

School of Design and the Built Environment

**Integrating Folk Values into Primary Education in Bangladesh:
A Sustainability Perspective**

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0009-0004-3452-1223

**This thesis is presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of
Curtin University**

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Declaration of originality

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own research work. The thesis contains five papers which have been published. The papers are co-authored with Prof. Dora Marinova, Dr Amzad Hossain and Dr Abul Hossain.

Other assistance received in preparing this thesis has been acknowledged as appropriate. I also certify that the thesis has not been submitted for any degree in any other university.

The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee: Approval Number HRE2019-0742.

Saria Tasnim

5 August 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Curtin University works across hundreds of traditional lands and custodial groups in Australia and with First Nations people around the globe. I wish to pay my deepest respects to their ancestors and members of their communities, past, present, and their emerging leaders. Our passion and commitment to work with all Australians and peoples from across the world, including our First Nations peoples, are at the core of the work we do, reflective of our institution's values and commitment to our role as leaders in the Reconciliation space in Australia.

The spirit of this acknowledgement holds true with regard to local and traditional communities in Bangladesh as well, where I have lived and worked.

Acknowledgement

In the name of Allah (SWT) most kind, most merciful, I express my solemn heartfelt gratitude to my creator who has given me the privilege to achieve this honourable academic accomplishment. I would cordially like to bestow my sincere gratitude to those individuals, without whom, this thesis wouldn't be in fruition.

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Abstract

The PhD study's focus is on integration of folklore in primary education as a means to rediscover and revive the traditional values and environmental and social stewardship in Bangladesh for achieving the UN-declared Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its main objective is to identify and highlight the aspects of folklore that are relevant to primary education and teaching practices in Bangladesh. In order to achieve this, the following aspects are investigated within the context of Bangladesh: where to find traditional folklore; how to integrate folklore into the formal educational system at the foundation level; and what initiatives could be undertaken in primary education for achieving the SDGs.

Completed as a PhD by compilation (publication), the thesis comprises five fully refereed published journal publications which present a cohesive argument in favour of embedding folklore in the primary education curriculum of Bangladesh. It starts with explaining the folk values relevant to sustainability, such as simplicity, self-reliance, respect for nature and resilience. Then it offers an analysis from a sustainability perspective of Bengali proverbs and sayings and outlines their potential for contributing towards children's moral education in Bangladesh. Based on a survey and detailed interviews with primary school teachers, with 140 respondents and 12 participants respectively, the study identified the gap between potential folklore and its use in the school curriculum in Bangladesh highlighting the lack of useful resources to teach sustainability in the classroom. Using the example of two popular Bengali childlore stories, the research then develops a new pedagogical framework through a scaffolding and mapping approach. The premise at the core of this theoretical framework is that an interdisciplinary approach and different pedagogical tools could help build the bridge towards implementing sustainability in education as well as in society.

The study concludes that integrating the respective folkloric traditions into primary education can inform the achievement of the SDGs. It concludes that the integration of folklore into the primary education curriculum of Bangladesh can help rediscover the roots for revitalising the country's culture of self-reliance, traditional values and ecological sustainability.

List of publications included as part of the thesis.

The following five refereed published journal papers form the basis of this thesis and are provided as appendices following the introductory segment, referred to as the exegesis. Copyright statements for the published materials can be found in the Appendix.

Publication 1

Tasnim, S., Hossain, A. (2021). Folk values for beginners: A sustainability perspective from Bangladesh. *International Journal of Information Systems and Social Change*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJISSC.2021010101>

Publication 2

Tasnim, S. (2020). The rhetoric of Bengali proverbs and sayings on conventional moral education for children in Bangladesh: Sustainability perspective. *Green University Review of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 1-21.

Publication 3

Tasnim, S., Hossain, A., Marinova, D. (2021). Supporting the sustainable development journey of Bangladesh with folk values in primary education. *Green University Review of Social Sciences*, 7(1/2), 1-21.
<https://doi.org/10.3329/gurss.v7i1-2.62678>

Publication 4

Tasnim, S., Marinova, D. (2022). Sustainability and folklore in primary education in Bangladesh: An empirical study of teachers. *Green University Review of Social Sciences*, 8(1), 23-50.

Publication 5

Tasnim, S. Hossain, A., Marinova, D. (2023). How can stories in primary education support sustainable development in Bangladesh? *Sustainability* 15(16), 12620
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Co-authors' Statements

Publication 1

Tasnim, S., Hossain, A. (2021). Folk values for beginners: A sustainability perspective from Bangladesh. *International Journal of Information Systems and Social Change*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJISSC.2021010101>

	Conception and Design	Acquisition of Data and method	Data Conditioning and manipulation	Analysis and Statistical Method	Interpretation and Discussion	Total % contribution
Co-author 1 Saria Tasnim	75	80	70	80	70	75
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Co-author 2 <u>Amzad Hossain</u>	25	20	30	20	30	25
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Author Saria Tasnim	100	100	100	100	100	100
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Co-author 1 Saria Tasnim	65	70	60	60	65	64
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Publication 4

Tasnim, S., Marinova, D. (2022). Sustainability and Folklore in Primary education in Bangladesh: An empirical study of teachers. Green University Review of Social Sciences, 8(1), 23-50

	Conception and Design	Acquisition of Data and method	Data Conditioning and manipulation	Analysis and Statistical Method	Interpretation and Discussion	Total % contribution
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Publication 5

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Co-author 1 Acknowledgment: I acknowledge that these represent my contribution to the above research output Signature						
Co-author 2 <u>Amzad Hossain</u>	10	10	10	15	15	13
Co-author 2 Acknowledgment: I acknowledge that these represent my contribution to the above research output Signature						
Co-author 3 Dora <u>Marinova</u>	25	20	30	25	20	23
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1. Introduction to the research and its contributions

Starting with a short reasoning of the background of this study, the chapter focusses on the major factors which have shaped the research. It also states the research question and objectives of the study that guide the investigation.

1.1 Prologue

In 2000, I joined the education sector in Bangladesh as a government primary school teacher. My desire was to emphasize on instilling morals and values to my pupils that I inherited from my father who happened to be a teacher himself. During my 5-year teaching span, I experienced how difficult primary education was and that teachers' training and ineffective conventional curriculum have failed to keep the interest of the young students in the classroom. I initiated the introduction of unconventional teaching techniques in my classroom, wherever possible, by using stories, rhymes, proverbs, sayings, songs or pictures to create more student engagement as well as activities for children to comprehend the lessons relating them with real-life scenarios. I received an exceptional response from the students, as my first emancipation from the cliché of the teaching process. Students not only achieved significant success in their academic results but also changed their attitudes in daily life and towards the overall school environment. That year, the school where I taught was recognized as the School of the Year.

However, I also projected that the personal experience, willingness and effort of a singular teacher wouldn't be able to profoundly change the existing condition unless the change is adopted and institutionalized in the mainstream education system. Migration to Australia ceded me the opportunity to work on my long-cherished dream. In the next two decades since 2000, various development plans have been adopted and implemented in the primary education system in Bangladesh, including curriculum reformation, increasing the number of schools and student enrolment and attendance, infrastructural development and teacher training. Nevertheless, there is still a big void in the important purpose of education to create values and develop positive attitudes towards other people and the natural environment which is described as educating for sustainability.

1.2 Introduction and overview

When we think about leaving in a 'livable world' for current and future generations, it is not only about infrastructure, roads, architecture, buildings and bridges as well as protection of natural resources. It is also about lifestyle, values, wisdom, tradition and culture. Education for sustainability, or sustainable education or sustainability education¹, is considered to be the primary requirement for sustainable development and management of the resources of this planet. One of the objectives of sustainable education is to develop life skills, conquer knowledge, build the right attitudes and

¹ We consider the following expressions synonymous as they convey similar ideas: education for sustainability, sustainable education, sustainability education and education in sustainability.

values in students to transform the society towards sustainability, that is to make it more prosperous while maintaining environment health and social cohesion (Noor, 2010). The most important steppingstone in education is that in the primary school. It is high time to think and talk about primary education, as unless we introduce and safeguard sustainably livable values in the classroom and school environment with appropriate educational tools, the idea of creating and integrating sustainability for a better world would be incomplete (Tasnim, 2017).

Bangladesh is one of the countries at the forefront and with the foremost stakeholders to implement and achieve the UN declared Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (Tasnim et al., 2022). Resilience in life, climate change, sustainable consumption incorporated with value education from a sustainability perspective are considered to be the major goals for the country amongst others. Reinforcing values, recognizing traditional knowledge and lifestyles of the respective nations are a prime demand for the successful achievement of these goals. This research is substantively motivated by UNESCO's assertions and Sterling's (2004) recommendation that Education for Sustainability (EfS) should be based on a 'values-laden system' which aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its 4.7 target.

According to UN (2015), SDG 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' has 10 target areas to consider. The 7th target seeks 'by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development' (UN, 2015).

A most striking observation when examining SDG 4.7, is the critical initiative that aims 'by 2030 [to] ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development' (UN Envision 2030, Goal 4). The acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for sustainable development is crucial for the future of our planet and its inhabitants. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes the importance of SDG4.7 in promoting sustainable development and global citizenship. The organization has also highlighted the need to "foster engaged, active, and critical learners who act for sustainable development" (SDGs Knowledge Platform, 2021). To achieve this goal, it is essential to introduce sustainability values and include values deliberation in the education system, starting from the primary stage. By doing so, we can ensure that the future generations are well equipped and prepared with the knowledge and necessary skills to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles. For example, they would understand that the use of finite resources for their daily needs depends on being able to sustainably manage them.

Human values play a significant role in determining how people use these resources. Social justice is an essential aspect in educating young people about sustainability and the role of human values in achieving it.

Although the need for sustainability education is relatively new and associated with economic development since industrialization, many of the values embedded in traditional wisdom and practices have at their core social well-being and the health of the natural environment. My intension with this research is to explore 'folk values' as a means of encouraging sustainability, including in regular education and everyday lifestyle to preserve traditional wisdom and best practices. Therefore, supporting the UN declared SDGs, including SDG 4.7, with calls for achieving self-reliant sustainability in Bangladesh (Hossain, 2022) could be linked to traditional and local wisdom. This also supports the charter adopted by UNESCO in 1998 which aims to protect and preserve the threatened and deteriorating folklore and traditional cultures across the world (UNESCO, 1998). Hossain (2022) stressed that the charter emphasized not only on the necessity of collecting, preserving and studying folklore of all countries of the world but also insisted on the inclusion of folklore study in all secondary and higher education. Training in folklore studies at regional, national, and international levels was also another emphasis of the charter to which all countries, including Bangladesh, are signatories.

This study is in the vein of these calls but goes a step further by investigating how education can promote sustainability and sustainable development among young pupils by adopting a holistic and values-based approach. It argues that traditional values, such as kindness, respect, leaving no one behind, self-reliance and resilience, simple living, environmental stewardship and responsibility, can serve as a pedagogical tool and turned into 'core values for sustainability' or 'sustainability values' for enhancing social, economic, and environmental awareness and action through the use of folklore in the classroom.

1.3 Background for the research

Bangladesh is undergoing a cultural change, particularly for the young generation, due to the thriving globalization and surrendering of traditional values. Cultural shifts and changes in the moral and ethics in a country or community do not happen overnight. The presence of a harmful catalyst or the absence of beneficial factors in daily life, state management and social governance accelerate this decline (Tasnim & Hossain, 2021). Education can be such a catalyst acting against or for sustainability. There is a popular saying that "it does not require the use of atomic bombs or the use of long-range missiles to destroy a nation. It requires weakening the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by the students seeking better grades" (Prelipcean, 2020). The results of a poor education system can lead to situations where patients die in the hands of incompetent doctors; buildings collapse in the hands of incapable engineers; money is mismanaged by unapt economists and accountants; human values are lost in the education provided by untruthful religious scholars; justice is lost at the hands of fictitious lawyers and judges; governance is ineffective at the hands of poor legislators. Education,

especially moral education, and education that builds on local cultural values, is society's foundations. The indiscriminating infiltration of foreign culture in Bangladesh as a result from globalization, westernisation and associated values is shaping the next generation towards a world where the country's own culture is almost forgotten and absent.

Dr Zafar Iqbal, a well-known intellectual of Bangladesh who is a teacher, researcher, scientist and a writer stated that the current culture is "giving birth to monsters" day by day (Bangla Tribune, 10 October 2019). For students at school to university, the education system in Bangladesh does not provide the human values needed for the future to come and contributes towards a dysfunctional society. Many consider that the responsibility falls on the family or the guardians, but in fact the school and the education system have a lot to contribute. However, this is difficult to achieve when the education system ignores important human values and has no plans of actions against foreign destructive influences which introduce attitudes and behaviours encouraging profiteering and contributing to unhealthy social and ecological environments.

Below are some excerpts and headlines from the Bangladeshi media indicative of the cultural problems the country currently faces in the basic area of food:

- i) A TV report about a chemical factory producing juice and, baby foods using fake and artificial chemicals extremely dangerous for children, without supervision of the authority and license – May 21, 2019, Ekusher Chokh
- ii) The country is at high risk of long-term disease from adulterated food - May 14, 2024, Daily Kaler Kantha
- iii) Formalin being used to preserve perishable items (fish, fruits, vegetables, and juices) by the local business stakes - May 21, 2019, Ziaul Hoque
- iv) Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)'s campaign against adulterated food and fake products, 10 companies were fined 40 lakhs – May 1, 2024, Bangladesh Protidin

Similar examples can be drawn in relation to cybercrimes, healthcare provision or construction practices. Dishonesty is also rampant across the education system, including examination processes and teachers' appointments, as well as the broader society leading some to conclude that "corruption gets in the way of happiness in Bangladesh" (The Diplomat, November 4, 2023).^{xvi}

The ongoing deterioration of the natural and social environments due to anthropogenic human activities, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, widening poverty and, moral degradation, lead people to believe that the present educational systems and syllabuses are lacking effective ways to deliver education for holistic sustainability management (Harris, 2004). Sustainability education is required right from the primary level. Rhaman (2011) argues that a fundamental gap exists in developing pro-sustainability attitudes and practices, despite diverse educational efforts across the world to encourage sustainability, including the UN Decade for

Education for Sustainability which instigated the need for the development of aligned pedagogical and comprehensive contextual tools. In 2002, UNESCO (2002) called for a reorientation of education towards sustainability arguing that this required a new vision with an emphasis given on environmental awareness, values, changing people's attitudes and behaviour consistent with sustainability. Nevertheless, education for sustainability has consistently been excluded from the mainstream educational system.

Humans' helplessness in the face of nature has been experienced in time and again across the world, locally or regionally, in situation of floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclones, or erupted volcanoes amongst others. Personal and social ethics keeps people humane in any situation, even in disasters. For good example, a story was widely published in the social media during the COVID-19 pandemic: a vegetable farmer in Japan opened his garden to everyone to have what they need. Surprisingly, no one took more than one vegetable, because everyone wanted others to have their turn in this difficult time.

Folklore, as an oral tradition, has provided many ways to convey essential values that support community living and protect the environment. It encourages both lifelong learning and practices for a self-reliant socio-economic and environmental sustainability management, including in the cultural context of Bangladesh (Khan, 2016). Such an age-long tradition however has been overshadowed and marginalized by the acculturation of modern education that is dominated by globalization, urbanization, consumerism and western lifestyle (Khan, 2016). This research attempts to develop, revive and rediscover the importance of folklore as an educational tool for sustainability. Such an approach is based on simple living, leaving no one behind and environmental stewardship mapped with the generally acknowledged traditional principles of sustainability (Khan et al, 2015) and aligned with the current SDGs. It allows for modesty, kindness and resilience (Khan et al., 2015) to be potentially integrated as values and practices into primary education, by finding systematic and respectful ways for embedding folkloric traditions. Hence, the study brings together three main areas - values education, pro-sustainability attitudes and folklore, within the context of Bangladesh's primary education system.

A key requirement for the contributions of education to sustainable development is the need for a new vision for education and better understanding of its role within society (UNESCO, 2002). It should seek to empower people to assume responsibility for their actions as well as for creating a sustainable future.

Any moral and civic educations would not have proper application or justification unless they are included in the customs of a nation. Having said that, the teaching of ethics, of humanity, should not be limited to the textbook only as a tool to pass the examination, it should be reflected in real life. Rhaman (2011) points out that both formal and non-formal education are indispensable to changing people's attitudes in order to be able to assess and address sustainability concerns in a holistic manner. One of the well-known spiritual leaders Pir Mujaddidi, who is also the spiritual leader of the researcher in this study, stressed that children should be prepared and equipped with the right values and attitudes from an early age to successfully manage all aspects of life. The spiritual leader firmly believes that values education is pivotal in equipping the young generation with values to sustain themselves,

together with others, as well as their environment. He often argues in his speeches that knowledge cannot guide emotions, but values instilled in people's hearts do generate and guide emotions. Pir Mujaddi further elaborates that the head (knowledge) needs to work together with the heart (values) to attain sustainability, as sustainability is a product of science as well as values. Hence, he stresses that there are millions of people with knowledge; however, the world is still on a path of destruction and not sustainability as knowledge alone is not enough for sustaining relationships with others and with the natural environment.

Bangladesh is a country rich in folkloric traditions. As an oral tradition, folklore – the nation's collection of stories, sayings, proverbs, legends, histories, myths and music, is passed from generation to generation (Ishak et al., 2020). However, folklore use has been deterred to communicate basic concepts in the field of primary education.

The Bangladesh National Curriculum has undergone significant changes, being reformed, redesigned, and restructured nine times since the country's independence in 1971 (BANBEIS, 2023). These numerous reformations, including the activities of the National Curriculum Board, have been heavily influenced by the ruling governments and their prevailing political ideologies. This has often resulted in a curriculum that lacks a focus on folklore and folk values, which are integral to the cultural heritage of Bangladesh. The frequent changes in the education commission have created a lack of continuity and stability in the educational policies. Each new commission often brings its own set of priorities and reforms, which can disrupt the implementation of long-term educational strategies, including those aimed at integrating folk values into the curriculum. Political intervention has significantly influenced the education system with agendas and interests often dictating educational reforms, leading to inconsistencies in curriculum design. This political interference can result in the sidelining of culturally significant subjects like folklore, as they may not align with the immediate goals of the ruling parties. The inconsistency in curriculum design due to these frequent changes and political interventions has made it challenging to maintain a coherent and comprehensive educational framework. This inconsistency hampers the development of a stable and effective curriculum that can consistently include and emphasize the importance of folk values. Furthermore, there is a failing perception of the importance of folklore-centric educational resources. Many educators and policymakers do not fully recognize the value of integrating folklore into the curriculum. This lack of recognition leads to insufficient support and resources for developing and implementing folklore-based educational materials, further hindering the promotion of folk values in primary education.

