Bangladesh's Journey towards SDG 4: A Review of Progresses

Wahida Akther

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Leading University, Sylhet-3112, Bangladesh.

Email address:

wahidaala@gmail.com (W. Akther)
* Corresponding author: wahidaala@gmail.com (W. Akther)

Abstract: SDGs represent a bold new agenda with 17 goals and 169 targets to end poverty, fight inequality, tackle the adverse effects of climate change and ensure a sustainable future for all across the earth. SDG 4 is one of 17 Global Goals that make up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Education is one of the most essential and powerful vehicles for the development of human potential as well as socioeconomic growth of any country. Quality education leads to significant sustainable development which is beneficial for individuals, communities and countries. The main objective of the present study is to show the progresses of SDG 4 in Bangladesh. Descriptive research method was employed, and mostly secondary data were used to conduct the study. It has found that Bangladesh has made significant progresses in achieving SDG 4 at every stages of education – distribution of free text book from preprimary to secondary level; increasing student enrolment by reducing dropout rates in primary & secondary level; transition rate from primary to secondary level; increasing access to education at all levels; increasing gender parity index; compulsory ICT education from class six's to twelve; implementation of several programs/project for enhancing quality education as well as reducing the discrimination in education system etc. Finally, the study recommends some suggestions to continue and boost up the progresses of SDG 4.

Keywords: SDGs, SDG 4, Education, Progress, Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also known as Agenda 2030 provide a comprehensive vision and framework for all population across the world. They encourage transformational change within societies and economies in a more sustainable direction and seek to incorporate a balance among the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental). The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices at present, to improve life in a sustainable way, for future generations of world countries. They provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries of the world to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges (Khaled, 2018). The vision and proposed activities relating to education under the 2030 Agenda, popularly known as the Education 2030 Agenda, has been recognized as SDG 4. The aims of SDG 4 are to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". A number of targets and indicators of quality education are broadly included in SDG 4. It has seven targets about what is to be done and three means for achieving those targets. The targets cover primary to tertiary education, technical and vocational education, inclusiveness and equity in education, skills development of adults and youth, literacy and numeracy of population, quality of education and teachers as well as scope, provisions and character of education services that address the targets. It is recognized that the success of other SDGs is also linked with this goal. Bangladesh government has indicated its commitment to the SDG 4 and has set up a high-level coordination mechanism to work on aligning the goals and targets into the national development plans and programs such as including the five-year plans and the sectoral programs. Government has been implementing certain programs/projects, policies and strategies which contribute to achieving the education sector targets. As a result of all these initiatives, a significant progress has been made in SDG 4 over the couple of year despite various challenges remain there. Also, the successful attainments of SDG 4 will help us to accelerate the path of development.

2. Objectives of the study

Objectives of the study are as follows:

- To show the progress of SDG 4 in Bangladesh.
- To give a brief overview of government initiatives for achieving SDG 4 in Bangladesh
- To recommend some suggestions to continue and boost up the progresses of SDG 4.

3. Methodology

Basically, secondary data were used to conduct the study. The main objective of the paper is to show the progresses of SDG 4 covering the period of 2016 to 2020. Descriptive research method has used to attain the objectives. Aligning with this perception, relevant data were collected from secondary sources. To collect secondary data, a number of government reports, frameworks, guidelines, publications of Ministry/Division; published statistical data from reliable and recognized sources were reviewed. Also, several books, articles, website and some newspapers etc. were collected and reviewed to complete the study.

4. Literature Review

Education is a fundamental human right and closely related to the realization of other rights. It is like a public good for all individual and base for human fulfillment, peace, sustainable development, gender inequality and responsible global citizenship. Education is considered as a key contributor of development and acts as a vehicle for reducing inequality and scaling down poverty. Access to quality education at all levels is an essential condition for accelerating progress towards the achievement of other sustainable development goals (Tang, 2015).

