching-learning theoretical knowledge and reflective practices in higher education.

This higher education teaching and learning program is designed in several steps. The teaching-learning process introduced the teachers to the fundamental difference between deep learning and surface learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The participants experienced and were enlightened by both deep and surface learning theories and practices. To understand higher education teaching and learning, the course also provided basic and foundation knowledge of teaching and learning, such as psychological aspects of teaching-learning, teaching theories, learning theories, instructions for effective teaching-learning, teaching-learning methods, pedagogy, andragogy, active learning, tools and techniques in higher education, teacher planning, and classroom management in higher education, etc.

The teaching-learning process was introduced at the beginning of the program. However, it took spiral progression through other courses such as academic program and curriculum development, students' aspects and readiness for effective learning, assessment and evaluation in higher education, technology in higher education, etc. Additionally, it is also considered reflective practice in higher education. It generated and practiced different forms of knowledge, such as factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and metacognitive knowledge. It has designed different sessions to achieve these diverse learning outcomes and experiences through hands-on practices. The participants reflected their teaching-learning knowledge and skills effectively through individual presentations, small group and big group activities, classroom responses, and micro-teaching. All the participants have done the above activities as part of their formal and informal assessments.

Information Technology in Higher Education

21st century Higher education is highly dependent on technology. Technology has influenced and transformed higher education teaching and student learning. This PGDHET program has incorporated technology as a vehicle to deliver content effectively, learning management, instructional support for effective learning, effective communication in education, and so on. This blended course was designed effectively and provided adequate hands-on experience in information technology and theory classes to enhance their educational technological knowledge. The course has initiated effective online classroom communication tools such as Google Classroom to establish effective online classroom management. At the inception of the program, the students participated in a computer laboratory class to use an online teaching-learning tool as a primary classroom management tool. As a part of the process, they were also required to have hands-on practice in the classroom. To accomplish this goal, the course has given dummy problems to become familiar with educational technology. There were also exclusive sessions on

online educational resources (OER). The participants exercised several online resources to master the information technology skills necessary for higher education.

Professional Practices in Higher Education

Professional practice is one of the emerging issues in higher education since the span of higher education has extended more than ever before, which requires professional excellence. It should be noted that professional excellence can't be achieved within a short period of time; rather it requires cumulative growth. Additionally, professional practices are more philosophical than propositional knowledge. Therefore, professional practices are not only focused on the theoretical aspects of higher education teaching but also on the practice and transformation of it.

One of the major focuses of the PGDHET program design was the blend of higher education professional theories and practices. The program's professional courses covered three different areas—effective teaching, research, and professional practices. The program invited veteran professors to share their professional experiences with the young faculty members. At the same time, the instructors shared different higher education professional theories with the participants. The program ensured the active participation of each participant during the coursework. The participants have participated in different individual, peer, and group activities through different activities to experience higher educational professional practices.

Recommendation

Our journey towards developing such a professional curriculum for a specialized program, which has not been tested by anyone in Bangladesh before, was not straightforward. In fact, the entire task, from idea generation to implementation, was an epic journey with new challenges, possibilities, and interpretations. The task was like the mission to self-renew indefinitely, and it needed several people to be alive.

The original inspiration for developing such an academic program came from Bangladesh's Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who said in a speech on January 24, 1971, "Without cultural freedom, political and economic freedom is worthless" literature and culture of Bangladesh should be based on the soil and with people focusing on their happiness, peace, dreams, and expectations. Therefore, my aspiration was to search for a contextualized, culturally responsive approach to tertiary teacher education. It seemed that tertiary teacher education should accommodate the concept of 'social justice," which was the spirit of Bangladesh's independence. Any imperial mimicking of teachers' development in higher education would not be realistic, without pledging to the high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism—the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the Republic. The essence of academic programs for faculty development in higher education should be aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Sustainable Development Goals that advocate for ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of the education system. The fourth SDG goal aims to ensure equal access for all women and men to high-quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including universities, which have a growing demand for qualified teachers. On the other hand, the Perspective Plan of Bangladesh has set the strategies of upgrading the curricula and improving teaching-learning methods for quality outcomes to meet 21st-century challenges and realize the prime goals for all universities to achieve international standards [1] (p. 85). Unfortunately, since independence, no mechanism has been set up for educating university faculty members. This ground-breaking initiative will be the first step toward establishing a tertiary teacher