Despite the importance of the traditional values in shaping the identity and moral framework of the nation, they have not been adequately incorporated into the educational system. The absence of folklore-centric education means that students miss out on learning about the rich cultural narratives, wisdom, and values that have been passed down through generations. This gap in the curriculum not only affects cultural preservation but also limits the potential for fostering a deeper understanding of sustainability and community-oriented values among students.

Integrating folklore and folk values into the national curriculum could provide a more holistic education, one that balances academic knowledge with cultural literacy. It would help students develop a stronger sense of identity and pride in their heritage, while also promoting values such as kindness, resilience, and respect for nature. Such an approach could also enhance critical thinking and creativity, as students engage with stories and traditions that offer diverse perspectives and insights.

To achieve this, it is essential for future curriculum reforms to consider the inclusion of folkloric content. Policymakers, educators, and cultural experts should collaborate to design a curriculum that reflects the cultural richness of Bangladesh. This could involve creating specific modules or integrating folklore into existing subjects, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education that honors their cultural roots and prepares them for the future.

Against this background, the study investigates how traditional values and wisdom generated from Bangladesh's rich folklore can be used as a tool to implement into formal or non-formal education at primary level in the country to help build the pro-sustainability attitudes and sustainability wisdom in future generations. Values education, related to the social, economic, and environmental facets of sustainability is required to be implanted in the hearts of the young generation as part of sustainability education and folklore can help achieve this. The thesis attempts to develop a map based on the acknowledged traditional principles of sustainability – modesty, kindness and resilience (Khan et al., 2015) that also evaluates the importance and contexts of folklore compatible with the 5-11 age group to communicate complex concepts.

The outcome of this study are five papers which investigate the possibility of implementing folk values as a means or tool in the curriculum of primary education intertwined with the content of education for sustainability. These papers form the core of the PhD by publication and the current introduction, referred also as an exegesis, sets up the context and nature of the research. It also highlights the contribution of each paper to the body of the knowledge related to integrating folk values in sustainability education at the primary level using the example of Bangladesh.

1.4 Research question and objectives

The research aimed to investigate the possibilities of implementing folk values as a potential mean or tool in the curriculum in primary education, formally or informally. It also investigates what folklore has to offer primary education for achieving sustainability perspectives, i.e. sustainable development goals reflected in self-reliant living in Bangladesh. Its research question and objectives are stated below.

Research question

This thesis aims to revitalize the depleting folklore values in primary education. Thus, the research focuses on using folklore values to help equip children with the main socio-spiritual, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development. The research question the thesis asks is: How can folklore be used in primary education to support sustainable development in Bangladesh?

Research Objectives

The major aim of the study is to discover why and how using folklore in primary education could be a possible means to support the development of sustainability values, in the context of Bangladesh. Its complementary objectives are:

- ▶ Understand why sustainability need to be communicated with primary school children, in what aspects and how;
- ▶ Examine the challenges of sustainable development in Bangladesh and the role of primary education;
- ▶ Investigate the folklore messages, including Bengali proverbs and sayings that connect to sustainability challenges;
- ▶ Identify the gaps in sustainability education and the opportunities to improve sustainability education at primary level using folklore;
- ▶ Analyze sustainability messages in selected folk stories and their appropriateness for primary school children;
- ▶ Develop a model to facilitate the use of folklore in primary school curriculum to encourage the development of sustainability values.

2. Work definition of key terms

The objectives of this chapter are to clarify the key terms used in the thesis to investigate the research question. They are referred as **‘work definition’** of the key terms in this thesis.

2.1 Defining and clarifying the key terms

This study is on a series of published refereed that investigated the significance of traditional values and wisdom for reviving sustainability, in particular the use of folkloric material in primary education. Conducting a semi-systematic or narrative literature review (Snyder, 2019) was considered the appropriate approach for this study. The key terms including the research question and objectives are determined from a broader aspect and intertwined by historical overview, state of knowledge and developing a theoretical model throughout the study. Using a strategic qualitative research methodology, this study requires a holistic and in-depth investigation of the phenomena. To understand an interpretation of the sustainability perspective of Bangladesh and to provide supporting evidence for a practical issue (Ridley, 2008), such as primary education, the methodology also employed desktop analysis of

some of the concepts identified through the semi-systematic literature review. The citations and interpretations were conceptualized from Weissberg and Buker's (1990) approach of contrasting the features and characteristics of the conceptual approach to establish a practical approach.

2.1.1 Sustainability perspective and sustainable development in the context of Bangladesh

The commonly used and widely cited in the media, Baul songs, folk stories and proverbs blueprint for sustainable Bangladesh is:

Nadi vora jol	Waters in rivers,
math vora sashay	fields full of crops,
pukur vora maas	ponds full of fish,
gohal vora garu	cows in the cowshed,
bari vora gaas	homesteads with trees,
pakhir kolotan	melodious tune of birds,
shisur koahol	uproar of children,
bauler o majheer gaan	songs of Bauls and boatpersons,
rathe banya jantu O vuther voy.	fear of wild animals and ghosts at night.

This blueprint is based on folk culture and knowledge and has transcended historical times. It is alive in people's minds and aspirations but difficult to make a reality with the current development trends in the country, particularly in urban areas.

Sustainability perspectives vary based on places, time, geographical and economic condition. Unlike the Western countries of the world, who are giving utmost importance to environmental sustainability, the latter carries a meagre importance with regards to Bangladesh which has a very small ecological footprint. Unceasing encounter with natural catastrophes, such as floods, draught, cyclones etc. over the centuries, has grown resilience in the people of Bangladesh. As a result, environmental sustainability hardly has any significant influence in Bangladesh's sustainability perspective. On the other hand, although Bangladesh is ranked as the 15th least happy country in the world (Azran, 2024), its people's experiences vastly differ from high-income countries. About 18.7% of the country's population are habituated in living their life beneath the poverty line (ADB, 2022). The majority of its people, who are not very ambitious, depend on agriculture-based socio-economic lifestyle and meeting the fundamental needs of life is in the top of their priorities. Almost 90% of the respondents to the 2024 World Happiness Report stated that they are free to make life choices (Azran, 2024). Hence, economic sustainability follows suit environmental sustainability in not being one of the priorities for common people in Bangladesh's sustainability perspective.

The people of Bangladesh appraise culture, tradition and, social values to be more important than economic and environmental sustainability. However, the rapid spread of western values and globalization in the post 1960s era unduly influenced the people, especially the youth, of Bangladesh resulting into shifts in social values. In the same 2024 World Happiness Report, over 55% of the respondents reported

that they had nobody to help them in a time of need, indicating a high level of social degradation. Social sustainability, which includes the diligence to stop further deterioration, is the uttermost concern in this thesis in the context sustainability in Bangladesh.

Notwithstanding this, all three aspects of sustainability are correlated and ought to be addressed concurrently to achieve social well-being. A sustainability perspective in this thesis includes the approach adopted in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which focusses on collaborative outcomes of values-driven actions to maintain sustainable use of the finite physical resources, such as water, soil, oil, gas, biodiversity etc., of the geo-environmentally unique Bangladesh along with safeguarding the non-physical resources, including cultural and spiritual traditions and heritage (Tasnim, 2020). All SDGs² are relevant to Bangladesh and its people.

The blueprint of the traditional Bangladesh culture argues sustainability endured where there was an existence of self-reliant living within communities. Traditional local knowledge promotes the obligation of care for the environment- from harvesting to use of resources. For example, the popular discourses by Darvish Aziz Shah Fakir to his devotees, about how to care for the environment suggest that 10 percent of fruits on any tree must be left so that birds can eat them and spread the seeds around (Khan et al., 2015). He argues for this notion to be adhered to when fishing, gathering crop residue etc. A popular rhetoric was that two young trees should be planted if a tree is dead or chopped, because the need of green is exponentially increasing with the speed of human population increase. Rapid scarcity of clean air, water, soil and biodiversity due to human unethical actions and over-exploitation is a major concern raised by the Fakir. The philosophy of the 10 percent seeding of resources as they are used, is traditionally widely taught and practiced maintaining sustainability. This traditional culture of Bangladesh is inherently geared to maintain a balance between natural resources and human needs, but globalization and westernization have been promoting only the materialistic well-being of people (Hossain, 1995).

Thus, sustainability initially appeared as an ecological concept, reflecting prudent behaviour by a predator that avoids over-exploiting of the prey to ensure an optimum sustained yield (Odum, 1971). Sustainability however refers to a dynamic, living and self-sustaining entity with the provision of fulfilment of the ecosystems' functions and a failing or depleting sustainability is recognized as unsustainability (Hossain, 2001). Both terms, sustainability and unsustainability, can be applied to physical entities such as soil, water and biodiversity, and non-physical aspects which include culture, education and politics.

² The UN Sustainable Development Goals are: No poverty; Zero hunger; Good health and well-being; Quality education; Gender equality; Clean water and sanitation; Affordable and clean energy; Decent work and economic growth; Industry, innovation and infrastructure; Reduced inequalities; Sustainable cities and communities; Responsible consumption and production; Climate action; Life below water; Life on land; Peace, justice and strong institutions; and Partnerships for the goals (SDGs, UN).

Sustainable development is a constitutional obligation for Bangladesh. According to Article 18A of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the "state shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to preserve and safeguard the natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forests and wildlife for the present and future citizens" (Constitution of Bangladesh, 2011, Act XIV). In the geo-environmental and cultural context of Bangladesh, this thesis argues that sustainable development is development which not only protects and improves the natural environment but helps achieving a self-reliant living in compliance with the blueprint of sustainable Bangladesh together with the aspects of social and cultural integrity and economic stability (Hossain, 1995). This conforms to the most widely cited definition of sustainable development which states: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). However, what is particularly emphasised is self-reliance in achieving human and environmental well-being by the people of Bangladesh. This thesis predominantly emphasises prudent human intervention on both, the physical (including finite) and non-physical resources when people rely on them for basic needs, such as food, shelter and all tangible requirement for living, while maintaining a cultural integrity, including spirituality, needed to upkeep their spiritual health.

The understanding of sustainable development is a type of progress that will be stable in its own area without causing harm to others. Sustainable development should balance the synergies between its aspects and participants. For instance, a development that appears to be beneficial for the economy may cause environmental calamities; a massive infrastructural project may have serious environmental setbacks. Hossain, Hossain-Rhman and Marinova (2007) question whether economic growth alone can be sustainable in itself at the cost of social and environmental sustainability. When that happens, we cannot consider this as sustainable development. Unfortunately, sustainability has been a missing agenda in development programs in many developing countries and Bangladesh in particular. The sustainability perspective has been missing in many development plans.

Therefore, a holistic approach of including a sustainability perspective is needed across all facets of society. It starts with mainstream education that will create an avenue for understanding the complexity of this concept and what we should do and what not while planning a development program and when thinking about today and the future. Educating in sustainability is a vital component to achieve sustainable development for the well-being of a nation and it starts with the primary education system.

2.1.2 Folklore and folk-values for pro-sustainability attitudes

Folklore is the lore or wisdom created by the folks or ordinary people through their lifelong experience that is transmitted from older to newer generations and is integrated in their code of life. Different genres and subgenres were formed from this lore, namely proverbs, myths, idioms, riddles, tongue twisters, tales, stories, songs, ballads, child lore, children's street culture, counting rhymes, superstitions, taunts etc., and these are reflected in the festivals, rituals, customs, costumes, crafts, food, medicine, folk art, folk beliefs, folk dramas, folk games, folk housing, folk magic, folk

medicine, folk narratives, folk poetry and rhymes, folksongs, holiday lore and customs, and weather lore. The list given above is by no means complete and more genres can be added. Each genre includes a few or many sub-genres. For example, the genre Folk Narrative comprises the following subgenres: anecdote, fairy tale, fable, joke, legend, maxim, saying, ghost story, parable and proverb. folk art is also a vast genre that includes many subgenres, such as blacksmithing, carpentry, embroidery, metalwork, pottery, Rickshaw, Painting, Weaving and so on. We have incredible opportunities to explore the enormous virgin field of folklore as an academic discipline in Bangladesh (Ahsan, 2013). Scholars involved in studying folklore are confined to few genres, especially folk literature, folktale, folk rhyme, proverb, folksong, and the like. These can be broadened to cover, for example, ethnology, aboriginal studies, human rights, folk languages, bilateral acquisition, sustainable development, indigenous knowledge, traditional health knowledge and care, profession-based knowledge etc. Folk religion with its rituals and songs may be considered as one of the important areas of folklore. A folk religious community, its ways of life, rituals, songs, etc., is an area of particular research interest in the context of folklore.

Folk values in this thesis are understood as the traditional values of Bangladesh's culture. These values encompass the principles of sustainability in the context of Bangladesh, as highlighted by Khan et al. (2015), including kindness, modesty and resilience. Additionally, they embody other significant tenets, such as simplicity, patriotism and naturalism. Folk values also represent traditional wisdom. While in contemporary society wisdom is defined as the ability to discern and judge which aspects of the knowledge acquired through study, research, observation, investigation or experience, are true, right, lasting and applicable to life situations, folk values offer insights into wisdom that has transcended centuries and builds on understanding of the world shaped by the cumulative intelligence of the people inhabiting the geopolitical place that is Bangladesh. Hence, the traditional wisdom encapsulated in these folk values serves as a moral compass, discouraging actions that lead to unsustainability and promoting a pro-sustainability mindset. This is particularly important for children, who are the future custodians of these values.

Identify the significance of folk values in sustainability is one of the major objectives of this thesis. Values generated from Bangladesh folklore impact the beliefs held by young minds and if children are introduced to them through the education system, their future behaviour is likely to embrace pro-sustainability attitudes. Sustainability is dependent on the scale of human intervention on the available resources to satisfy people's needs. Gandhi teaches that the "Earth has enough to meet everyone's need, but not everyone's greed" (Misra, 2007). In the Bangladesh cultural context, the scale of natural resources use depends on people's values and values are defined as the fundamental principles that give guidance to a person to evaluate the merits and demerits of an action or thing (Tasnim, 2020). These values, described as sustainability values, have their roots in folk values and encourage pro-sustainability attitudes.

2.1.3 Conceptual framework of sustainability values principles in primary education

The sustainability values principles introduced in this study and the contribution of the Bengali folklore in the generation of its conceptual framework are depicted in Figure 1. Three sustainability value principles correspond to the general understanding of sustainable development as a way to integrate social, economic and environmental priorities and are: **leaving no one behind** (social), **self-reliance living** (economic) and **environmental stewardship** (environmental). These value principles foster social sustainability, promotes economic sustainability, facilitates care and responsibilities towards environmental sustainability. They are distilled from the culture of rural Bangladesh through its folklore. A number of generally acknowledged folkloric proverbs, wisdom sayings and, folktales are analyzed to describe the links with sustainability and the practice of transmitting knowledge from one generation to another as a powerful sustainability tool.

Bangladeshi folklore and the country's cultural heritage hold innumerable proverbs, adages, wisdom sayings, folktales and folksongs, many of which are linked to the principal aspects of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) and the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The rural people of Bangladesh had been practicing sustainable development using traditional principles and approaches to sustainability (Hossain, 2006). It is time to outline a framework to see whether these traditional practices can be integrated into formal education at the primary level in Bangladesh. Such a framework can help children to comprehend the significance of the sustainability value principles of environmental stewardship, leaving no-one behind and self-reliance living to encourage a simple lifestyle, prudent consumption behaviours, further moral values and spirituality. It can contribute to maintain the cultural traditions and help restore the degrading environment of Bangladesh. These principles are explained further below.

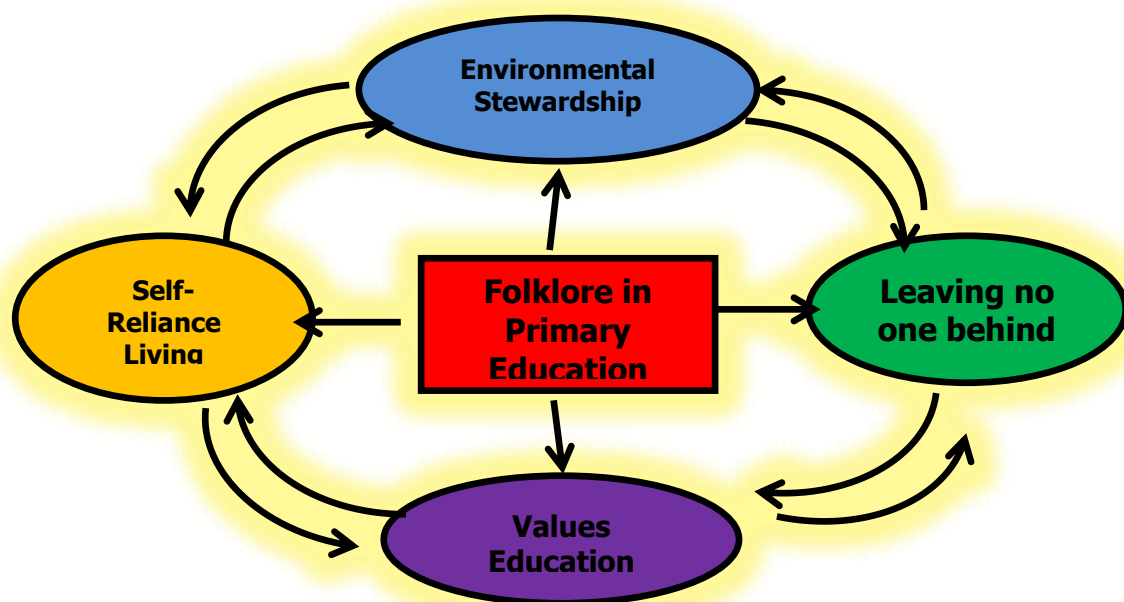


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Leaving no one behind is the central, transformative premise and the core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is a commitment made by the UN member-states to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and end discrimination among others targets. This study argues that folklore can be a potential tool to introduce this value principle to future generations at an early age. There is a popular Bengali verse from the medieval poet Chandidas: 'Shobar upore manush shotto, Tahar upore nai' / 'Nothing is above humanity'. Introducing the wisdom of these inspirational verses to school children will foster the young minds to prioritise human beings' dignity irrespective of sex, age, gender, culture, race or ethnicity. Similarly, the widely spoken proverbs, dosher lathi eker bojha / many a little makes a mickle, ekotia bol/unity is strength, ekhotay utthan, bivede poton/united we stand, divided we fail, represents solidarity. It is important to build the sense of social cohesion and unity from primary education.