Despite various challenges, the education sector in Bangladesh made notable progress in last decade. The progress in the education sector has been possible due to the concerted efforts by the government, the non-government organizations (NGO) and the development partners (CRI, 2019). The country takes pride as one of the early starters by completing all groundwork for implementing the SDGs. Government has taken several measures through embedding SDG into the 7FYP (2016-2020), 8FYP (2021-2025) and the PP (2021- 2041); accomplishing mapping of ministries/agencies by targets; preparing action plans for all relevant ministries/agencies; and putting in place the needed monitoring and evaluation framework (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report, 2020).

Bangladesh is committed to the 2030 SDG agenda including SDG4. The country - with two ministries for the education sector, namely, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) has one of the largest centralized education systems in the world with around 40 million students, 200,000 educational institutions, and a million teachers and other education workforce members (ESA, 2020). The country has made much development in increasing student enrolment by reducing dropout rates in primary education sector in the last couple of years. Physical and educational facilities of primary educational institutions across the country have improved over time, including space of the classroom, sanitation and drinking water facilities as well as educational qualifications of teachers. Gender disparity in access and participation has been eliminated (Shahidul Hasan, 2018).

Government's policies and strategies on education have a great impact on education. Several initiatives such as food/cash for girls at the primary level and stipend & tuition programs at the secondary level has taken by the government to increase physical access to schools. These endeavors bring reforms in the education sector for expanding enrolment and improving the quality and governance. The government has approved the National Education Policy 2010 with the objective to promote humanity among the future citizens of the country. It also assists the students to grow as creative, rational and tolerant to others' opinion and liberal who will be able to lead the country towards inclusive development and progress (SDGs, 2021). Bangladesh has made spectacular success in improving access to education. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in 2021 in primary education has reached 105.32% and net enrolment rate (NER) 97.42% in 2021. In secondary education, GER reached 75.52% while NER was 70.25. As well as GER was 48.79 % and NER was found 40.54% in Higher Secondary level. Transition rate from primary to secondary level was 93.53%. Bangladesh has already achieved gender parity for educational access in both primary and secondary education. The number of out of school children has been continuously decreasing both in absolute and relative value. Also the technical and vocational education is a growing subsector and the gender parity index (GPI) was 0.37 in 2021. The participation in tertiary education is also increasing. GPI in tertiary level was 0.80 in 2021 (BANBEIS, 2021). Higher Secondary Education (HSE) grades 11–12 provide an important bridge between secondary and tertiary education in Bangladesh. HSE enrollment rose at an annual compound growth rate of 5 percent between 2016 and 2020—much higher than the population growth rate (USAID, 2021)

According to United Nations "Obtaining a quality education underpins a range of fundamental development drivers. Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels, particularly for women and girls" (SDG Tracker). Bangladesh has gained unprecedented success in girls' education. Several measures have been taken at the national level to promote gender equality in education. Girls' stipend program, separate wash block, introducing curriculum

to promote health and hygiene of girls' as well as free education up to secondary level in public institutions etc help to achieved gender equity in primary and secondary level (CRI, 2019).

Bangladesh is on its way to become a Middle Income Country (MIC) in 2026 and will become a developed country by 2041. Without forming a pathways towards creating a knowledge-based economy and society then the country will not become a developed country by 2041(Shahidul Hasan, 2018).

There is growing international recognition of education for sustainable development (ESD) as an integral element of quality education and a key contributor for SDGs. Bangladesh has also focused on ESD which can help to reduce the negative impacts due to developments through creating the sustainability competencies among the learners. This education helps the people to take proper decision for environmental balance, economic well-beings and social justice for present and future generations. It makes interactive, learning outcome settings and learner-centered teaching experiences for the learners as well as includes the issues as climate change, poverty and sustainable consumption practices in the curricula. It assists to the individuals for achieving SDGs through their competencies and necessary knowledge on transformational and understandable perception on sustainable development (Akther, 2019).