education program in Bangladesh. The University Grants Commission has also planned to set up a Faculty Development Academy for university teachers. As a result, this PGDHET program initiative is ground-breaking work for overcoming all challenges and an example for future initiatives.

A professional development program also has an impact on the nature of the job and the autonomy enjoyed by a teacher in HEI. "Autonomy of the university should be considered as an essential element, both to facilitate international exchanges in higher education and with regard to the establishment of comparability and equivalence of degrees and diplomas" (UNESCO, 1966). However, the specific difficulties of ensuring such autonomy in developing countries emerged due to a lack of skilled faculty members to ensure quality production in accordance with societal needs. Therefore, higher education quality enhancement initiatives have a direct link to a nation's economic development. In this connection, UNESCO (1966) recognized the essential role of teachers in educational advancement and the importance of their valuable contribution to the development of future generations and modern society.

A recent study emphasized the importance of tertiary teacher education programs to promote higher education development and strongly recommended it for teachers' quality through teacher education programs. It also recommended systematic improvement of the quality of teaching techniques (UNESCO, 1966). Because of the overall improvement of a higher education system, higher education should assume the major role of supplying competent teachers to the institutions. The effectiveness of education, especially higher education, largely depends on the "qualifications and ability of the teaching staff in general and on the human, pedagogical, and technical qualities of the individual teachers" (p. 30).

To reform higher education with the rapidly changing landscape of contemporary knowledge structure, teachers need to be developed to re-direct university education to acquaint themselves with the changing social, economic, and cultural perspectives. Perspective curricular nature and Characteristics of the program are determined by several factors.

Based on our experience from this PGDHET program, effective contextualized strategies for developing academic programs would best fit the demand for Higher Education in Bangladesh. There still exists a huge vacuum in this higher education teacher development field. While doing this task, we had a remarkable period of intense learning, not only in the academic arena but also on a personal level. Finally, finding the complexities within the program design, we should not forget the words of Castells (2010) regarding the complex nature of today's world.

Conclusion

The analysis revealed that developing such a comprehensive program for tertiary teacher development is not an easy task, as many complexities are involved, such as the duration, vision, mission, design, and assessment guidelines during the development phases. The challenges were multifaceted and multidimensional, such as fitting the program content to be applicable across the teaching disciplines and ensuring its suitability for those who are teaching face-to-face, making it flexible, and creating an online learning environment. Due to the existence of uncertainty in the development process, a flexible and rational model of curriculum design called a measurement-driven curriculum was incorporated. A broad-based approach to tertiary teacher education has been considered rather than a narrower approach to teacher training. This approach was justified by examining the need for higher education reform to provide a more inclusive and high-quality education. Therefore, this program employed a diverse area of teacher education, incorporating the view of developing professional academic skills for supporting and supervising student learning and effective teaching. The results showed that the program development initiative had one major

and two supplementary focus areas that were interconnected and interdependent. The primary goal was to produce or transform faculty members to meet the needs of the twenty-first century, while secondary goals included ensuring teaching excellence across disciplines, ensuring quality learning for diverse learners, and developing professionalism. This initiative was perceived as a remedy to one of the major weaknesses of the Bangladesh Tertiary Education system, which was not having any organized teacher education program. It is expected that such experiences would be significant for many developing countries in developing teacher education diplomas to enhance the quality of university faculty members. In fact, the entire task, from idea generation to implementation, was an epic journey with new challenges, possibilities, and interpretations.

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Notes on Contributors

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