Self-reliance living in this thesis denotes the ability to live independently within the available resources with integrity, stability and dignity with sustainability-oriented decision making in every phase of life. This is a lifestyle to live within one's own accord from the very early stage of life and should be a tenure of primary education. The geo-environmental (that is, natural resources) and cultural context of Bangladesh challenges its people to be self-sufficient; self-reliance living nurtures simple living. The political ethicist and leader Mahatma Ghandi urged people to: 'Live simply, so that others might simply live' (Cummings, 1991). Simple living is one of those pro-sustainability attitudes that are the prerequisites for promoting sustainability and need to be developed in today's children as a means of stimulating sustainable and regenerative practices. This endorsement is considered to be a process of learning how to make pro-sustainability decisions and developing the capacity for future-oriented thinking (Sterling 2004). It can be argued that this process of learning has not been a dominant feature of current education, resulting in the current sustainability crises around the globe. Self-reliance living discourages unsustainable consumption, pollution and environmental degradation which are currently a major global concern.

Environmental stewardship is introduced in this study not only as a way to respect the natural environment but also as a tenet that requires a novel communication tool which leverages folklore and traditional practices as pedagogical resources to cultivate moral values and ecological awareness among young generations. The tool is tailored to the context of Bangladesh, a country that strives to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) on quality education and SDG 13 on climate action. By integrating indigenous knowledge and culture into the curriculum, the tool aims to foster the inclusion of sustainability principles and practices in education and enhance the adaptation and resilience capacities of learners and communities in the face of climate change. This tool also reinforces the values of kindness, modesty, and responsibility that are essential for safeguarding a healthy Earth.

The sustainability agenda for Bangladesh is much broader and longer-term than the SDGs. Although there is some immediate overlap, the foundational values and principles need to be localised and this is what the thesis does by placing emphasis of the contribution folklore can make as an appropriate and powerful communication and educational tool for young children. For primary education to successfully deliver the sustainability value principles, an active involvement of policy makers, educators

and curriculum developers is needed for addressing the challenges and opportunities in implementing and professionalising this innovative approach. Sustainability calls for a holistic and inclusive vision of education for sustainable development that respects and values the diversity of cultures and knowledge systems and integrating folk values in primary education is an essential aspect of it in the context of Bangladesh.

2.1.4 Why sustainability needs to be communicated with children?

According to Kelley (1995), “education is communication”. The Climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe (2018) says in one of the most popular shows – TED talks: “The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: talk about it”. We do not require to be environmental scientists or climate experts in the field to communicate with people or with our children about climate change. That also applies to other sustainability issues, including social, economic and environmental. We need to speak from the shared values, common interest and talk about our responsibility for living things from the perspective of human beings, care and love for the least fortunate, those who are already suffering the impacts of extreme climate events as well as unsustainable development, including hunger, disease, poverty and more. According to Hayhoe (2018), every single person in the world already has the values they need to care about the planet and its people. They have just failed to connect the dots which we can do through our conversation with them. The Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE, 2014) advocated a focus on deepening children’s understanding of learning to live more sustainably as well as the local and global problems of climate change, environmental degradation, rising sea levels, extinction of species, resource depletion and lack of wellness around the world. It is our obligation to introduce children, who are representing the future, with the challenge they will face on Earth, and formal education is a vehicle to achieve this.

Sustainability Education, also referred to as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), is defined as (UNESCO, 2014) allowing, “every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future”. The Council for Environmental Education (CEE, 1998) also emphasised that people need to make decisions how to live well “individually and collectively, both globally and locally, without damaging the planet for the future”.

It is not an exaggeration to say that we are borrowing the world from the future generation, i.e. the children of today. All definitions, explanations and theories about sustainability is for and towards these children. Thus, communicating with these children about sustainability along with the sustainability challenges, is the first and foremost step towards achieving sustainable development.

Communicating with children about sustainability challenges through formal and informal education is a demand of our time and in order to do so, educationists, teachers and policy makers should also consider communication that is compatible for children of the 5-11 years old age group. For example, if children are knowledgeable and concerned about climate change and its impacts, this will bring a positive change for the world in 15-20 years. This study builds on the importance and

necessity of communicating with children as well as using appropriate tools for this communication.

The PhD thesis comprises five published refereed papers which address the issue of communicating sustainability values in primary education using the case of Bangladesh. Its contribution is to put forward the use of folklore as an appropriate way to build sustainability values in the young generation.

3. Research design and methodology

The original research design for the study intended to use passive or non-participatory observation (Williams, 2012) in the classroom to explore how teachers communicate sustainability values in primary education. However, the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to carry out this research design and the study had to adapt its methodology to accommodate and comply with social distancing guidelines and travel restrictions. Under these circumstances, fieldwork arrangements were paused and made uncertain. Consequently, the non-participatory observation was re-arranged post pandemic and replaced by conducting a survey and in-depth interviews with 12 primary school teachers as part of a mixed-methods approach for empirical data collection. Desktop research and literature reviews were used throughout the study to build on previous knowledge as well as identify suitable folkloric material for use in communicating sustainability.

A post-positivism methodology in understanding and interpreting the sustainability perspective for Bangladesh was employed, considering the country's rich paradigm for educational research, specifically pedagogical research (Panhwar, Ansari and Shah, 2017). Despite the fact that post-positivism uses various instruments to examine a phenomenon clearly and closely, it still believes that no universal truth is found, and research is only an attempt to explore an event as much as possible (Panhwar, Ansari and Shah, 2017).

In line with post-positivist thinking, a mixed-methods approach can be used to examine the same problem from different perspectives (Greene, 2008). Employed for more than 30 years, a mixed-methods approach provides a deeper understanding compared to what can be achieved by applying only one research method (McKim, 2016). In this particular case, the methodology utilises a combined strategy whereby a survey, interviews and document analysis were used to investigate the research question. The primary data were collected by conducting a survey to understand the trend of how sustainability is communicated in primary school curriculum and in-depth interviews were conducted to further investigate whether this curriculum is effective enough to communicate sustainability to young children.

The study investigated students' prevalent attitudes towards sustainability and the pro-sustainability attitudes they require to develop, such as kindness, resilience, simplicity, modest consumption and, prudent behaviour to nature (land, water, air and all natural resources). It was then necessary to survey the teachers' thoughts about the pro-sustainability attitudes that need to be created in children. Also,

teachers' opinions were further investigated about the role of folklore to develop these attitudes. Survey data was used to quantify and justify the patterns and describe the phenomenon.

The resulting mixed-methods approach is presented in Table 1. It explains how the descriptions of the context, literature review, methods, results and discussions appear in the five articles that form the body of this PhD thesis to draw together the research output logically. One strand of the literature on mixed-methods research designs discusses how individual methods are combined. The literature describes qualitative, quantitative and performative elements, and the different ways in which they are integrated into research questions, designs, methods, data analysis and results (Hong and Pluye, 2018). An important aspect is that the intentional integration of data from the different methods may reveal greater insights than those yielded from any individual approach alone (Guetterman et al., 2017) and this study was intended on discovery, interpretation and gaining insight rather than hypothesis testing (Noor, 2008).

The first part of the thesis explores the diversity in understanding sustainable development and education for sustainability (EfS) and identifies the need for an integration of sustainability in education, specifically at primary level. In the second part of the thesis, the challenges in sustainable development around the globe and how Bangladesh deals differently from the rest of the world, are explained. The final part explores what approach is to be taken in educating sustainability at the primary school level and develops tools to support this approach. One paper (Publication 5) explicitly elaborates the research methodology, actual methods used as well as the sampling and recruitment process. Both research instruments used for empirical data collection, namely the survey questionnaire and the interview schedule, are given as appendices

The adopted approach allows for covering issues that are meaningful and culturally salient, no attempts are made to anticipate or test hypotheses related to the data. Hence, the aim through the respective publications is to provide a rich and explanatory description of the role of folk values for sustainability education in Bangladesh.

Table 1 Overview of the thesis by compilation: Connecting objectives with methodology.

Purpose/Key objectives	Methodology & Tools	Questions addressed	Publications
Examine the challenges of sustainable development in Bangladesh and the role of primary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop / textual / document analysis • Government publications and reports on SGDs. • SGD reports and publications of stakeholders, including UN and NGOs • SGD discourses available online • Earlier published research • Personal records • Mass media, including news articles, debates and blogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to the rest of the world, what are the challenges with regard to sustainable development in the context of Bangladesh? • What are the elements that influence these challenges? • What role, locally and globally, does primary education play in meeting the challenges in terms of sustainability? How does Bangladesh compare with other countries in the world that have included sustainability in their primary education? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication 1 • Publication 2 • Publication 3
Investigate how sustainability is currently communicated in primary education and in what aspects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum review • Government/national curriculum • Year 1 to 5 curriculum • Subjects, including Bengali, mathematics, social sciences, history and religion • Survey of teachers • Interview with teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is sustainability present in existing curriculum? • In which subjects is sustainability covered? • In which grades/classes is sustainability covered? • In what forms is sustainability covered? • How are the students being introduced to sustainability or how sustainability is being communicated with them? • What are the teaching methods used? • What elements of instruction are being used? • How is the result of the communication being measured / followed up? • Is there any reflection of this communication in real lives that is being communicated between the children and the teachers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication 2 • Publication 4
Is Folklore used in Primary education in Bangladesh and how? In what contexts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum review • Previous Education Commission reports – from 1980s to 1990s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has folklore been used in past curriculum (from 1980s to 1990s)? How was folklore communicated? • In which subjects was folklore used? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication 4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum archives • Context review (year 1 to 5) • Interview with teachers • Survey with teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In which grades/classes was folklore used? • In what forms was folklore used? • Was there any reflection in real life of the folk values communicated to children? 	
<p>What are the folklore messages that connect to sustainability challenges? In particular, how do they connect to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh context?</p> <p>Develop a folkloristics approach by using Bengali proverbs, sayings and stories from Bengali child lore</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folklore mapping by connecting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bengali folk literature • SDGs discourses • Child lore • Interviews • Peer reviewed publications • Other publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of curriculum in primary level can help achieving the sustainable development goal? • Which values / messages from Bengali folklore bear / express the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability? • In what forms e.g. proverbs, story-telling, riddles, legends, bachans etc. are these sustainability messages available to be compatible for children aged 5-11 years old? • How can a framework for a folkloristics approach be designed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication 1 • Publication 2 • Publication 4 • Publication 5
<p>Identify the gaps in sustainability education and the opportunities to improve sustainability education at primary level through the use of folklore.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary views • Interpretation of data • Survey • Interviews • Mass media • News and editorials • Debates • Talk shows • Other document analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the state for education for sustainability in the primary level curriculum worldwide? • What are the main aspects that need to be deliberated in the context Bangladesh in order to include education for sustainability in primary level curriculum? • How have Bangladeshi age-long folk values and wisdom impacted people's lifestyle and helped in achieving the sustainability at present and in future? • Which genres of Bengali folklore can help developing the pro-sustainability attitude in the children? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication 1 • Publication 2 • Publication 4

4. Contribution of the publications

A PhD thesis is expected to form a distinct contribution to the knowledge on the subject and offer evidence of originality shown by the discovery of new facts or by the exercise of independent critical power. This thesis emphasises the latter part of these aspects and is primarily theoretical. While it does generate new material, such as the scaffolding approach in story telling in the classroom and investigates the applications and implications, its primary concern is to examine existing material in an unconstrained way, developing and applying new explanatory frameworks in a very affordable manner.

The five publications submitted as part of this thesis by compilation '**Integrating Folk Values into Primary Education in Bangladesh: A Sustainability Perspective**' were designed in order by breaking down each objective into a published refereed paper to facilitate the investigation of the research question. Hence, the thesis brings together five papers in a comprehensive and cohesive way to critically rethink the existing knowledge and redesign the existing practice in the field of primary education in Bangladesh. Its contributions cover the following aspects:

- ❑ The five publications submitted as part of this thesis by compilation form an academic contribution to the literature review defining **sustainability values and significance of folklore in education for sustainability**.
- ❑ The thesis explores the diversity of understanding sustainable development and education for sustainability (EfS) and identifies the need for an integration of sustainability in education at **primary level**.
- ❑ The thesis investigated the significance of ethical deliberation when it comes to human intervention for sustainable development. Hence it attempts to establish the inevitability of **moral intervention in sustainability** based on human values.
- ❑ The thesis also represents an argument explicitly in an area that has not been previously explored, **concerning the existing resources in the primary education curriculum in Bangladesh and their effectiveness /functionality in education for sustainability**.
- ❑ The thesis develops a **scaffolding approach** suitable to be applied to folkloric material to be used in the primary school classroom.

Further details about each publication are presented in the following sections:

4.1 Publication 1

Tasnim, S., Hossain, A. (2021). Folk values for beginners: A sustainability perspective from Bangladesh. *International Journal of Information Systems and Social Change*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJISSC.2021010101>

This paper outlined and developed work definitions for the key areas of the thesis.

- ❑ It explores the synopsis of folkloric Bangladesh, what folklore, folk values and folk-life mean to rural people in Bangladesh are analysed.
- ❑ Folk values and philosophy as a code of life and for sustainability in the context of Bangladesh are analysed.
- ❑ An overview and literature review of the values that are particularly beneficial for sustainability for acquiring in primary education are presented.

According to the folklorist Alan Dundes, folklore is not a static fragment of past (Dundes, 1978), it is an ongoing phenomenon to be passed down and cherished for generations to come. We have to explore effective and practical ways in which unique cultural expressions of traditional folklore can be maintained and their wisdom transmitted to future generations. Dundes (1978) believed that it should start from the primary level of education so that the young generations carry along this ongoing process of development, preserve, maintain and ensure the transmission into the future.

Bangladesh is a country rich of folklore of all genres – proverbs, sayings, songs, legends, riddles and stories. Although this folklore is still alive in the countryside, it is gradually disappearing from the urban lifestyle. The vast knowledge and wisdom about self-reliance, social, ecological, medicinal, anthropological and environmental sustainability carried by Bengali folklore, needs to be rediscovered and preserved for generations, present and future. Folklore, considered as the ‘code of life’ for Bangladeshi culture, has values and traditional wisdom instilled in the genres and from time immemorial has been considered an indispensable source of informal educational material for children in the country and around the globe. The term ‘folk values’ is understood as the traditional values of Bangladesh’s culture which also correlate with the principles of sustainability, namely kindness, modesty, simplicity, resilience, patriotism, and naturalism. These values are linked to the globalisation of sustainability education to offset current negative trends in the natural and social environment.

Sustainability values are sought to be redefined and developed right from the primary level of education. Using the case study of Bangladesh, the paper presents a synopsis of the core folkloric tradition of the country and critically analyses the substantial impact of folk values on the daily lives of the country’s inhabitants as well as discusses how these values can contribute to sustainability.

4.2 Publication 2

Tasnim, S. (2020). The rhetoric of Bengali proverbs and sayings on conventional moral education for children in Bangladesh: Sustainability perspective. *Green University Review of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 1-21

In the course of investigating a holistic approach, this paper introduces a 'folkloric approach' in the classroom by using Bengali **proverbs and sayings**. Values and wisdom generated from Bengali proverbs and sayings can be used as a tool in formal and non-formal primary education in Bangladesh for reviving sustainability and to help build pro-sustainability attitudes for future generations. A number of generally recognisable proverbs – stipulated as the 'wisdom of the nation' and hence 'wisdom for sustainability', were analysed in mapping with sustainability.

Proverbs and sayings are mostly transmitted orally and transformed into beliefs that are reflected in our everyday lives. This reflection is rewarding. The paper argues that integrating Bengali proverbs and sayings in their practices, the primary school children of Bangladesh have the potential capacity and ability to create significant difference in their behaviour towards sustainability. This paper also outlines a framework for potential resolution of the root-cause of the sustainability challenges, identified by the preceding paper.

The paper argues that the cognitive connotation of proverbs or sayings accentuated while communicating with children, develop their intellectual sense, contributes an everlasting lifelong learning process and through the teacher-learner interaction, the audience can smoothly relate a current situation, its facts, consequences and resolution while a moral lesson is transmitted. The three elements (task, action and, reward) associated with each proverb and saying, articulated in the paper, can significantly contribute to achieve SDG4.7, encourage young children to best practice recycle-reuse as well as urge; shifts from a wasteful to sustainable lifestyle; and promote a peaceful co-existence of cultural diversity and non-violence global citizenship.

4.3 Publication 3

Tasnim, S., Hossain, A., Marinova, D. (2021). Supporting the sustainable development journey of Bangladesh with folk values in primary education. *Green University Review of Social Sciences*, 7(1/2), 1-21.
<https://doi.org/10.3329/gurss.v7i1-2.62678>

This paper is a chronological attempt to establish the interconnectivity of sustainability, sustainable development and folklore. Therefore, it is pivotal to investigate the challenges of sustainability and sustainable development in Bangladesh in contrast to the global context. Bangladesh inherently possesses an enormous treasure of folk genres considered a source of 'sustainability wisdom' and

the paper analysed how folklore and folk values can be a way of communicating complex concepts and supporting a sustainable development journey for the country.

The paper investigates the difference in interpretation and comprehension of sustainable development, inclusive of the contexts, perceptions, priorities that vary in countries (developed or developing, market-oriented or centrally planned) and how the fundamental needs of poorer and wealthier nations impact their sustainable development. As such, economic growth is constantly compromising the non-exploitation of natural resources and challenges remain in sustainable urbanisation and demographic shifts (e.g. people living with \$1 or less a day, are not worried about renewable energy or solar panels).

Bangladesh is the 10th most densely populated country in the world (UN, 2022) and despite 22 million people living below the poverty line of US\$2.15 per day (World Bank, 2024), the country moved up to 94th from 101st place among the happiest countries in the world because of the high resilience of its inhabitants. As the world's 7th most vulnerable country to extreme climate events, having contributed the least in ecological footprint, Bangladesh is 9th in annual fatalities, 13th in overall losses, 37th in losses per unit GDP (Harmeling and Eckstein, 2013), Bangladesh is also one of the first to develop a National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA, 2005) for addressing climate change.