Quality is a major concern at all levels of education from primary level to successive levels of education (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report, 2018). Education is refers as a character building process, enhancing one's personality and making him/her rational, capable, responsive and intelligent. Teachers have more responsibilities in forming the character of the students. Thus, the role of the teacher in the society is vital for its development. The quality of education depends on the quality of teachers (Kulshrestha & Pandey, 2013).

Now it is high time to focus on ensuring quality education at all levels and promoting skill-based education to face the challenges of 21st century and meet the requirements of the competitive job market. To ensure quality basic education, government has implemented a number of programs- developments and distribution of learning materials, capacity building of teachers and construction & reconstruction of educational institutions.

5. In Bangladesh SDG 4 Emphasizes on: (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report, 2018)

- Achieving proficiency in primary and lower secondary education
- Ensuring access of both boys and girls to quality early childhood development and pre-primary education
- Ensuring access to quality technical, vocational and tertiary education
- Eliminating disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable population especially persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.
- Ensuring substantial increase in skilled adult and youth population which will required for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- Achieving literacy and numeracy by all youths and substantial proportion of adults.
- Providing skills and education to promote sustainable development and facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive.

6. Government Initiatives

A holiday called the Textbook Celebration Day occurs annually on January 1 to promote better education in Bangladesh since 2010. Students from preprimary to secondary level (including- pre-primary, primary, ebtedayee, secondary, dakhil and technical) are eligible to receive free books on this day. Government has taken initiative to print textbooks for ethnic minority children so that they can learn with their own mother tongue. From 2017, books has been written and distributed in various ethnic languages - Chakma, Marma, Garo, Tripura and Sadri (DPE - APSC, 2021). Government has been implementing certain programs/projects which contribute to achieving the education sector targets. To achieve the targets of SDG 4, the government has implementing various programs such as the primary education development program (PEDP) in different phases; stipend program; reaching-out-of school children (ROSC) project and the school feeding program in poverty-prone areas as well as the second chance education program and basic literacy program in all 64 districts of the country (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report, 2020). Now the PEDP 4 for 2018-2023 is running to improve the quality at all levels of the primary education subsector.

Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP) has been adopted for the period 2017/18 to 2022/23 to support secondary education covering grades 6-12 as well as post secondary,12 grade, technical and vocational education & training. Long term vision and framework of governments for developing secondary education has two major objectives: extension of basic education to eight years; restructuring and improving the outcome of secondary education. Under the secondary education sector investment program (SESIP), the MOE has establishing ICT learning in all districts of the country (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report, 2020). Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (SEQAEP) & Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI) project aim to increase the participation of Bangladeshi youths in the educational system as well as to overcome the barriers of education and reduce inefficiencies in the system (Update on SDG Goal 4).

The expansion of the country's technical and vocational education aims to transform and promote skill-based education among the young population. The National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF) has been adopted to broaden TVET. Under the leadership of MoPME and MoE, a strategic framework and Action Plan on SDG 4 has also been prepared.

The government's plan is to expand and enhance the scope and quality of higher education in the country. Projects such as the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) is being implemented to support quality improvement initiatives at the tertiary level in both public and private universities (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report, 2018). Government has taken the initiative to established public universities in every district and has passed the Cross Border Higher Education (CBHE) Act 2014 to facilitate permanent campus establishment of the world standard private universities in Bangladesh. To encourage the research based educational environment in higher educational institutions, an Academic Innovation Fund is operational. Further, the government has taken initiatives to increase the technological skills and the Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN) has been established. For ensuring the quality of higher education, the National Accreditation Council Act has been enacted.

The ICT education is already made compulsory in secondary education. To promote information and communications technology (ICT) for education, government has taken several initiatives - equipping the classrooms with audio-visual aids, including multimedia classrooms and digital smart boards, equipping teachers through training to ensure interactive classes and on using e-books and e-learning materials. As a result, it has bought significant changes in the field of education.