While the existing literature contains discussion of the disposition of Bangladesh in its journey to sustainable development, critical gaps are identified in this article, including declining educational budget between 1980-2022 and thus, declining quality primary education, massive degradation of traditional values with urbanisation and globalization. This paper contributes to understanding the gap between development and sustainability. As a qualitative study, the critical reflection approach (Fook, 2011) used in this paper, explicitly emphasises improving the current practice in primary education in Bangladesh. Using folk values is a model that can be instrumental in helping primary education to develop moral values in children across the time in every nation.

4.4 Publication 4

Tasnim, S., Marinova, D. (2022). Sustainability and folklore in primary education in Bangladesh: An empirical study of teachers. *Green University Review of Social Sciences*, 8(1), 23-50

This paper is a vigorous initiative of investigating the current state of resource availability for teaching sustainability in primary education. It covers a study carried out within the context of Bangladesh which can have a broader applicability. The paper investigated:

- How sustainability aspects are currently communicated in primary education in Bangladesh;

- The existence of a gap between the favourable survey results and the availability of resources to teach sustainability in primary school;
- How folklore can be an important avenue to bridge this gap.

A survey was conducted within 200 government primary school teachers followed by in-depth interview with 12 teachers. The objective of the survey was to determine the strength (degree of importance) of the attitudes held by teachers towards pro-sustainability practices in order to gauge the likelihood of them directing practices and behaviour (Rhaman, 2011). On the other hand, this study required in-depth interviews with primary school teachers to properly comprehend their perceptions, understandings and views on sustainability and to investigate any gaps in developing pro-sustainability attitudes and practices in the existing primary education curriculum and education system that challenge sustainable development.

This study is the first to underpin the synergies between folklore and primary education within the context of sustainability. The use of mixed-methods methodology allowed this study to go deeper into the issues and reveal the gaps between, on one hand, the impressions obtained from the quantitative results in most cases overwhelming supporting the importance of sustainability and possible synergies from using folklore as a tool in the primary school curriculum, and on the other, the challenges and barriers teachers have.

The study's first objective was to investigate how sustainability aspects are currently communicated in primary education in Bangladesh. The participants rated over 90% the importance of every aspect – social, economic and environmental sustainability, that was asking about the role of primary education in teaching children sustainability attitudes, such as simplicity, kindness, resilience, consumption in moderation and stewardship. These are quantitative results that support the importance of educating for sustainability in primary education, considered as an essential prerequisite in achieving a more sustainable development and in particular the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Another aspect was to investigate the status of sustainability in primary education in Bangladesh by exploring the resources in the curriculum that support teaching all three aspects of sustainability. There was an overall agreement that the curriculum has resources to teach the social aspects of sustainability, including kindness, respect for all other living beings and resource stewardship, with the shares of teachers who agree being respectfully 78%, 69% and 74%. It was interesting to see from the survey that, the environmental and economic aspects show an average of 70% ratings in favour of available resource in the curriculum that teach children about climate change, protecting environment and saving natural resources, while building prudent attitudes in children when it comes to consumption leaves a lot to be desired. These results are consistent with the assertion found in the interviews with all participants feeling that only textbook-based resources cannot help the children to be empathetic to all creatures, refrain from wasting resources, and look after the natural environment.

There was a tension between the results from the survey which rated highly having sufficient resources for the sustainability aspects in the curriculum, and the

interviews that argued the curriculum was not well-equipped for children's education and failed to achieve the sustainability perspective by identifying major gaps:

- The primary education curriculum of Bangladesh only emphasises achievable competencies and learning outcomes significantly determined by the student's reading, writing and listening competencies and lack of values education. Although most schools believe that sustainability is important, they are faced with limited resources and budget concerns are a limiting factor.
- There is no emphasis on greening practices or encourage more sustainable practices, such as recycling or waste management. While planting trees is a common educational activity for 95% of the respondents, access to renewable energy is very limited. This explains another observation from the interviews that teachers do not have a clear idea how to relate sustainability to subject teaching and do not feel obligated to bring this aspect into the classroom.
- The educators contemplate that only textbook-based resources cannot help school children to be empathetic to all living creatures, refrain from wasting resources, and look after the environment. Students do not contemplate the cultural values of the oral tradition when delivered in the classroom as they do not observe this practice neither in their family nor in society nor in the form of entertainment in the media.
- The interviews revealed that the teachers adhere mainly to the prescribed curriculum where sustainability does not feature in a prominent way and where more practical issues, such as student–teacher ratio and socio-economic background of the students require more urgent attention. This explains that behind the surface of positive attitudes, there is a dearth of consideration for sustainability.
- The shares of those who are unable to judge about the availability of resources or consider them inadequate are very revealing as they cover between a third and a quarter of the teaching population. Despite all participants acknowledging the importance of educating for sustainability at a primary school level, the task at hand seems often unsurmountable. External influences on students, such as the effect of globalisation, socio-economic and political influences and the attractiveness of a western materialistic lifestyle which focusses on the individual, rather than the community, contribute towards unsustainable behaviours, even when the primary school teachers are successful in developing certain sustainability values. These tendencies are unduly presented as being a value-neutral expression of development, however, they embody assumptions that lead towards overexploitation of the Earth's resources and do not support a sustainability ethics.
- Student backgrounds also matter, especially in government schools. Teachers may find teaching children from poor backgrounds difficult and unrewarding, particularly if they are untrained for the challenges of reaching first generation learners, and if the system is under-resourced, or designed on the assumption that children come from backgrounds where learning is prized and supported.

- The study revealed other problems that hamper the educational environment and delivering of primary education – poor physical environment in schools, the shift-based system, with short contact hours, lack of support materials and inadequate number of trained teachers, traditional classroom teaching and learning practices.
- One of the most commonly addressed issues by the participants was, teachers engaging in non-teaching tasks. This includes voter lists, celebrations, maintaining different registers (e.g. wheat distribution register and inspection register. Such activities affect the delivery of primary education and with sustainability seen as an add-on to the curriculum, it often is pushed aside.

The paper argues that engagement with sustainability issues can occur with proper communication that leaves a long-lasting impact on children’s learning. A second objective of the study was to explore whether the use of folklore in the curriculum can deliver this. Changes in how teachers teach, not just what they teach, are essential and folklore offers such an opportunity. Child lore can be a way to reach out and communicate with children in a caring way that builds confidence and understanding.

There was a widespread agreement with 90% of the teachers concurring that folklore offers a way to teach kindness, self-reliance, honesty, resilience and other sustainability attitudes to primary school children. Furthermore, 89% agreed that child lore helps enhance the morals, values and wisdom of children. Maintaining the oral tradition in transmitting values and wisdom was seen as important by 92% of the teachers and further supported by the interview material. The hallmarks of the Bengali culture based on peace loving, social harmony, sympathy, family ties, love for language and country, loyalty to parents among others, have survived over the centuries through the oral tradition.

4.5 Publication 5

Tasnim, S. Hossain, A., Marinova, D. (2023). How can stories in primary education support sustainable development in Bangladesh? *Sustainability*, 15(16), 12620 <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151612620>

This paper builds upon the groundwork laid out in the Publication 2, delving into an innovative approach to foster sustainability awareness and values through communication among primary school students. Two commonly recognised stories, Shukhu and Dukhu’ and ‘Jackal, The Jury) were used as the vessel to explore how stories and tales can serve as powerful conduits for communicating sustainability principle. As a sampling of folk stories, this paper emphasizes simpler forms of narratives, such as exempla that combine animal tales, anecdotes, formula tales, or fables, each carrying unique lessons or morals. Bengali folk stories like “Lalkamal-Nilkamal,” “Byangoma-Byangomi,” and “Duo Rani – Suo Rani” symbolize various

socio-economic scenarios in the lives of Bengali people. These stories are not only rich in cultural heritage but also serve as powerful tools for education.

One of the primary objectives of selecting these stories is to stimulate children's imagination and help them relate with their own lives and circumstances. By engaging with these tales, children can explore different aspects of human experience and societal values in a way that is both entertaining and educational. These stories provide avenues for children to think critically and ask questions, fostering a sense of curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

For instance, 'Jackal – The Jury' depicts themes of bravery, wisdom, and justice, while 'Shukhu-Dukhu' explores themes of jealousy, kindness, and resilience. Through these narratives, children learn about the consequences of actions, the importance of virtues, and the complexities of human emotions and relationships. Focused on two well-known stories, the analysis dissects their underlying themes and weaves them together with established sustainability management principles. Additionally, the investigation maps these narratives onto the three major facets of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental. The ultimate goal was to unravel how storytelling can shape young minds, nurturing pro-sustainability attitudes that will resonate throughout children's lives.

This paper outlined a conceptual framework of story-telling in the classroom by introducing 'scaffolding and mapping' and developed a 'folkloric approach'. Scaffolding refers to the supportive framework that educators provide to learners as they acquire new knowledge and skills. In the context of storytelling, scaffolding involves guiding students through the process of understanding and creating narratives. Mapping, on the other hand, involves connecting the story elements to broader contexts, such as cultural values, historical backgrounds, and sustainability principles. It helps students see the bigger picture beyond the immediate storyline. The scaffolding was done by the 3C Approach (Concept, Content, and Context) as follows:

- **Concept:** Begin by clarifying the central idea or theme of the story. What message or moral do you want to convey? For instance, if the story revolves around environmental conservation, the concept might be "responsibility towards nature."
- **Content:** Develop the content of the story. This includes creating characters, setting and plot. Consider the following:

Characters- build relatable characters that resonate with students; these characters can represent diverse backgrounds, abilities, and perspectives;
Setting - place the story in a context that matters to students, it could be their local community, a historical period, or a fictional world;
Plot - craft a compelling narrative with a clear beginning, middle and end;
Introduce conflict and resolution.

- **Context:** Contextualise the story within the students' lives. Address demographic factors (such as gender issues), socio-economic backgrounds and cultural

interpretations. How does the story relate to their everyday experiences? How does it connect to their cultural heritage?

This paper emphasises the folkloric approach by using the folklore and folktales as powerful teaching tools. Folklore includes myths, legends, fairy tales, and traditional stories passed down through generations. A folkloric approach initiates the cultural connection: Folklore reflects cultural values, beliefs and norms. By exploring folklore, students gain insights into their own and others' cultural heritage. Universal themes and often conveyed by folktales, e.g., courage, kindness and justice. They provide a common ground for discussing ethical and moral concepts. Folklore can be a conduit for teaching sustainability and sustainability values. Stories about respecting nature, conserving resources and living harmoniously with the environment align with sustainability goals.

This paper then attempts to create the avenue for mapping with sustainability values. When using folklore, explicitly discuss how the story aligns with sustainability principles. For instance:

- A folktale about a wise forest guardian who protects endangered animals can emphasise biodiversity conservation;
- A legend about a river spirit can highlight water stewardship;
- A myth about seasons changing can underscore the cyclical nature of life and ecosystems;

After telling or reading a folktale, the students can be engaged in discussions:

- What sustainability lessons did the story convey?
- How can we apply these lessons in our lives?
- What actions can we take to promote sustainability?

In summary, scaffold storytelling enhances teaching by providing context, developing relatable content and weaving sustainability values through folklore. By doing so, educators empower students to become thoughtful, responsible global citizens who appreciate the power of stories in shaping their understanding of the world. Folklore, a rich tapestry of cultural narratives, rituals and beliefs, has been woven across generations and passed down orally. Folklore's fluidity allows it to adapt, evolve and resonate with diverse audiences and transform into a belief system that reflects our everyday lives. This reflection is rewarding.

Picture a classroom where a teacher introduces a story—a young hero or heroine overcoming adversity using an ingenious trick. Inspired, the teacher devises a task for students: apply this wisdom to resolve their own challenges. The classroom buzzes with anticipation as students share their success stories in the next session. Empowering sustainability, beyond entertainment, folklore serves a higher purpose. It fosters awareness, challenging assumptions and clarifying values. As students grapple with the same ingenuity that once saved our mythical heroes, they internalize resilience, resourcefulness and sustainability. These lessons ripple outward, empowering individuals and groups to act wisely.

5. Conclusion, limitations of the study and scope for future research

This chapter outlines the research findings including the substantial academic contributions of the study, limitations and the scope for future research. Being the first attempt in bridging the teaching of sustainability in the primary school classroom with the folk values of Bangladesh, the compilation of five published refereed papers as a whole adds synergistically new aspects that the individual publications cannot achieve on their own.

5.1 Limitations of the study

The Covid-19 Pandemic has had a vital role on diversion of the research from a standard large body of writing to a thesis by compilations. Classroom observation was excluded from the primary methodology; this could have contributed towards triangulation of the results from the survey and interviews with passive non-intrusive observations. The scope of investigation was maintained within the time and resources of one PhD student and hence, interviewing policy makers, curriculum development committee members and other stakeholders was not possible due to limited resources and time.

The Bangladesh National Curriculum has been reformed, redesigned, restructured nine times since the independence of the country in 1971 (BANBEIS, 2023). There is a scarcity of digital archive of the textbooks and limited access to any public archive to investigate the relatively significant precedent of change in content in the curriculum. The researcher used personal records and non-digital archives from the available sources only. Scarcity of recourses and restrained time barred further explorations of additional aspects of the research.

5.2 Scope for future research

This study was done within the context of Bangladesh but can have a broader applicability. The primary arguments are to establish the importance of emphasising the integration of folklore into school programmes to promote sustainability through students' respect for nature, values, lifestyle and education for sustainability. This will help improving not only the overall environment of the school but also the physical and mental health of the students and prepare them for the future challenges. Further research requires to be conducted in the similar field to find a broader range of options to design curriculum with the inclusion of folk genres.

The study introduced the 3C scaffolding approach using folk stories in the classroom and endorsed a folkloristic approach. In the analysis of the folk genies, the 3C approach to the stories can be applied in curriculum reformation and research data can be used to replicate future approach.

Many agree that a fourth function of folklore is to educate (Carthy, 1984). The following three characteristics of folklore should be considered before integration into informal education: the body of knowledge, mode of thought and kind of art, drawn as reflection from culture (Islam, 1985). Islam (1985) also argues that the use of folklore should be moulded by the geographical condition of Bangladesh and the linguistic position combined with social interest based on conformity of livelihood. The urban-rural planners, policy makers, academics, educationalists, folklorists, self-educated and other philosophers need to come together to analyse the issues, challenges and opportunities to reform the school environment to comply with the concept of a liveable world.

Future researchers could undertake more comprehensive interviews with primary school teachers to explore innovative ideas for integrating folkloristic approaches into the classroom environment. By engaging deeply with educators, researchers can uncover practical strategies and creative methods that leverage traditional cultural narratives and values to enhance the educational experience. These insights could lead to the development of curricula, teachers' training that not only preserve cultural heritage but also promote critical thinking, creativity and a deeper connection to the students' cultural roots.

Additionally, researchers can formulate detailed plans on how Bengali folklore can be seamlessly integrated into school curricula. This integration would aim to sustain and promote the values that are important to Bangladeshi society. Developing a 'sample' structure or module for the non-formal education systems at the primary level could serve as a pilot project, demonstrating the potential benefits and practicalities of such an approach. This model could then be adapted and applied to other educational levels, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive incorporation of folkloric knowledge across the entire education system.

Government bodies, policymakers and academics also have a crucial role to play. They can outline and implement policy initiatives that support the reinstatement of folkloric knowledge and wisdom as a core component of education for sustainability. These policies could include teachers' training programs, curriculum development guidelines, and resource allocation to ensure that folkloric content is effectively integrated and sustained within the educational framework.

By fostering a collaborative effort among researchers, educators, and policymakers, we can create an education system that not only imparts academic knowledge but also instils a deep appreciation for cultural heritage and sustainable living. This holistic approach will help nurture well-rounded individuals who are connected to their roots and equipped to contribute positively to society.

5.3 Conclusion

Sustainability is an action that involves direct human intervention. However, where human intervention is involved, there will be questions of values or ethical deliberation. The size of the Sun or its distance from the Earth is beyond human intervention. Human actions are very different as they can change the face of the

planet. The debate about sustainability started in the 1970s but will continue beyond the SDGs. Achieving the SDGs targets by 2030 is not only difficult, but in some cases impossible. The loss of traditional values is one such barrier that requires deeper thought and effort and long-term planning. In the last 20-30 years, westernisation and globalisation have rapidly changed everything, including education, culture and people's lifestyle. With the intensity and rapidity of change, the thousand years of traditions and values in Bangladesh are getting extinct. This study determined the significance of values in every aspect of life and the importance of reconnecting the aged-long traditional values with sustainable development. It investigated how values generated from folklore can dominate the attitude towards sustainability and hence help build pro-sustainability practices for future generations who will inherit this globe.

This series of five published refereed papers investigated how education can promote sustainability among young students by adopting a holistic and values-based approach. It argued that traditional values, such as respect, care and responsibility, can serve as a pedagogical tool for enhancing environmental awareness and action. The conceptual framework designed in the study developed a roadmap that integrates folklore in the formal learning context of the primary school classroom to link values education and sustainability education. It offered a theoretical and practical implications that can be applied in sustainability management and other educational settings and contexts. The study explicitly emphasised the importance of building environmental stewardship in the young children combined with self-reliance living and the principle of leaving no-one behind.

Folklore has a universal global disposition in people's life. Every culture on the planet has local traditions, knowledge and wisdom which allow for values principles to be derived from their folklore (Khan et al, 2015) and they can contribute towards education for sustainability. The thesis identifies the need of a 'holistic approach' in primary education that applies in the context of the sustainability perspective in Bangladesh and developed a folkloristic approach as a potential tool. Thus, this thesis contributes to bringing these two perspectives together with an explicit focus on their importance for developing an interdisciplinary approach and unique pedagogical tools that could help building the bridge towards implementing sustainability in education in Bangladesh and globally.

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Folk Values for Beginners: A Sustainability Perspective From Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

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The inherently diverse folkloric values are the applied aspects of folk philosophy. Amongst these values, the paper focusses on a few specific tenets that are transplanted in the beginners' hearts to counteract the current culture of thriving consumption that instigates competition and greed, profit-making use of science and technology, and moral degradation. These values are also linked to the globalisation of sustainability education to counteract the destruction of the natural and social environment. They need major attention right from the primary level of education. Using the case study of Bangladesh, the paper presents a synopsis of the core folkloric tradition of the country and critically analyses the substantial impact of folk values on the daily lives of its inhabitants as well as discusses how these values can contribute to sustainability.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Folk Philosophy, Folk Values, Folklore, Primary Education, Sustainability Perspective

INTRODUCTION

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Folklore is the lore, tradition, wisdom, knowledge, experience and practices created by the folks through the times that are transmitted from older to newer generations. The term was first coined in 1846 (Winick, 2014) but the matter it deals with has existed in people's lives since ancient times. In Bangladeshi culture, folklore is considered the code of life and its values and traditional wisdom are an indispensable source of informal educational material for children or any beginners. Traditional or folk values in Bangladesh's culture, such as kindness, modesty, simplicity, resilience and naturalism are closely linked to the principles of sustainability (Khan et al., 2016). Integration of such values derived from aged old folklore, into the formal education system would possibly be able to create a better future for the new generations which are currently being exposed to and encouraged to live within a consumerist culture that pays little respect to the natural environment and social cohesion.

Despite diverse educational efforts across the world to encourage sustainability, including the 2005–2014 United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2019), there still remains a fundamental gap in developing pro-sustainability attitudes and practices as well as a need to find contextual tools that would be pedagogical, comprehensive and well-aligned with the goals of primary education. This paper argues that building on tradition, culture and heritage, folklore offers a way to communicate and develop sustainability values.

The sustainability perspective adopted in this paper relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are synergistic aspirations based on human values that drive activities to maintain sustainable exploitation/consumption of the finite physical resources (such as human, soil, water, biodiversity among others) of the geo-environmentally unique Bangladesh as well as safeguarding the non-physical, that is cultural and spiritual tradition and heritage. The impacts of globalization, urbanization, consumerism, materialistic lifestyle and technology-dependent Green Revolution in agriculture are marginalizing the folk traditions and utterly tend to weaken people's natural instinct for sustainability, including socio-economic self-reliance and environmental stewardship. Education, including that of the young generation, is a tool to counteract to these new trends (Hossain et al., 2014). Thus, the study aims to investigate ways to reinstate the folklore culture in primary education in order to conserve the country's indigenous knowledge and best practices.

BACKGROUND

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As in most places around the world, children in Bangladesh, particularly those living in urban environments, are exposed to the influence of a consumerist culture (LS Special, 2017). A 2015 study in Dhaka states: "global media have large-scale impact on the audiences who are exposed to them... urban youth culture in Bangladesh is no longer identical to [the] long-standing traditional patterns but is found to be melting into western norms of dress-codes, food habits, attitude, and life styles" (Hossain, 2015, p. 213). The rigorously increasing urbanization and globalization also leave children to the risk of physically inactivity leading to health and mental problems. Education emphasises the development of skills suitable for a market economy with limited importance given to moral and spiritual values (Pereira, 2016).

Moral degradation of a generation in a country does not happen overnight. The presence of a harmful agent or absence of a beneficial catalyst in the daily life accelerates this decline. In today's world, there seems to be an invisible war between humankind and the planet Earth. As "we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children" – a popular saying with uncertain origin (Quote Investigator, 2014), today's scientists

are seeking to discover better environmentally friendlier technologies, economists are developing alternative economic practices or activities to alleviate poverty and ensure economic well-being, sociologists are working on reducing social inequality, environmentalists are researching what changes can potentially help us reduce our environmental footprints and restore the health of the planet. Are these efforts likely to change the course of human civilisation and leave a sustainable earth for the generations to come? Do we need to wait for all these new discoveries or can we use the knowledge and wisdom we already have available through folklore?

The argument of this paper is that there is a distinctive role for values education through folklore which can help abate some of the serious sustainability challenges we face globally and particularly in Bangladesh. Sustainability education through folklore is a particularly useful tool in the formal system of primary schools. Bangladesh has a rich culture of traditional knowledge and this can provide a sound foundation for building the value systems of the younger generation. The sections to follow touch briefly on Bangladesh's folkloric heritage and folk philosophy. This is followed by examples of folk tales related to sustainability that can be used in primary education in Bangladesh. The concluding section stresses that if adopted and used in primary schools, folklore will leave long-lasting marks in the hearts and minds of the learners and shape their future behaviour towards sustainability.

FOLKLORIC BANGLADESH

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Bangladesh is a deltaic land of natural and environmental diversity including topographical variations and seasonal phenomena with storms, floods and draughts. In 2019, about 63% of the country's people lived in rural areas (World Bank, 2021) supporting themselves on agriculture, including fishing. Bangladesh is a country rich of folklore of all genres – proverbs, sayings, songs, legends, riddles and stories. Although this folklore is still alive in the countryside, it is gradually disappearing from the urban lifestyle. Ironically, folklore holds a lot of knowledge and wisdom about self-reliance, social, ecological, medicinal, anthropological and environmental sustainability which need to be rediscovered for current and future generations.

Rural people, having no or limited academic or scientific knowledge or knowhow, carry on with their real-life experience whether it relates about farming or life's philosophy. Their intense intimacy with nature helps them to have the prudence to calculate the calamities or blessings the natural environment would shower on them. Folklore is used in everyday life and as Leach (1996, p. 255) explains:

Whenever a lullaby is sung to a child; whenever a tongue twister or a riddle or a counting out time is used in nursery or school; whenever sayings or proverbs are told; whenever a mother shows her daughter how to sew, spin, weave, embroider, bake an old-fashioned pie; whenever a farmer on the ancestral plot trains his son in the ways long familiar; whenever a village craftsman, carpenter, carver, shoemaker, blacksmith trains his apprentice in the use of tools; whenever in may callings the knowledge, experience, wisdom, skill, habits and practices of the past are handed down by examples or spoken word, by the elder to the new generation, without reference to books or print, that is called Folklore.

Integral to the folk people's lives, folklore is a body of blended experience, wisdom and belief creating the lore that defines a community (Hossain, 2001). History books are filled with names, dates and events which have shaped our world. For the folk people, however, the beliefs and practices captured in folklore are the actual teachers who guide them through their life. Since this lore is unwritten, it is transmitted orally from one person to another, from generation to generation without reference to printed documents. The purpose of folklore is to tell us about the way life of the common person who remembers the hopes, fears, dreams and details of everyday life.

Folklore is particularly appealing to children who have not yet had the experience and knowledge adults have (House, 1993). It offers "the fantasy into which the children can escape, there are heroes with whom they can identify and there is justice which often doesn't exist in real life" (House, 1993, para. 1). This makes folklore suitable to communicate particular messages within the primary school curriculum which help children understand their history, geography or cultural heritage but also build essential values which will stand the test of time with the transition to adulthood.

FOLK VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY – A CODE OF LIFE

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Folklore also denotes the indigenous philosophy that represents the local or traditional beliefs, wisdom and thoughts. As the basis for understanding the fundamentals of their local environment (Hossain, 2001), indigenous people gather knowledge from nature. According to Nuttall (2002), philosophy as is an activity – something that you do rather than just learn about from the books. It is essentially “thinking about thinking” for doing things (Nuttall, 2002, p. 1) and this is how indigenous philosophy encourages you to do things within the natural environmental reality of a place and practice sustainability management.

Adopting folk philosophy and pro-sustainability lifestyle has become part of culture in Bangladesh, especially for the rural folks. Popular culture is a cluster of wisdom (Hossain, 2001) that has answers to social, economic and environmental queries. Bangladesh has rich proverbial philosophy generated from local knowledge which is observed in people’s day-to-day living and decision making resulting in encouraging sustainability. Examples include: “What is (al) lotted cannot be blotted”, “to do or die”, “cut your coat according to your cloth”, “where there is a will, there is a way”, “failure is the pillar of success”, “grasp all, lose all”, “avarice begets sin, sin begets death”, “necessity knows no bounds”, “money is not all”, “a person is the slave of their environment”, “there is no happiness without sorrow”, “values know not how to compromise with immorality”, “take the bad with the good”, “every time has its knowledge”, “when you are losing your patience, try a little more patience”, “to live longer eat less”, “foolish is s/he who over-eats”, “desire for too much is ruining”. They are common in the oral tradition of rural folks. These proverbs are also considered as sustainability wisdom in Bangladesh, for they convey a sense of values that belong to the universal human conditions (Afzal, 1986).

Baul philosophy is an integral part of the Bengali folklore. The Baul are the mystics of Bangladesh who educate people with spontaneous songs in response to socio-economic and political issues, solutions to environmental problems, moral values and spiritual quests (Hossain & Marinova, 2004). The highly respected in Bangladesh Bauls are recognised as an intangible cultural heritage to humanity by UNESCO (2008) for their life philosophy and contribution to sustainability. Baul philosophers understand spirituality is an inner human dimension by which people understand their role for societal and environmental sustainability. An example is Darvish Aziz Shah Fakir whose discourses to his devotees explain how to care for the environment. He suggests that 10 percent of the fruits on any tree must be left so that birds can eat them and broadcast the seeds elsewhere (Khan et al., 2015). According to him this principle must be adhered to also when fishing, gathering crop residue and other similar activities. When a tree is dead or chopped, two young trees should be planted because demand for trees is increasing with the increase of human population. The Fakir raises the concern that as soil, water, air and biodiversity are rapidly being degraded due to humans’ unethical actions and exploitation; the ideology of 10 percent seeding of resources as they are used must be widely taught and practiced to maintain sustainability.

In the past people in Bangladesh believed in simpler lives of living than today’s lifestyle. Mazharul (1985, p. 370) explains: “A pair of cows, a plough, a yoke, a few plots of land is the minimum assets that every village-dweller craves. The spade, the scythe or the sickle, the weeding-tool, the harrow, the yoke are the simplest forms of tools which are used in agriculture. Too much rain or draughts are bad for the corps”. Festivals, rituals, proverbs, myths, songs, ballads, tales were mostly reflections of the lives in villages and their inhabitants. For those simple living people, the sun, moon, rain and monsoon were reliable sources of measuring the time (day and night), luck (full moon, solar or lunar eclipse), relationship (fixing a wedding date), harvest (planting paddy or ripping corps), festivals (Choitro Shongkranti, a day before the start of the New Year – Nobanno, a very joyful time of harvesting the corps), rituals (a funeral or the first solid food for a newborn). They tended to depend more on nature and luck for their living. Superstition was also a vital part of their lives. However, family bonding and social lives were considerably more sustainable than they are today. These traditions would soon be extinct if we fail to carry them out to our children through formal education. They will never know how the Moslin – a very thin siphon, and the Nakshikatha – the pride of Bangla, are woven or their historic details or the magical trick of pottery.

Most of the commercial activities which took place in the villages were in the markets called Hats. People used to assemble once or twice a week for selling and buying things in a fixed place, prices were settled between buyers and sellers, there were no fixed rules or regulations which made a few richer rich and poorer poor depending on their techniques of buying and selling capacities. A competition in extempore speech or composing poems, rhymes,

riddles or music between individuals or between villages took place which widely played a role in discovering local talents and this was the way through which folklore was explored as well. “Putul nach” (doll dance) was a very common way of telling tales to people at such fairs or Hatts.

Voluntary simplicity became an attractive and visionary work for sustainability in the 1980s with calls for deliberately choosing a way of living that shows a degree of consciousness about other people and the rest of the world (Elgin, 2010). The philosophy of simple and self-reliant livelihood, insights of life, little consumption and leave a better world for the future generation, are all reflected in the Baul teachings and all branches of Bangladeshi folklore. The Bangladeshi people have learned from their struggles against natural disasters, diseases and fight for existence and these experiences enrich their knowledge which they try to transmit from one generation to another through folklore. The indigenous philosopher-elders in Bangladesh, such as Fakir Lalon Shah, Hason Raja and numerous numbers of the Bauls are mostly without formal education, but extend their excellent aptitudes for directing people towards individual, social, cultural, economic and ecological sustainability through their songs. Their lifestyle, stories, proverbs, wisdom and interpretation of natural phenomena encompass aspects of long-term sustainability (Hossain, 1995).

The Baul and Sufi songs preserve the essence of spirituality in their wordplay. The well-known songs of Fakir Lalon Shah give the feel of the presence of a divine spirit within ourselves. As he says: “There stays my neighbour just beside my abode but I have not seen him once... that neighbour neither has limbs nor has shape... I have never seen him...”. The Bauls, who can instantly produce repartee in the battle of songs, also give us room to think deeply about our life and afterlife. As the renowned Baul Abdur Rahman Boyati says: “My mind is a human-clock, I intend to find out the Creator of it as it is running towards eternity after its Creator has put it on earth just once”. The Baul communities constantly seek to see a self-reliant sustainability for village Bangladesh and encourage this through their songs full of poetical, musical, and philosophical talent. They are the voice of criticism against material consumption and for social, economic and environmental sustainability. These voices also need to enter the formal system of primary education.

FOLK VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY – FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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Sustainability and folk values go hand in hand in Bangladesh’s culture. For example, traditional local knowledge promotes the obligation of care for the environment while harvesting or distributing resources. Therefore, sustainability originally appeared as an ecological concept, reflecting “prudent behaviour” by a predator that avoids over-exploiting its prey to ensure an “optimum sustained yield” (Odum, 1971, p. 223). On the other hand, sustainability as a living, dynamic and self-sustaining entity with the provision of fulfilment of the ecosystems while a depleting or failing sustainability is recognized as unsustainability (Hossain, 2001). Both terms sustainability and unsustainability can be applied to physical entities, such as soil, water and biodiversity, but also the non-physical aspects, including culture, education and politics. In the geo-environmental and cultural contexts of Bangladesh, sustainability means sustainable management of land- and water-based natural resources as well as cultural integrity. The natural resources satisfy people’s basic physical needs (food, shelter and clothing), while a cultural integrity is required to upkeep their spiritual health (i.e. spirituality) in order to uphold the sustainability of the biophysical environment.

Living simply is a pre-requisite for retaining the country’s holistic sustainability. This is evident in the sustainability precepts and practices of the rural masses despite decades of developmental efforts by donor countries, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the government that have made the country reliant on foreign aid (Novak, 1993). Hossain et al. (2007) argue that the engineers of this development have rarely had the cultural and spiritual connection with the Bangladeshi people. They seldom studied the oral tradition and the spiritual gurus. Bangladesh’s pro-Islamic secular culture emerged as an admixture of medieval Sufism with that of the culture of native Hinduism and Buddhism where simplicity and poverty-like self-reliant lifestyle were dominant. This encourages low consumption, respect for nature and fellow human beings, hence sustainability.

The use of folklore needs to be revived for the sake of renewing the country’s declining sustainability. Modernity has dimmed three critical domains that need to be resurrected for sustainability: our sense of ourselves as human beings – the human domain; our sense of our place in the natural world – the natural domain; and our sense of doing the

right thing – the ethical domain (Ehrenfeld, 2008). According to Adams (1974) folklore can help validate, maintain conformity or control, escape, and educate. These functions are most needed to design a better educational system with the use of folklore which can convey sustainability values (Fluehr-Lobban, 2004).

Let us look at one example – the legends about an extremely intelligent and erudite woman Khana, who, through very simple expressions, could make accurate predictions about day-to-day lives and still has enormous influence on rural people in Bangladesh. Her sayings or “bachans” have often been repeated by elders whenever Bangladeshi are confronted by nature’s endowment or calamities. This famous Bengali lady had simultaneously great astrological and ecological prowess, but also a will to learn from the experiences of the common farmers and artisans. Popular sayings of Khana are: “If it rains at the end of the month of Magh, the harvest promises affluence for the ruler”, “If it rains at the end of Falgun, one could bring home twice the yield” or “Do not cut the banana leaves after planting the saplings as that would ensure your food and clothing”. These proverbs and forecasts of Khana have provided guidance to farmers and continue to do so. In fact, farmers in villages are still following some of Khana’s verses in modern agricultural practices.

Khana’s verses are highlight key factors in crop management, such as the time for sowing, harvesting or seasonal adaptation. As she combines in the verses poetry and rhymes, they can easily be memorised by people and still are making significant influence on their lives. Below is an example translated in English:

The process to sow grains

Aush crop grows in three months.

If the saplings are sowed with some gap in between them,

they grow strong and in large quantities.

If seeds are sown in the month of Ashar, the harvest will be less.

If done in the month of Shravana, the harvest and crop growth will be very good.

If sown in the month Bhadra, very little growth is seen and

if sown in Ashwi, it results in useless efforts

since growth and harvest are almost negligible.

Although these verses were composed more than thousand years ago and have been transmitted only orally, modern agricultural technology has established them to be true scientifically with none proven wrong. This and other examples of folklore need to be embedded in formal education to re-establish people’s senses as human beings, their place on nature and righteous behaviour.

FOLK VALUES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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There are two types of primary education systems in Bangladesh – one emphasizes general or secular values while the other accentuates on religion-based moral values. Both systems have the potential to incorporate folklore-centric values and education for sustainability. The widely adopted understanding of sustainability refers to three dimensions, namely environmental, economic and social (United Nations General Assembly, 2005) which are applied to all human activities and use of natural resources. They also apply to human settlements, including urban and rural lifestyles. However, despite overwhelming evidence that there is a close connection between the foundations of folklore as traditional wisdom and sustainability as a philosophy that reconceptualises development to protect the natural environment while improving people’s living standards and safeguarding social cohesion, these two concepts are rarely linked. They espouse similar value systems and can serve to educate people to find ways to sustain life for all species on this planet.

The best way to establish such a link is at the beginners’ stage of formal education, that is primary school. Through its stories, fables, proverbs, legends and songs, folklore offers the tools to communicate respect for nature, nurture values of responsibility and spiritual connection. The teachers play an essential role in this process through their knowledge and approach but also through the inter-personal relationships of trust and respect that facilitate

communication in the classroom. Children are usually quick to separate fact from fantasy and are in a position to hear the underlying message of the story (Russell, 2009). They can sort out good from evil and identify with the positive characters. Such stories are vivid and entertaining, they symbolise cultural beliefs and contain fundamental human truths by which people have lived for centuries. They are also brief and although they may contain elements of fantasy, they always hold a resolution or a moral learning for the problem.