Investment in education and multi-faceted reforms are vital to make huge skilled youth force   for ensuring employment in the job market both at local and international level. The government has targeted to increase allocation through the 8FYP. However, the Perspective Plan 2041 (PP2041) set ambitious targets of increasing government spending in education to 4% of GDP by FY2031 and 5% of GDP by FY2041. Following those targets, government spending is targeted to raise 3.5% of GDP by FY2025 (Rahman, 2021).

7. Progresses

Through the initiatives from government and development partners'   Bangladesh has made a significant progress in SDG 4 over the years (2016-2020). Schooling completion rates, pre-school enrolment rate, literacy rates and educational facilities are improving. Gender parity in literacy has already been achieved and is expected to be maintained up to 2030.

Education is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and SDG 4 also recognized as an impartial goal. Education in Bangladesh has three major stages- primary, secondary and higher educations. Primary level education is provided through two major institutional arrangements - general and madrasha, while secondary education has three major streams: general, technical-vocational and madrasha. Higher education, also, has 3 streams: general (inclusive of pure and applied science, arts, business and social science), madrasha and technology education (BANBEIS, 2020).

Here, the Education System is composed of pre primary and primary (Grades 1–5), middle or junior secondary (Grades 6–8), and secondary (Grades 9–10) levels, followed by higher secondary education (Grades 11–12) and tertiary/higher education levels. It is that education at all levels can be a powerful tool in promoting sustainable development. Bangladesh is performing well and is on the track towards attaining many targets of the SDG 4. The progresses of SDG 4 of respective years are shown below:

7.1. Primary Education:

In Bangladesh the primary education (Preprimary to Grade V) system is very large, catering to 20.09 million students through 25 types of providers. Among them the government primary schools alone covered 13.47 million (67.09%) students (BANBEIS, 2021). The country has achieved near universal enrolment of primary education with gender parity index (GPI) value higher than one. The progresses of primary level were as follows:

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. of Primary Schools (Covered by APSC)	126615	133901	134147	129258	133002
Teachers (Include all teacher from 2016-18, since 2019 only GPS teachers are included)	548201	574001	685400	354722	367480
Total Enrolled Students (Grade 1-5)	18602988	17251350	17338100	16336096	17603839
Total Pre- Primary Enrollment	3129535	3667851	3578384	3786241	3947852
Total Enrollment (Pre-Primary –Grade 5)	21732523	20919201	20916484	20122337	21551691
Gross Enrollment Rate (GER in %)	112.12	111.70	114.23	109.49	104.90
Net Enrollment Rate (NER in %)	97.96	97.97	97.85	97.74	97.81
Dropout Rate (%)	19.2	18.8	18.6	17.9	17.2
Completion Rate (%)	80.8	81.2	81.4	82.1	82.8

Source: APSC 2019 & 2020, BANBEIS 2020, 2021, BBS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

7.2. Secondary Education:

In a world where technology is moving rapidly and where competitiveness requires a diversified and highly trained workforce, it has become imperative to pay greater attention to secondary education. There has been substantial improvement in enrolment of girls and boys in secondary education with girls exceeding boys. The transition of primary completers entering secondary education is around 95 percent (ESA, 2020). GER in secondary level was reported at 75.52 % in 2021, dropout rate was 35.66 and completion rate was 64.34. The GER, dropout rate and completion rate in the same year were 48.79; 21.14 and78.86 respectively in higher secondary level (BANBEIS, 2021). Key performance indicators of secondary level were as follows:

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of institutions	20449	20467	20465	20660	20849
Teachers	243553	243880	234165	246845	252505
Total Enrollment	10184364	10330695	10475100	10349323	10252126
Gross Enrollment Rate (GER in %)	74.23	74.64	75.32	75.62	76.38
Net Enrollment Rate (NER in %)	67.84	68.78	69.38	67.30	71.89
Dropout Rate (%)	38.30	37.81	37.62	36.73	35.76
Completion Rate (%)	61.70	62.19	62.38	63.27	64.24