Bangladeshi culture abounds with folk-tales, songs and proverbs which help build national identity and secular responsibilities for the country's natural environment and its people (Chowdhury, 2013). Folk culture is a way of establishing unity not only between different people living in the same country but also between species and with the biophysical environment as often fauna, flora or natural phenomena play part in the plot. The use of the oral tradition to communicate values makes the learning process particularly suited for young adolescents whose reading skills are still developing.

In some cases, proverbs can be used to draw children's attention and fantasy to explain certain sayings and even create plays that represent their morals. Possible examples are: "Cut your coat according to your cloths", "a stitch in time saves nine", "as you sow, so you reap", "grasp all, loss all" and many more. Each Bengali proverb can lead children on a right way and attitude towards life if they are nurtured with these lessons at a tender age.

In most cultures around the world, including in Bangladesh, there was a rich tradition of storytelling for children and even adults. Indeed in the past, children were entertained and instructed with folktales. This tradition has been overtaken by the written culture. Some writers have tried to write down and preserve the oral tradition in books which are aimed at children and can be used in the school settings, particularly as many children, especially those born in the urban areas, have lost touch with the oral traditions of their people because of the busy lifestyles of their parents and most grandparents living in the rural areas.

One of the first to collect 22 Bengali stories was Lal Behari Dey (1883). These folk tales have been passing from generation to generation on the Indian subcontinent for centuries. The stories in *Thakur Maa'r Jhuli* (or *Grandmother's Bag of Tales*) is another collection of Bengali folk tales first gathered by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder and published in 1907 (Majumder, 1907) with an introduction by Rabindranath Tagore (a 1913 Nobel laureate in literature). They have also been translated into English (Jhuli et al., 2005) and many have been filmed and televised. These short stories offer a rich material that can be used in primary schools. Some depict different characters that suffer misfortunes, but qualities, such as courage and kindness, help them improve their lives. Others show interactions between people and animals or birds, some being mythical. Other stories with sustainability messages that can be included are *Fish on a Tree*, *The Clever Farmer's Wife*, *Turning Cows into Men*, *The Fox and the Crocodiles*, *The Rabbit and the Tiger*, *The Prince and the Demons* – the list is very long. Children are likely to respond in a very positive way because they are not only entertaining but also carry significant moral lessons. Other sources that can be used include "Fish on a Tree; Tales from Bangladesh" by Abdal (2010) and Basak's (2007) history of Bengali proverbs.

Folklore can carry along and teach the history of a people as well as their cultural norms, such as diligence, respect, perseverance etc. Dangers and how to avoid them may be pointed out. Primary purposes served when a story is told is to raise interest, provide fun and excitement. Fables which attribute human features to animals present moral truths and offer guidance. Folklore also provides stability, rules and rationalisations when other institutions and conventions within society are challenged. This is particularly important for young people who need direction and are keen to learn.

Folklore sessions in schools and after-school programs will bring young people in touch with their communities, their ethnic identities, the authentic cultural expressions of their families and others through direct participation (Mazharul, 1985). Ethnographic methods based on photography, video, radio, audio recordings, exhibitions, festivals and encounters with tradition-bearers, including Bauls can also be used. Web-based resources can also link educators and teachers to folk arts programs across Bangladesh. Folklore can be a valuable element in education integrating formal and informal learning enhancing the quality of tuition.

It is very important to keep in mind the impact story telling has on young learners. The poem by Richard Peck (in *Children's Literature*, n.d.) conveys this well:

A story is a doorway

That opens on a wider place.

A story is a mirror

To reflect the reader's face.

A story is a question

You hadn't thought to ponder,

A story is a pathway,

Inviting you to wander.

A story is a window,

A story is a key,

A story is a lighthouse,

Beaming out to sea.

A story's a beginning,

A story is an end,

And in the story's middle,

You just might find a friend.

CONCLUSION

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Teachers' approach to the classroom, their understanding and beliefs regarding moral values "play a pivotal role in grooming the personality of the learners" (Asif et al., 2020, p. 1). This is particularly true in primary education which moulds and shapes the individuality and traits of the new generation. When teachers use folklore as the basis to communicate sustainability messages, they establish a long-term pattern of knowledge and wisdom in the hearts and minds of the learners.

With sustainability becoming a global priority to build knowledge, life skills, attitudes and values of students to transform society, children need to be exposed to the best ways of learning. Access to quality literature and appeal to the young learner are essential in this process (Huck, 1979). Including folklore in the primary school curriculum easily achieves these aims. In the case of Bangladeshi rich folk tradition, it is not difficult to find suitable material that can convey the right messages in a way accessible to primary school children. Linking folklore and sustainability in formal primary education in Bangladesh will not only continue the cultural tradition but will also prepare the new generation to face the challenges of the present and the future.

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The Rhetoric of Bengali Proverbs and Sayings on Conventional Moral Education for Children in Bangladesh: Sustainability Perspective

Saria Tasnim¹

Abstract

From time immemorial, in traditional Bangladesh, proverbs and sayings were used as a tool for inculcating conventional moral education which was playing a very important role in dealing with any disaster and in building the necessary resilience, for children, in particular. Perhaps it supports the belief, that the more developed is a country or society, the less resilient are the generations. On the other hand, the more people live in natural disaster-prone areas, in developing or underdeveloped countries, the more resilient they are. Again, just being resilient to natural calamities does not make people with high morale. It requires the presence of 'moral and values education' in overall education. The philosophers, intellectuals believe that civic education or conventional moral education should be considered as important resources for value education. Folk values do not mean fairy tales or clinging to old ideas. Folk values are apparently what makes a person humane and learn from the environment around them, from the people in the environment, which they use for the benefit of themselves and others. Bengali folklore has the treasure trove of these values in every branch of its genres, proverbs and sayings, can be a powerful tool to communicate with children. This paper is a part of a series of papers, where the author's efforts are to investigate a holistic approach on how 'folk values and wisdom' generated from our rich folklore can be used as a 'tool' to best implement into formal or non-formal primary education in Bangladesh for reviving our declining sustainability and help building the pro-sustainability attitude and the sustainability wisdom to the future generation.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Folk values, Moral education, Primary Education, Pro-sustainability attitude, Sustainable development.

Introduction

The major objective of this paper is to develop a mapping based on the generally acknowledged Principles of Sustainability (namely kindness, modesty, simplicity, resilience, patriotism, naturalism) which will also evaluate the contexts of folklore that will be compatible with the children. This mapping will establish a link amongst the three main components of sustainability. At the same time the paper aims to investigate the possibilities of implementing 'folk values' generated from our folk genres, as a best means or tool to intertwine between building moral values into our future generation that relates to sustainable development. Following

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this paper, a series of papers will be developed to investigate how 'folk values and philosophy' that are generated from the genres (mostly proverbs, sayings, poems, and stories) of Bangladeshi rich folklore, can be used as a 'tool' that can fit into formal or non-formal primary education in Bangladesh for reviving our declining sustainability and help to build the pro-sustainability attitude and the sustainability wisdom to the future generation.

To develop the qualities/values of sustainability management is often regarded as the greatest of education in Islam (Hussain and Ashraf 1983: 29) as development of values are considered to be the very basis for sustainability. Values education in Islam, is an integral part of education which reinforce the sensibility into the learners and it is governed by their spirituality (Siregar, 2021) and deeply felt ethical values in their attitude towards life, their actions, decision and approach to all kinds of knowledge. In Bangladesh, education at all levels has been replaced with a culture that encourages competition, profit-making usage of science and technology and thriving consumption. Education has become a commodity rather than a value. Hence, we are experiencing global degradation and destruction of the natural and social environment as consequences. Social degradation refers to social injustice and conflicts, and unsustainable demographic trends (Rhaman, 2011). Unwise utilization of technologies is socially and environmentally harmful for a community in terms of depleting biodiversity, deteriorating ecosystem health and climatic changes.

When my skilled migration visa application for Australia was refused on the first attempt, my migration agent wrote me an email explaining every possible detail of the reason for the refusal. Knowing how heartbroken it would be for me, she ended her email saying, "when one door shuts, another open". This was just not a mere proverb, saying, or sentence to console. What she wrote rather brought new hope, strength, and enthusiasm for my successful second attempt. Soon after we moved to Australia, we adopted a new lifestyle after a struggling culture shock. On our usual family dinner, when kids were fussy and were dropping foods secretly under the dining table, my usual instinct told the kids, "You will be beaten by 70 snakes, for every single piece of food you are wasting". Out of no surprise, they started multiplying the pieces of foods they were hiding, with 70, and stopped throwing food under the table. This surely worked on me while I was a young kid, albeit little evidence of the existence of 70 snakes after death. Some proverbs and beliefs stay in our lives with no sheer evidence of reality and are carried by generations. They remain not as outworn sentiments from an earlier age but as a rule of conduct. This incident has opened an avenue for me to renew the traditional beliefs and values that were instilled in me by my parents and to pass them on to my

children. The important part that strikes in my mind is that those proverbs or sayings will be merely kept as a text in historical records if they are not used or practiced in our everyday lives, which I have observed a significant decline in past decades. From European courtrooms to African legal rituals, they use proverbs for the same purpose. The case usually will be won, not by the man who knows the most proverbs, but by the man who knows best how to apply the proverbs he knows to the problem at hand (Arewa & Dundes, 1964). Another famous Bengali proverb can represent this milieu,

*Gronthogoto biddha ar
porohosthey dhon
nohe biddha, nohe dhon
holey proyojon*

Knowledge in the book
wealth in hand
not a knowledge, not a wealth
if necessary

(Knowledge confined in books and wealth in other people's hands, are useless.)

Proverbs and sayings are conventional wisdom which is aesthetically pleasing and memorable. They get traditionally accepted by repetition of use over the time. Unfortunately, this widespread proverbial tradition is missing in many nations including Bangladesh. One of the major aims of this paper is to re-establish the appropriate use and practice of our age-long proverbial treasures, through informal education, from a very primary level. It is of no use of knowing hundreds of words in your vocabulary unless you know how to put them into a sentence during your communication.

Folk (proverbial) Values into Conventional Moral Education

Values are defined as the fundamental principles that give guidance to a person to evaluate the merits and demerits of a thing. Our values are those principles and qualities that matter to us, which are really important to our sense of well-being. On one level, values are the ideas and beliefs on which we base our decisions. They are like an invisible DNA, made up of our sense of right and wrong, that structure our choices. So, our values are our beliefs (Anielski, 2009). Values are normative standards by which human beings are influenced in their choice among the alternative courses of action which they perceive. Certain basic or minimalist sets of values are necessary for collective survival: righteousness, forgiveness (do no harm), justice, constraints (abstinence), respect, belief in multi-culturalism, responsibility, courage, patriotism, honesty, compassion etc. (Derek, 2002). Therefore, education for sustainability that includes values education required for sustainable development as well as acquiring skill for becoming self-reliant; for values education is "...an attempt on the part of individuals and society to transmit to the succeed

ing generations their accumulated store of the knowledge of arts, values, customs and their ideals of life as a whole as well as their experiences in various fields which should help the younger generation in carrying on their activities of life effectively and successfully” (Ahmed, 1990:1). In cultural context of Bangladesh, the scale of natural resource use depends on people’s values. Thus, integrating folklore in primary education is, rather, essential to our children for understanding the natural and social environment around us and for connecting our knowledge with our concerns about nature, ecology and other people.

Folklore has been the most famously used tool to inculcate morals and values in children across the time in every nation. Much of the folklore has been created especially for children that serve them from birth (Jaffro, 2003). ‘Folklore’ has been translated as ‘wisdom of nation’ (Mailybaeva, 2015) that reflects the nation’s morals and manners, people’s lifestyle, knowledge of life, nature, cults and beliefs. All the genres of folklore, such as fairy tales, legends, epics and shezhire were widely used as great techniques in children’s education (Hartwick, 2008) taking into account the level of development of imagination, mentality and the use of visual combined techniques with imaginative, expressive language. The lessons often embedded in proverbs make them tools for moral education (Kwesi, 1999). Lynne Hamer’s one of the FIVE approaches of folklore in education has been to study folklore in schools, that is, how students and teachers form folk groups and create culture independent of or despite official culture. Kindergarten students and elementary school kids can learn about morals, traditions, beliefs, practices and attitudes of traditional community’s inhabitants and other grassroots groups through contact with folk creation (Gasouka & Arvanitidou, 2014). Alan Dundes, who was a graduate in teaching of English from Yale University has urged in one of his English education journals that K-12 teachers use folklore as an instructional tool to develop tolerance, and to use the students’ own cultural traditions to enhance learning (Dundes & Bronner, 2007). He called on teachers to rely on raw oral lore ‘performed by children for other children’. He was famous, in fact, for requiring his own college students to collect items of folklore that they would then describe and interpret. In this essay, he provided socio-psychological perspectives that can be used to interpret folk material. Dundes pointed to children’s folklore, not as something to be repressed, but rather to be exposed as only folklore can, issues of sibling rivalry, puberty, and parent/child relations. He distinguished folklore, as evidence, from the use of other materials, because it is autobiographical ethnography, a people’s own description of themselves. He evaluated what children typically relate in folklore to areas of special concern or anxieties that are expressed more readily in folklore than in everyday conversation.

Islam believes, Folklore is the vehicle of Ethnological studies in Bangladesh

(Islam, 1985, p. 361). Folklore programs in schools and after-school programs will bring young people in touch with their communities, their ethnic identities, the authentic cultural expressions of their own families and others through direct participation and ethnographic methods using photography, video, radio, audio recordings, exhibitions, festival, and residencies with tradition-bearers. Countries across the world have taken initiatives to bring folklore into an interdisciplinary field of study or utilize folklore as a valuable resource for primary, secondary and tertiary level. Some of the pioneers are China, Italy, Kazakhstan, USA, Canada, and Australia. The education system in Kazak has paid significant attention on identifying the theoretical basis of formation of valuable relationship of young school children and they have clarified the content and essence of the concept of 'value' through folklore (Mailybaeva, 2015). In their work 'Formation of modern world view of moral values of school children through the folklore education of Kazakh people' has given an evidence of how the scholars in this field shared their views of the importance of folklore in formation of moral values and authors own theoretical expression of genres of folklore that can be integrated in children's education.

The conventional moral and civic educations do not get their proper application or justification unless they are included in the customs of a nation. That is to say, until the teaching of ethics, of humanity, is limited to the textbook, and used as a tool to pass the exam only, it will not be reflected in real life. Rhaman states that both formal and non-formal education are indispensable to changing peoples' attitudes in order (for them) to be able to assess and address sustainability concerns in a holistic manner. The contributions of education to sustainable development, one of the key requirements, that are highlighted including the need for a new vision for education, one that seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future (Rhaman, 2011). Further cited from my Pir (spiritual guide) Shah Sufi Hazrat Muhiuddin Mujaddidi, whom I am one of the thousand followers, that children should be prepared from an early age to succeed in each of the aspects of life. Values for managing each aspect of life needs to be instilled in order to equip students with the 'right' attitude for successfully managing all aspects of life. In this regard, he firmly believes that values education is pivotal in equipping the young generation with values to sustain themselves, with others as well as their environment. He argues that values instilled in 'hearts' do generate and guide emotions while only knowledges are unable to guide emotions. He further elaborates that the 'head' (knowledge) needs to work together with the 'heart' (values) to attain sustainability, as sustainability is a product of science as well as values. Hence, he stresses that there are millions of people with knowledge however, the world is still on a path of destruction and not on the path of sustainability as knowledge alone is not enough for sustaining relationships with others and with the environment.

Socio-cultural Aspects of Proverbs in Our Lives

Proverbs are short, concise sayings in common use which express some obvious and familiar truth or experience in sticking form (Frank, 1977). Some synonyms often used for the word proverb are saying, sentential, maxim, aphorism, adage, motto and epigram. Proverbs are characterized by conciseness of form and by memorable and striking rhetorical techniques, such as Alliteration, Rhyme, Metaphor and simile, Repetition, Ellipsis, Proverbial phrases, Antithesis, Puns and Parallelism. However, it is hard to maintain the difference when it comes to the use in real life scenarios; the leaves, for example, are individual but hold the different branches of the same tree.

Proverbs are universal. It is generally considered to be the folk wisdom of the common man in every distinctive nations or communities. From Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, Romans to modern age, proverbs became widely applicable to a variety of situations based on everyday observations of life and natural phenomena. A wide known Turkish proverb says, "*He who does not listen to proverbs remains screaming for help*"; according to Russians, "*For the sake of proverb, a peasant walks to Moscow*"; and the Yoruba of Nigeria would say, "*The man who knows proverbs reconciles difficulties*". Societies where proverbs are intensely used also recognise their high aesthetic value, their role as discourse ornaments. The proverb is a *lamp of the word* among the Arabs and an *ornament of speech* in Iran. According to the Somali, proverbs '*put spice into speech*'. The Igbo believes that, *proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten*, implying that words are hard to swallow without a proverb lubricant. The proverb's vitality in speech is marked by the observation among the Yoruba that it is '*the horse of conversation- when the conversation droops, the proverb picks it up*'. (Walter K. Kelly, 1989)

Proverbs or sayings can articulate in a different form comprising similar significance and they determine state of people's relationship in different stages in life. A Bengali saying 'Boshonter kokil' comes in a form of aphorism where, Boshon- to is Spring, Kokil is Cuckoo. In Bangladesh, Cuckoo only comes in Spring and the situation symbolises someone's state of relationship that fake friends come only in good times. In another instance, *Su-shomoye bondhu botey onekei hoy / O-shomoye hay hay keu karo noy* where su-shomoy is (in good times), bondhu is friends, onekey is many; o-shomoy is (in bad times), hay hay is regrettably ; keu karo noy is (no one at all). The lexical translation would be 'Many are friends in the good time, alas, no one at all'. This has universally spoken by people as 'A friend in need is a friend indeed' in every nation's own form. Such as, the Scotch proverb counsels not amiss, Try your friend afroe ye need him; He that would have many friends should try few of them (Italian); Give out that you have many friends, and believe that you have few''

(French).

Having said that, in this day and age, in which many of our educational endeavours may be characterized as 'value-free', we could do worse than revitalize an important part of the western liberal-education tradition (Frank, 1977). Like other forms of rhetoric, proverbs may be used as 'impersonal vehicles' for communication. But their best use may be as what Kenneth Burke calls, 'equipment for living'. As such they still have a vital relevance for modern man in the presentation and preservation of ethical values.

The Magic of Proverbs and Saying in Bengali lives, Hence Sustainability

The day to day sentiments, that is very rationally known to us, can be presented through proverbial sayings, in a totally artistic form, comfortably articulated that gives us confidence and a positive vibe in our thoughts. Folklore has a kind of trust and validation, the ability to show reality through fantasy. A feature of Bengali proverbs or sayings is that almost every verse carries a special message of morale or lesson for life. Proverbs are used in all nations of the world, in all cultures. A kind of confidence and acceptance for respective proverbs is naturally formed in the human mind. Proverbs explore veracity in front of people with examples. It has its use everywhere in human life which includes our everyday conversations, arguments, praises and humiliations, advices and instructions, warnings and consequences, guidance's and disciplines, agreements and statements. When two people are arguing, we often use a Bengali proverb 'Ek hatey tali baje na' (clapping with one hand doesn't make sound) or (it takes two to make a quarrel). As soon as the proverb is said, the thought that comes to the third person is about the involvement of the both parties. They both deal with their actions as they choose to embark on their part. The allegations of the two parties then analysed impartially. Proverbs carry underlying meanings beyond the general perception that prompts a voice of confidence from the core of the human mind.

Learning from oral traditions is an important element in the process of expanding perspectives on the history of the development of education for sustainability precept and practice (Regan, 2000, p. 10). It is argued that all beliefs and values have sprung from verbal face-to-face communication and are held in human memory, particularly by rural societies. Orality is, therefore, creations beyond the reach of literates (Rosenberg, 1991, p. 27). The oral tradition in Bangladesh includes local proverbs, folk song, folk stories, religio-spiritual discourses and wisdom on the environment (Khonar Bhachan), all this verbally translated knowledge helps people to understand and relate to other fellow human beings and to their natural environment. (Regan, 2000) argues that proverbs (sayings providing easily remembered succinct), for example, are one aspect of the oral tradition that helps develop

people's reasoning power and skills, and embody the wisdom and experience of people lacking written records in a concise, quotable and often amusing form.

Adoption of our folk philosophy and the pro-sustainability lifestyle has become part of culture in Bangladesh, especially for the rural folks. The popular culture is a cluster of wisdom (Hossain, 2006) that has answers to social, economic and environmental queries. Bangladesh has rich proverbial local knowledge which is highly observed in people's day to day living and decision making – hence, sustainability. 'What is (al) lotted cannot be blotted', 'to do or die', 'cut your coat according to your cloth', 'where there is a will, there is a way', 'failure is the pillar of success', 'grasp all, lose all', 'avarice begets sin, sin begets death', 'necessity knows no bounds', 'money is not all', 'man is the slave of his environment', 'there is no happiness without sorrow', 'values know not how to compromise with immorality', 'take the bad with the good', 'every time has its knowledge', 'when you are losing your patience, try a little more patience', 'to live longer eat less, foolish is s/he who over-eats', 'desire for too much is ruining' are some examples that are common in the oral tradition of rural folks. These proverbs are considered as 'sustainability wisdom' in Bangladesh, for they convey a sense of values that belong to the universal human conditions (Afzal, 1986). Primary schools' program will apply lessons of how we learn from the stock of local knowledge as indicated above in order to build spirituality for resiliency under all circumstances including the impacts of climate change. The people of Bangladesh use such proverbs drawing on their spirituality to build resilience in order to combat the negative impacts of climate change. (Adger, 2009) argues that the local knowledge embedded in the proverbial oral traditions displays a commitment to undertake active measures in order to cope with any unnatural climate change consequences.

Concept Mapping: Children with Sustainability Wisdom Through Proverbs and Sayings

Proverbs and sayings in child-lore or children's literature, are not just mere stories of kings and queens or fairy tales. In every branch and genre of child-lore comprises the art to mould the child's emotional worlds from clay, the science of growing a tree from seed. Expectations left from one generation to next through the passage of that lore. I have forgotten many formulas of graduation, but I fondly remember the poem:

*Sokale uthiya ami mone mone boli
Sharadin ami jeno valo hoye choli
Adesh koren jaha more gurujone
Ami jeno sei kaj kori bhalo mone.*

I wake up in the morning and
I pledge to do good all day long
What my elders advise me
I will graciously adhere to with
utmost respect

Myself, as a five years old little girl, were very delighted to have the foundation of understanding of what is Bhalo Manush (Good Human), Bhalo Kaj (Good Deeds), Bhalo Chinta (Good Thoughts), Gurujon (Respect to the elders) deliberately pass down through few verse of a poem. Even today, the sheer story of the liar shepherd boy warned me of the consequences of telling lies. Deep down my mind I am still terrified by the 'tiger of my mind' not the 'tiger in the forest'. The magic of child-lore lies here. The illustration formed in a child's mind lasts for many years, even for a lifetime. Just as a bedtime song or lullaby takes child's body and mind through an illusion and puts them into sleep, so a rhyme, story, legend or a mere proverb can snatch the necessary supplies from the child's mind, which is able to take place in their mind in perpetuity. Children possess a strong imaginative power. Since their minds are soft, they can be easily moulded and influenced. When a story or proverbial sentence describes an event of reality, they can easily relate to those proverbs, stories and realities by imagination. As a result, the lessons they learn from that proverb or story last long in their lives. However virtual learning alone does not have a very fruitful long-term effect if it is not practiced or real-life. Same goes for skill-based education, which is much more effective in real life than knowledge-based education

Translation in Mapping

The factual or literal meaning and the functional significance of proverbs in our daily life are different from one another. That is, many proverbs or sayings have differences in lexical or etymological terms and the intellectual sense. On the other hand, many wise sayings relate closely to proverbs by having most of their characteristics except grammatical form. This cognitive denotation desires to be accentuated when communicating with children through proverbs or sayings. The magical treasures of Bengali proverbs are used in the conversation of praise, condemnation, argument, sarcasm, humour, encouragement, advice, comparison and almost every aspect in our everyday life. These proverbs and sayings make any statement more powerful, widely acceptable and more interesting. This paper attempts to analyse a few of the well-practiced proverbs amongst hundreds and how it relates to Bengali proverbs and aspects of sustainability and how they can be communicated with children in the classroom in primary level.

Proverbs may contain material or tangible existence and non-material or intangible existence. In both cases they can be illustrated to children with familiar products that coexist in their daily lives. Identify the 'verb' or 'action' and 'consequences' from the sentence that will amalgamate with sustainability aspects. Author has considered the mechanisms while translating and mapping those proverbs with sustainability: Phonemic content, meaning of morphemes involved, English equiva

lent for the 'sense' of the whole proverb (Charles & Preston, 1946). Texture of a language cannot be translated (Islam, 1985) as every language has its very own style of interlacing the words whereas text has the flexibility for literal or free translation. Therefore, the author did not take any attempt to show Bengali grammatical classes by means of the translation and rather a literal and a free translation was applied in each text unit. The literal translations appear as specific units corresponding in each case to a specific text unit. All text units are positioned according to their places in the sentence. The meaning units, however, is corresponding with a text unit, in the literal translation according to their corresponding position. The meaning units are specific approximations of the Bengali meaning, in terms of each particular Bengali context. Thus, for example, the conjunctive suffix -e is not always rendered by English -ing or by any other constant form (Ferguson & Preston, 1946). The conjunctive suffix -ey, -er is not always translated by any other constant form, rather according to its specific English equivalent for the context in which it appears. These are the pronominal correlatives in Bengali characterized, in general.

- X was marked for literal translation and Y for free translation.
- The text can be a word, or a sequence of words and when it consists of more than one English word, it is connected by hyphens (~).
- The sign (,) is used to indicate hemistich boundaries.
- The sign (/ /) was deployed in conjunction to multiple proverbs with similar significance.

Proverbs in Mapping

1. *Porley dana matitey, 70 shaap ashbe katitey*

X *drop ~ food ~ on the floor, 70 ~ snakes ~ comes to ~ bite*

Y *Wasting food will bring upon you a deadly punishment on the big judgment day.*

(a) Verb / Action: Dropping food or wasting food

(b) Consequences: will be beaten by seventy snakes;

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: If you drop food particle or a piece of food to the floor and not being respectful, you will be bitten by 70 dangerous snakes after death. This is just not a proverb or sayings; this belief will help children to not be wasteful and also be respectful of the food and thankful for the privilege they are having the food.

2. *Dosher lathi , eker bojha // doshey miley kori kaj, hari-jiti nahi laj*

X *ten ~ stick ~ one ~ burden // ten ~ together ~ let's do ~ something, lose-win ~ no shame*

Y *Unity is strength // Many a little makes a mickle.*

(a) Verb/action: The first proverb doesn't contain any verb. This was consisting of two nouns with adjuncts and these proverbs are used in Bengali conversation as

nouns, not as a complete sentence. However, the second proverb with a similar expression and significance has a verb complimenting with an adverb.

(b) Consequences: achieve something big with total efforts, promote determination and persistence

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: In a group let's get together and do the job then whether we win or lose there's no shame. This is a morale booster for teamwork and social solidarity where today's children together will change tomorrow's world and keeps it sustainable.

3. *Ay bujhe baye koro*

X income ~ according ~ spend ~ do

Y Cut your coat according to your clothes or spend within your means.

(a) Verb/action: spend within

(b) Consequences: over exploit of resource will soon cause scarcity

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: This is considered a universally used proverb in different culture. A 5-11 years old child's mind can easily be mapped to the very deeper concept of sustainability which is, 'living within the limits to support ecosystems', encourage them to be modest in their real life. As an instance if you have a total of three meals for the whole day and with these three meals you have to satisfy your hunger all day long. But if you eat more than one in the morning, then if you feel hungry at the noon or night, you may not leave anything to eat. Again, if you have a faucet of water to meet your daily water needs and you keep it open for no reason, the faucet may run out of water and you will not get any when you really need it and be in trouble.

4. *Shoburey Meowa Pholey*

X Patience ~ dessert ~ happened

Y The fruit of patience

(a) Verb/action: patience

(b) Consequence: patience brings better result

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: One of the very well-known and important proverbs in Bengal. 'Shobur' denotes the word 'patience' or 'persistence' and 'meowa' is a very tasty dessert that takes a long time to make and therefore has an inherent connection to patience. Patience is a process through which the 'fruits' as in 'results' are always sweet, and when this proverb is properly explained to children, it certainly helps them become more tolerant and resilient in daily life.

5. *Jeebey doya kore jae Jon, sae Jon shebichey isshorey*

X beings ~ kind ~ be ~ which, that ~ serve ~ God

Y A person who care for all creatures serves God

- (a) Verb/action: kind to living and non-living being
- (b) Consequences: serves humanity, serves God
- (c) Sustainability aspect/s: The proverb is a combination of social and religious involvement together. The attempt to please God or the Creator exists in all religions. It is revealed through the proverb how easy it is to serve God by being kind to all living and non-living being, physical and non-physical being that includes a stewardship towards human, non-human lives, soil, water, air, biodiversity as well their cultural and spiritual tradition and heritage.

6. *Shomoyer ek phor, oshomoyer dosh phor*
X in time ~ one ~ stich, un timly ~ ten ~ stich
Y A stitch in time saves nine // Make hay while the sun shines

- (a) Verb/action: Get things done on time
- (b) Consequences: you will never get the 'time' you lost already.
- (c) Sustainability aspect/s: Troubles will quickly multiply if you do not handle them at once. For a student, if homework is not done on time or an exam preparation is not done prior the exam, failure will be inevitable. You've got to get things done while the opportunity is ripe. If you want to reach the goal of your life, make the best use of your childhood and youth, so that your adulthood can be meaningful. Take a good care of your health before it's too late.

7. *Shokal shoy, shokal uthey – tar kori na boiddho lutey*
X early ~ sleep ~ early ~ rise – that/those ~ wealth ~ no/not ~ robber ~ rob
Y Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy wealthy and wise

- (a) Verb/action: early rise and early sleep
- (b) Consequences: sound health, sound life
- (c) Sustainability aspect/s: This proverb denotes the importance of discipline throughout someone's life. A sound health is the rudiments of a sound life that will bring wealth, happiness, and success individually and as a whole. Children in specific would be demonstrated the value of discipline to help them prepare for this complex world.

One of the most signified and popular proverbs in Bengali that was illustrated both rhymed (multiple sentences) and unrhymed (single sentence) form.

Ek poysha jomaano mane ek poysha rojgar kora
X one ~ penny ~ saved ~ means ~ one ~ penny ~ earn ~ do (silent verb)
Y A penny saved is a penny earned.

or

Bindu bindu joley shindhu hoy drops ~ drops ~ water ~ nation (shindhu) ~ be

Rai kuriye bel hoy

small moles ~ pick ~ large moles ~ be

Y Little savings makes a mighty sum

Drops of water make the ocean.

or

Choto choto balu kona

small, tiny grains

Bindu bindu jool

drops of waters

Gorey toley mohadesh

builds a nation

Shagor otol

or an ocean

(a) Verb/action: small savings; little accumulative actions and efforts

(b) Consequences: every action counts in either achieving or destroying.

(c) Sustainability aspect/s: Every big achievement starts with a small beginning. Sustainability is an outcome of total effort locally and globally. To achieve sustainability, every little action count and it is important for the children to understand how sustainability is affected by what they do, what they use, what they eat. A small change in their attitude can bring big changes in their lives and to the world. One plant per student per year, can contribute against the global warming or a habit of little savings can prepare them to live life more economically, understand the economic value of wealth. On the contrary, a little negligence or wrongdoing may cause devastation to our social, economic and environment.

These proverbs and sayings encompass intense sensitivity and lifelong advice for the children for them to be brought up with a sense of timeliness, fear of wrongdoing, living simple and humble and building resilience and sense of responsibility.

Conclusion

Values and ethics cannot be taught (Derek, 2002) by any formula or curriculum cannot be formed as numeracy-literacy. These intangible qualities always need informal composition and are integrated through practice. A child does not understand the difference between rich and poor, black and white, good and bad unless the perceptions come from the adults, either by listening to them or by seeing them doing. Values such as 'always speak the truth' or 'forgiveness is a great virtue' sleep in a 'sentence' until we get them used in real life. This 'empathy' needs to be created in them which they can feel and apply to those words of morality. Inculcating empathy through proverbs can be a valuable tool.

Bengali rhetoric's, say Khonar Bachan, was used as teaching materials in Bangladesh from generations to generations. This literature composed with the

innumerable proverbs with deal with most discourses on seasonality, agriculture, human wellbeing, poverty, stress, joy, sorrow, health, lifestyle, population, economy, agriculture, horticulture, biodiversity, technology, human etiquette ethics and behaviors, do's and don'ts with regards to environment, values and spirituality (Rahman, 2011). It is claimed that when we read the oral verses on agriculture, weather, seasons, wind or propitious moments of travel, we find the people who epitomised the vast and authentic knowledge of these subjects were pertinently called 'the product of time'. (Afaz & Sattar,1986) compiled over 1,000 oral verses covering the link between seasonality and agriculture, norms to be adhered to for achieving social, economic, technological and environmental sustainability. Folklore has been the most famously used tool to inculcate morals and values in children across the time in every nation. Much of the folklore has been created especially for children that serve them from birth (Jaffro, 2003). Teachers should not limit exploring their knowledge and ideas within the collected proverbs or sayings or stories of their respective areas in the classroom.

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Supporting the Sustainable Development Journey of Bangladesh with Folk Values in Primary Education

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Abstract

Sustainability and sustainable development are now centre-stage in economic, environmental, social and educational activities around the world. However, these are not only complex concepts, but the perspective and understanding vary in different places, time, geographical and economic conditions. What is of particular relevance to Bangladesh, is the importance of educating for sustainability while emphasising values education and responses to the current realities that have resulted from factors, such as economic development and climate change. This is particularly the case in primary education which builds the foundation for preparing children for dealing with future challenges. This paper argues that sustainability attitudes can be communicated by embedding folk values in primary education as a way to communicating complex concepts and supporting the sustainable development journey of Bangladesh which as a country has to respond to issues related to population growth, poverty, inequality and climate change. It investigates the place of values and wisdom from the country's rich folklore as a tool in formal and non-formal primary education in Bangladesh to encourage a holistic approach to sustainability which looks at the needs of people within the boundaries of the natural environment.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Challenges, Folk Values, Primary Education, Sustainability, Unsustainability.

Introduction

Sustainability is a living and dynamic concept which describes a state of fulfilment of the planet's ecosystems in a way that allows for well-being of the human population. Unsustainability can be recognized as a depleting or failing sustainability. Both sustainability and unsustainability, can be applied to bio-physical entities such as soil, water and biodiversity, as well as to non-physical aspects, such as education, health, equity and politics. The tradition of Bangladesh has inherently adopted a balance between natural resources and human needs (Hossain, 1995; 2001), however more recently under the impacts of globalization the culture in

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the country has changed towards unsustainability by promoting only the materialistic well-being of its people. In the cultural and geo-environmental contexts of Bangladesh, sustainability refers sustainable management of land, water and other natural resources which is essential for basic physical needs in people's life (such as food, shelter and clothing), as well as upkeeping the cultural integrity that required their spiritual health to live meaningful lives and uphold the sustainability of natural resources.

Despite opinions that there is a difference between sustainability (e.g. the outcome of sustainable development) and sustainable development (e.g. the process leading to sustainability), these two terms are most commonly used interchangeably (e.g. Holden et al., 2014) as they entail the same dimensions and have similar implications for policy making, practitioners and educators. At a global level, there have been many ways of conceptualising sustainability as a development process within the boundary limits of the planet. The first and most-quoted definition of sustainability as a process is from the Brundtland Commission's report 'Our Common Future' (WCED, 1987, p. 43). As a boundary concept, sustainability emerged even earlier with the 1972 'Limits to Growth' report by the Club of Rome (Meadows et al., 1972) which discussed the planetary constraints compared to exponential economic and population growth. More recently the ecological and social dimensions were put together within the "doughnut model" (Raworth, 2017) which combines nine planetary boundaries (climate change, ocean acidification, chemical pollution, nitrogen and phosphorus loading, freshwater withdrawal, land conversion, biodiversity loss, ozone layer depletion and air pollution) and 12 social footings (water, food, health, education, income and work, peace and justice, political voice, social equity, gender equality, housing, networks and energy).