Source: BBS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 & BANBEIS 2020

7.3. Technical and Vocational Education:

Over population is a barrier for economic growth of our country, but if the people are trained and are more productive, they may not a burden instead a source of skilled person power. They can perform their task efficiently with best professionalism and can also contribute for national development by participating national and global labor market. Technical and vocational education and training raises the productivity of learners and also increases their lifetime earning capacity (Alam, 2008). Taking the rising demand for skilled workers in both national and global markets into consideration, more focus for TVET has to be a top priority. This is increasingly a growing subsector. Types of institutions involved are: Polytechnic, Technical school and college, Glass and ceramic, Graphic Arts, Survey Institutes, TTC, Textile institutes, Textile vocational, Agricultural training institute, Marine Technology, SSC Vocational (independent) HSC Vocational/BM (independent), Medical Technology, Medical Assistant Training School (MATS), SSC Vocational (attached) and HSC business management (attached).

Total institutions were 7661 and GPI was 0.37 in 2021 (BANBEIS, 2021). Following table shows the statistics of total institutions, teachers and students during the year 2016-20.

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of institutions	5897	5897	6865	7052	7259
Teachers	33389	34716	50991	53684	54028
Total Enrollment	875270	891964	1067484	1100177	1118334

Source: BBS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 & BANBEIS 2019, 2020

7.4. College Education:

The institutions offering post higher secondary education are included in college education. The categories of colleges are - Intermediate Colleges, Degree Colleges, Honors Colleges and Masters Colleges. The total institution involved in college education has been increasing and majority (85.45 %) was privately managed. In 2021 total number of colleges was 4729, total number of teachers was 137225 and total enrollment was 4736962 and GPI was 1.01 (BANBEIS, 2021). Following table shows the statistics of total institutions, teachers and students during the year 2016-20.

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of institutions	4238	4419	4495	4551	4699
Teachers	117337	120934	123518	127766	128641
Total Enrollment	3767784	3872960	4278441	4385210	4635121

Source: BBS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 & BANBEIS 2019, 2020

7.5. University Education:

The Government is giving top most priority on quality education and research to build the young generation in facing the challenges of the 21st century. At present, the scope of higher education has significantly expanded. The Government has been working for upgradation, expansion and onward advancement of higher education keeping goals of Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report 1974, National Education Policy 2010, Private University Act 2010 and the Rio 20+Conference's Sustainable Development Plan. Various types of scholarships/fellowship, research projects for conducting research at university level provides by the government and UGC to increase research output of the country. UGC Digital Library (UDL) has been set up through BDREN Trust for establishing linkage among the universities home and abroad. Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) has been set up to ensure the quality of higher education at university level. The Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) Act-2017 has been passed in the National Parliament to develop quality culture in higher education. The Council is expected to play an effective role in university quality management within a

short span of time. The Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF) and Outcome Based Education (OBE) Curriculum has been formulated and implemented by UGC for enhancing quality of higher education, as well as designing time-befitting programs/courses and implementing those ones coupled with taking the tertiary education to global standard through preparing Strategic Plan for Higher Education (SPHE) (UGC, 2021). The number of country's public and private universities has stood at 160, female students' percentage was 36.30% and GPI was 0.57 in 2021 (BANBEIS, 2021). Following table shows the statistics of total number of public and private universities, teachers and students during the year 2016-20:

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of institutions	132	132	143	151
Teachers	28643	29819	30630	31594
Total Enrollment*	3487566	3940470	4456137	4434551

Source: UGC Report-2019, 2018. BANBEIS 2019, 2020. BBS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020
*Including numbers of students of affiliated and constituent colleges/ madrasah

7.6. Madrasah Education:

Madrasah education is a large subsector of education in Bangladesh. This is popularly known as religious stream and quite distinct from the general stream. Ebtedayee madrasah offers primary equivalent while post primary madrasah covers Dakhil, Alim, Fazil and Kamil; which are equivalent to secondary, Higher Secondary, Degree and Masters Education of general stream. In 2021 total number of post primary madrasah was 9291, total number of teachers was 110901 and total enrollment was 2657252 (BANBEIS, 2021). Following table shows the number of institutions, teachers and enrollment of post primary madrasah for the year 2016-20.

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of institutions	9314	9303	9294	9278	9305
Teachers	113368	113761	109918	113577	112691
Total Enrollment	2460305	2453364	2477962	2491268	2553439

Source: BBS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, BANBEIS 2019, 2020

7.7. Teacher Education:

Teachers have more responsibilities in molding the character of the students. Thus, the role of the teacher in the society is vital for its development. Quality of education depends on the quality of teachers. Teachers' education is provided by seven types of educational institutions. These are: Primary Training Institutes (PTIs), Teachers Training College (TTC), Technical Teacher Training College (TTTC), Vocational Teacher Training Institute (VTTI), Physical Education College, Higher Secondary Teacher Training Institute (HSTTI) and Bangladesh Madrasahs Teacher Training Institute (BMTTI). In 2021 total number of institutions was 209, total number of teachers was 2952 and total enrollment was 33996.The GPI was 0.77 (BANBEIS, 2021). Following table shows the number of institutions, teachers and enrollment for the year 2016-20.

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of institutions	215	216	216	216	223
Teachers	2684	2700	2259	3060	3132
Total Enrollment	34768	35071	24746	35059	32193

Source: BBS 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, BANBEIS 2019, 2020

7.8. Professional Education:

Professional Education includes 13 types of institutions. These are Medical University, Medical College, Dental College, Nursing and Midwifery College, Homeopathic College, Unani/Ayurvedic, Nursing institute, Health Technology, Textile Technology, Leather Technology, Law and Art Colleges, Agriculture College and Library Science. In 2021 total number of institutions was 821, total number of teachers was 17176 and total enrollment was 191409. The gender parity index was 1.68 (BANBEIS, 2021). Total number of institutions, teachers and enrollment for the year 2016-20 were as follows:

Title	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of institutions	596	877	425	471	741
Teachers	8422	10816	9267	14545	15803
Total Enrollment	136122	168469	121488	143553	178928

Source: BBS 2017, 22018, 2019, 2020, BANBEIS 2019, 2020

7.9. Literacy Rate of Population:

Government has been implementing education programs targeting to adults both male and female to allow them to come out of the vicious cycle of illiteracy, poor skills and low income. The adult literacy program has focused on- providing basic literacy skills & basic literacy with skills development linked to livelihood. Besides government, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations are actively engaged in running adult literacy programs in the country (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report 2018). Literacy rate of the population has increased significantly from 2016 to 2020. The differences between male

and female adult literacy rates have narrowed down significantly over time and indicating that Bangladesh has managed to improve access to education for female. Adults literacy rate of the year 2016 -20 were as follows:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Adults 15 years +	72.3	72.9	73.9	74.7	74.9
Male	75.2	75.7	76.7	77.4	77.82
Female	69.5	70.1	71.2	71.9	72.0

Source: BBS 2020, SDGs Progress Report-2018, 2020

7.10. The Gender Parity Index (GPI):

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is defined as the ratio of female to male enrolment rates, gross or net. When GPI has a value of one, female enrolment and male enrolment rates are equal. A value of less /more than one indicates that proportionately less /more females has enrolled than males. GPI for the year 2016-20 were:

Level of Education	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Primary	1.06		1.075	1.04	1.09
Secondary	1.18	1.16	1.19	1.17	1.22
Higher Secondary	0.98	0.91	0.93	0.94	1.02
Tertiary	0.67	0.71	0.70	0.74	0.75
Technical	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.34	0.37

Source: BANBEIS 2019, 2020, SDG Progress Report 2020

7.11. Education Finance:

Finance is considered as blood of all development work. The share of domestic financing has increased in the education sector; and Bangladesh has succeeded in raising the education budget in absolute amount every year (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report 2020). Following table shows the share of education in national budget and GDP.

Year	National Budget	Education Budget	% of Education in National Budget	% of GDP in Education
2015 - 16	295100	31618	10.71	2.82
2016 - 17	340604	49019	14.39	3.04
2017 - 18	400266	50440	12.60	3.03
2018 - 19	464573	53549	11.53	3.02
2019 - 20	523190	53821	10.29	

Source: BANBEIS 2019, 2020

8. Recommendations

Education is a process by which the physical and mental capabilities of learners' are developed in an objective way. It is much crucial for human being as well as every kind of development. As a vehicle for development, education is a key contributor to reducing inequality and scaling down poverty. Thus access to quality education at all levels is an essential condition for accelerating progress towards the achievement of other sustainable development goals. The study recommends the following suggestions:

❖ Ensure and encourage active participation of NGOs and other civil society organizations in country's education delivery system. For successful achievement of SDG 4 only the effort from government is not actually enough; it requires - joint actions from multi-stakeholder partnership, civil society organizations as well as corporate sector to achieve the targets.

❖ Quality is a major concern at all levels of education beginning at the primary level which spills over to successive levels of education. Around half of the students at the end of lower secondary levels were unable to achieve the minimum proficiency in reading Bangla and mathematics and less than 20 per cent students achieved the minimum proficiency in English reading (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report 2018). Along with increasing the quantity, focused should be given to increase quality the proficiency of learners'.

❖ In 2021, the GPI for secondary education, higher secondary education, technical education and tertiary education were 1.21, 1.01, 0.37 and 0.80 respectively (BANBEIS, 2021). Initiative should be taken to increase the GPI of technical and tertiary level.

❖ Increase the collaboration among the secondary and higher secondary institutions, universities in domestic and international level which increase the knowledge share and increase the research output. Establish linkage with university and corporate sector to overcome the challenges of job market for employable graduates.

❖ Private sector is an important factor in the education sector of Bangladesh —from pre-primary to tertiary level. Lack of coordination has existed among the public and private education system. Greater coordination and systematic approaches are needed between these two to achieve the SDG 4.

❖ Bangladesh is yet to achieve the international benchmark of 15-20 per cent of the national budget for education and 4-6 per cent of GDP for education (SDGs Bangladesh Progress Report 2020). If the government doesn't invest more in education, many of our ambitions' will remain unfulfilled.

❖ The non-state actors, specifically NGOs, are playing a significant role in implementing SDG4. The spirit of SDGs is to "leave no one behind." The NGOs are working mostly to address the left-behind groups like those living in geographically hard-to-reach areas, deprived and underprivileged communities and physically-challenged people.

❖ Around thousands of NGOs in Bangladesh have different types of education and skill training programs. Ensure accountability and transparency in carrying out programs/ projects by NGOs.

❖ Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Secondary and Higher Education Division, Technical and Madrasah Division, Economic Relations Divisions jointly responsible for Implementing SDG 4. Develop strong institutional support and coordination among these responsible authorities for smooth progress of SDG 4.

❖ To achieve the targets of SDG 4, the government needs to establish good governance at educational institutions and ensure accountability and curb corruption in this sector.

❖ At every stage of education there remain some challenges i.e., Poverty, lack of quality, lack of equal emphasis on each sector of education, insufficiency of education institutions and education materials; discrimination in the method of education system, inadequate proportion of education budget, non-availability of education loan, loss due to natural disaster etc (Akther, 2022). Government and other development partners will take initiative to overcome these challenges and make fruitful action plan to achieve the targets of SDG 4.

8. Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the SDGs is the most important that of "Transforming the World". Lesson from history in the development of countries and societies has shown practically that education is central to achieving these goals. We cannot reform our country and achieve the other SDGs without achieving its goal 4 on education. From the very beginning, Bangladesh is showing strong commitment to achieve the targets of Agenda 2030. SDG 4 is the heart of these agenda. Education has been recognized as an investment not only for creating human capital, but also for inducing social changes and promoting overall development of a nation. The Government of Bangladesh takes tremendous initiative to achieve the targets of SDG 4. Through joint efforts from government and development partners' the country will boost up the progress of SDG 4 and also able to overcome the challenges remains there.

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