The world through the United Nations has responded to these concepts with practical approaches. They include the 2000–2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2005–2014 Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and 2016–2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Agenda 2030. Sustainability, including education for sustainability, is now one of the most important agendas to across the world maintain peace and allow for a development that integrates environmental and social priorities. However, there is still a fundamental gap in developing pro-sustainability attitudes, practices and habits (Linder et al., 2022). The issue of human values is pivotal in the quest for solutions. Modernisation and industrialisation have been associated with a shift away from traditional human values which were perceived as hampering development (Tipps, 1976; Mensah, 2019). On the other hand, people are at the core of sustainable development and their knowledge, skills and values can encourage conservation and regeneration of

the natural environment as well as influence what production methods are acceptable (Mensah, 2019).

Education can influence people in developing knowledge, skills and behaviours, and for this purpose, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has asserted the importance of re-orienting education for sustainability to be value-laden (Rhaman, 2011). Education that fosters values and attitudes and synergistically inspires students towards pro-sustainability behaviour building can instigate related sustainability practices. Different countries of the world, based on their geographical location, socio-economic, political and cultural context, are taking appropriate steps to determine the appropriate education systems and educational tools that can encourage sustainability. The challenges they face differ. There is no country in the world yet that has managed to achieve social prosperity and good life without transgressing the planetary boundaries (O'Neill et al., 2018). Countries are also differently affected by unsustainability.

Despite the small contribution to the global ecological footprint, Bangladesh is one of the biggest victims of the problems caused by industrialised wealthy countries. In fact, Bangladesh has not yet transgressed the country's biophysical boundaries (O'Neill et al., 2018) despite making significant economic and social progress and since 2015 becoming a low middle-income economy (World Bank, 2022a). Bangladesh can follow along the route of abandoning traditional values and replacing them with modern attitudes that leads towards exceeding the planetary boundaries or can aspire for a different model of development where social thresholds are achieved without compromising ecological health. We have attempted to explore the sustainability challenges that Bangladesh is dealing with from a different perspective by examining the need for an approach in primary education that motivates children to develop pro-sustainability attitudes by instilling folk values into their daily-life practices.

Materials and Methods

The study is based on a review of literature and practical experience combined with critical reflection. As a research method, the aim of critical reflection is to learn from experience with the explicit task to improve professional practice (Fook, 2011), such as primary education. Educating for sustainability provides the context, theoretical perspective and transdisciplinary approach to translate theory into practice by drawing on non-established ideas and breaking away from existing assumptions, restrictions and philosophies (Meyer and Lemaire, 2018). This is where critical reflection and other similar concepts used in qualitative research,

such as reflectivity, reflexivity and reflective practice (Fook, 2011), can assist. Reflective practices in research allow the researcher to be aware of their thoughts and the learnings that emerge from the analysis while reflexivity and critical reflection consider how these insights can influence the broader context of professional practices (Kallos, 2021).

Research in sustainability and educating for sustainability require such a critical-reflection approach in order to improve current practices. Moreover, for primary teachers to be not mere technicians in delivering basic literacy and numeracy skills, they also need to embrace reflectivity and engage in a deep way (Mortari, 2015) in the process of building sustainability values. This requires them to understand sustainable development as a complex journey with a range of interdependent dimensions as well as the specifics of Bangladesh and the wealth of opportunities that the country's folklore offers in building up sustainability values. These issues are further analysed in the remainder of the paper.

Sustainability and Sustainable Development as a Complex Journey

At the core of sustainability is integration of environmental and social priorities within an economic framework that often takes precedence over the other two sets of considerations. There have been numerous voices that humanity – that is, individuals, communities, economies, societies and cultures, is embedded in the planet's biosphere, on which it depends but which it also shapes (Folke et al, 2016). Using the case of protecting the global oceans, Pretlove and Blasiak (2018) argue that the health of the biosphere is the pre-condition for addressing societal issues and any economic development should improve people's lives without causing environmental degradation. In other words, there is a clear hierarchy with the natural environment representing the foundations for social development which in turn is the basis for economic prosperity (see Figure 1). Although complex, these three concepts can be easily conveyed at a primary school level using simple toys. What is more difficult to convey are the limits of the three rings (see Figure 1), and particularly that on the top, that is, the economy. While the biosphere is determined by the boundaries of the planet and society by the population numbers, the economy needs to be contained and justified in order not to transgress the other two rings. In fact, exactly such transgression has been happening in the wealthier countries contributing to climate change, social injustice and the overall planetary unsustainability. Let's now look closer in how to convey the concept of Sustainable Development.



Figure 1. The interconnectedness between the three aspects of sustainability

Definition

The definition of sustainable development by the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987, p. 43) report 'Our Common Future' is: "a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The concept of 'needs' in particular is essential in this definition. It includes the needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given. In addition, there is also the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation represented through the notion of ability to meet present and future needs. There is complexity right from the original definition of sustainable development. For instance:

1. Interpretations can vary across different economic and social development in countries (developed or developing, market-oriented or centrally planned);
2. There can be conflict between 'physical sustainability' or the biophysical world and the 'social-political setting' or the level of society, particularly when logically the concept is extended to equity between generations;
3. The discrepancy within a generation with potential divergence between the basic needs of the vast numbers of people around the globe and their aspirations for an improved quality of life and those who are wealthier and have access to larger resources. Thus, poverty and inequity are present prone to ecological, social and other crises;
4. The perceived needs are socially and culturally determined. Thus 'consumption' is not clear in regard to long-term sustainability as 'living standards' do not have any 'set parameters' within countries, societies and communities;
5. Sustainable development requires economic growth which may compromise the non-exploitation of others. In fact, 'growth' itself is not enough if it fails to meet the essential needs of people;

6. Few immediate problems can be solved by technological developments but often lead to even greater challenges. Large sections of society may be marginalized by ill-considered development.

Therefore, it appears that the economic dimension was missing from the Commission's definition (Spangenberg, 2016). Spangenberg (2016) also stresses that the complexities of the three systems, namely biosphere, society and economy, is tremendous and beyond the analytical capabilities of current economic theories and models. This requires attention to be given on the interlinkages and systems co-evolution. Whilst the theoretical status of sustainable development has remained a polemical and passionate area of research, some have argued that sustainability is not something to be defined but to be declared as an ethical guiding principle (Trisoglio, 1996). Since the 1980s, our understanding of sustainability continues to evolve as do the critiques of the concept for being vague, challenging and multifaceted (Agbedahin, 2019).

Despite the lack of a 'unified theoretical definition' (Trisoglio, 1996, p. 23), the four original primary dimensions of sustainability as outlined by the Brundtland Commission, namely: safeguarding long-term ecological sustainability, satisfying basic human needs, promoting inter- and intragenerational equity, continue to be valid (Holden et al., 2014). This remains a point of agreement among the plurality of views expressed by businesses, governments, international bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), environmental groups and educators. So far, no country has managed to achieve sustainability when these four dimensions are analysed (Holden et al., 2014) and the SDGs with 169 explicit targets are concentrating the efforts across of the global community towards positive transformation. This requires collaboration and contribution from all stakeholders across society at a global, national and local level.

Stakeholders

Since 2000s, peace and partnerships for sustainability emerged as a new lens that defines the sustainability agenda (Sachs, 2012; UN 2015). Rahman (2011) explains that in terms of governance, it is a challenge to make any particular institution administratively responsible for this transformational agenda; instead, sustainability should permeate across all sectors and government structures as there is a need for fast changes that humanity has never experienced before under the current pressures of climate change, global poverty and other manifestation of unsustainable development. This is why it is important to identify the stakeholders and create meaningful and effective partnerships underpinned by the dimensions and values that define sustainable development. Education has a vital role to play in empower

ing people of all ages, and particularly young children, to take responsibility in creating a sustainable future (Agbedahin, 2019). Interestingly enough, education for sustainability so far has not been shaped by the pedagogical community but rather initiated by people, be it by well-intended policy-makers and other stakeholders, from outside the educational sector (Agbedahin, 2019).

Despite the lack of uniformity and agreement about its theoretical definition, Rahman (2011) believes, sustainability is a concept that ordinary people can easily understand. Moreover, it has a different meaning depending on their geographical, social or political context. The term itself is complicated representing a western concept to which non-westerns relate differently, mainly because their resilience is high, and they are more attuned to the natural environment. The global education for sustainability agenda has many universally applicable aspects but it needs to be grounded in the specifics of each locality and creatively use the available resources and tools, including those that people have used traditionally for millennia to support life. Most importantly it needs to make sense and be understood by the local people.

Comprehension

Defining sustainability in different realms is making it complex to be understood by the mass people and children in particular. While sustainability has come to be associated with the protection of biodiversity in biology, in economics, it is advanced by those who favour accounting for natural resources. In sociology, it involves environmental justice and in planning, the process of urban revitalization. In environmental ethics, sustainability means preservation, conservation or sustainable use of natural resources. The principles associated with sustainability, such as the futurity principle or the precautionary principle (Basiago, 1995), are also interpreted differently depending on contexts, perceptions, priorities and change with the course of time. While the wealthier countries are researching and producing new theories about biodiversity, forests, sea levels, renewable energy, global warming, climate change, human lives in countries, such as Bangladesh, Syria or Palestine, have become most vulnerable and the futurity and precautionary principles have less relevance compared to current risks.

Leading businesses, NGOs and academics are now referring to 'mega forces', such as population growth, globalisation and new work patterns (Kubik, 2012), and 'megatrends', such as the human dimension, geopolitical shifts and digitalisation (CSIRO, 2022), that influence sustainability in a way which is not fully understood. Often long-term consequences are ignored in favour of fixing one issue in a system that doesn't work (Holland & Wielgus, 2013). For example, building a

school in a developing country does not necessarily lead to more educated children. Teachers are also needed, which means teachers' training. We need books and computers, which means transport and logistics. The children must be able to get to the classroom safely and their parents need to be well-off enough to send them to school instead of having them work. Children also need to be well-nourished to be able to concentrate. People are at the core of the notion of sustainability. This includes not simply ensuring that they are fed and kept in good health but that they lead purposeful and productive lives.

Demography

More than half of the world's population since 2007 has lived in urban centres. It is estimated that in 2018, 55% of the world's population resides in urban areas and this share will reach 68% by 2050 compared to 30% in 1950 (UN, 2018). Urban population is not uniform around the globe and increasing urbanization will affect differently various parts of the world. Urbanization creates new jobs and opportunities for millions of people and has contributed to poverty eradication worldwide. At the same time, rapid urbanization adds pressure to the resource base and increases demand for energy, water and sanitation, as well as for public services, education and health care. Asia and Africa are the two continents where 90% of the expected growth in urban population will occur (UN, 2018). Yet most "governments in these two continents seem woefully unprepared for the challenges they will face in providing their urban citizens with the basic services and security from poverty, environmental degradation, and crime" (Siddiqui et al., 2016, p. 1). A vast infrastructure of roads, housing, public transport, power plants, manufacturing, municipal waste collection and public open spaces will be needed for the new urban dwellers, including those residing in informal settlements. In 2018, it is estimated that 1 billion people across the globe live in slums and informal settlements with 80% of them in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (UN DESA, 2022). Urban areas are seen as manifestation of a modern lifestyle in which traditional cultural values are gradually fading and replaced with consumerism and marketplace behaviours (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). From culture bearers, people become consumers in a society where individualism prevails over community life. This trend of increasing population poses many challenges which include growing inequality, concerns about safety and security, rising crime associated with social tensions and disparities, as well as health issues with air, water and land pollution and other environmental risks.

While carbon emissions due to fossil fuels are contributing to climate change, they also are linked to providing comfortable living in the city with the use of electricity in employment, transport, food preparation, air conditioning and

recreation. Communicating effectively about a topic like climate change can be complex, confusing, uncertain, sometimes overwhelming, often emotionally and politically loaded and overall challenging (APS, 2019). Food is another challenge for the world's population with over 800 million people going to bed hungry and more than a billion being overweight and obese (Marinova & Bogueva, 2022). It is also estimated that 32% of the total food produced globally is wasted (UN DESA, 2013, p. xii). Furthermore, livestock is consuming a staggering 50% of all grains grown in the world (Sansoucy, 1995) with this figure being even higher at 56% in Europe (Greenpeace, 2020), meaning that industrially raised, grained animals are competing directly with hungry human beings for food. Therefore, the quest for sustainable food production is also highly complex, multifaceted and site-specific with no one-size-fits-all solutions (ICSSL, 2016). It also needs to be communicated in a way that conveys these complexities.

Sustainable urbanisation is key to sustainability. To ensure that no one is left behind, urban growth needs to help maximise the benefits of population agglomeration while minimising adverse effects on the environment and providing infrastructure, food, education and services for all, including the poor, socially weak and vulnerable groups (UN, 2018).

Social

Social inequality, insecurity, and inadequate health and education services in developing or underdeveloped countries persist while the western world is struggling with providing more efficient public service. Even if global income inequality has receded slightly in recent years, inequalities within many countries have been rising (UN, n.d.). Still, the affluent 20% of the global population continue to consume 80% of the world's resources, such as water and land (Christian Aid, 2012). Since 1995, the top 1% of the world's richest people have captured 20 times more global wealth than the bottom 50% of humanity (Oxfam, 2021). Left unaddressed, these inequalities threaten sustainable development prospects in multiple ways.

According to Raphaely (2012), the economic aspect of development is embedded in the social and environmental conditions and can only be secondary to efforts of individual empowerment for sustainability. Education can contribute towards such individual empowerment for sustainability which needs to start from the very first years at school.

Within the complexity of sustainability, there are threats and theories but not that many solutions, plans and options. We are chasing after the effects rather

than stopping the causes; we are discussing and debating the consequences rather than finding the solutions. Education offers the opportunity to counteract unsustainability. However, there is neither any specific global solution nor is it possible to find one. Every nation and region must find not only specific solutions to deal with climate change and any other issues dealing with sustainability, but also ways to communicate them and develop the required level of comprehension. Common people might think it's too much to know. People who are living with \$1 or less a day can't ever think of renewable energy or solar panels. Thus, sustainability has always been complexed for millions of inhabitants of the earth! The challenges, solutions and opportunities vary from place to place and Bangladesh is no exception.

Challenges for Bangladesh

In the geo-environmental and cultural contexts of Bangladesh, sustainability means sustainable management of land and water-based natural resources as well as cultural integrity. This obligation is stipulated in Article 18A of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, added in 2011, as follows: "The state shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to preserve and safeguard the natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forests and wildlife for the present and future citizens" (Laws of Bangladesh, 2019, para. 1). Despite some successes in sustainable development initiatives in recent years, Bangladesh has yet to stretch the threshold in many areas. A full litany is beyond the scope of this paper and several challenges were identified for discussion to characterize the scale and seriousness of what Bangladesh is facing distinctively from the rest of the world and what measures should be taken.

Population

With 170 million population (1278 people/km²), Bangladesh is sitting as the 10th most densely populated country in 2021 (UN Population Division, 2022) and its environmental and ecological balance is under severe threat due to the over-exploitation of natural resources, deforestation, degradation, and habitat loss. Adding 700,000 Rohingya refugees who fled from Myanmar in 2017 (reaching later 850,000) has made these challenges more pressing for the environment, food security, law and order situation. Around 4,300 acres of hills and forests were cut down to make way for temporary shelters and 198 acres out of a total of 375 acres of natural forest land was invaded and around 3,000 to 4,000 acres of hilly land has been cleared of vegetation. From the remaining forest and jungles in Ukhia and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar, 6,800 tonnes of fuelwood are being collected each month (Uddin, 2018). Conversely, greenhouse gas emissions from human activities in 2020 were about 35

billion tonnes (t) of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e), which equates to 4.47 t of CO₂e per person, the highest per capita annual emissions being from oil-rich countries, such as Qatar at 37.02 t, Australia at 15.37 t, USA at 14.24 t, Canada at 14.2 t, and Europe at 6.61 t (Ritchie et al., 2020), being less densely populated countries. Bangladesh contributed 93 million t of CO₂e in 2020 compared to 392 million by Australia, representing only 0.56 t of CO₂e per person and making it one of the least polluting countries in the world (Ritchie et al., 2020). The largest geographical populations of China and India contributed 7.41 t and 1.77 t per person, respectively (Ritchie et al., 2020). In addition, the accumulated historical emissions per person per year over the period 1750–2020 show that US contributed 24.56% compared to 13.89% by China, 3.21% by India and only 0.09% by Bangladesh (Ritchie et al., 2020). These widely differing statistics raise ethical questions about the responsibility for reducing emissions and consequences from climate change. It also feeds into the challenges associated with the much higher rate of pollution to be generated by fast-industrialising nations like China and India in the short-term future. Challenges in providing necessities like energy, food and water, and essentials like health care and education, are related directly to population size in Bangladesh in the absence of necessary qualified personnel, institutional capacity, lack of awareness and education as well as extreme poverty making any law enforcement difficult in the country's setup.

Poverty

The lack of a minimum nutritionally adequate diet plus essential non-food requirements being not affordable (Townsend, 1993, p. 9) is the most obvious manifestation of poverty. It may be caused by social norms associated with the use and distribution of available resources, lack of social safety nets, political turmoil, civil unrest or war conflicts but it could also be the outcome of natural phenomena, including droughts, floods, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and other extreme weather events and geographic phenomena. Both groups of factors – social and natural, are creating poverty in Bangladesh. Brammer (1997), for example, explains that soil or land erosion due to river migration causes poverty to hundreds of thousands of families in the Char (bar) lands of Bangladesh. This is in addition to the inherent and difficult to address poverty characteristics that exist in Bangladesh – the needy, beggars, mystics and landless poor (Hossain, 2001). Hossain (2001) also gives another example – the neo-poverty generated through foreign aid which forces rural people to take loans that they cannot repay.

In 2018, 22 million people lived below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day in Bangladesh (World Bank, 2018). Urban slum population is estimated at 28 million or 47% of total urban population (World Bank, 2022b). A

large number of poor people depend on agriculture and meeting the basic demands of life is their major survival and resilience concern. The Green Revolution of the 1970s was an attempt of the West to assist in poverty alleviation in Bangladesh which had very mixed results and serious environmental consequences (Shiva, 2015).

Despite of 20.5% of its population living below the national poverty line of US\$5.50 per day in 2019 (Asian Development Bank, 2022), Bangladesh has a very positive outlook at the world and its country. Its economic progress, human capacity building and resilience reduction have been extraordinary (World Bank, 2018). Between 2016 and 2019, the share of population living below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day decreased from 14.8% (World Bank, 2020) to 4% for those who are employed (Asian Development Bank, 2022). In 2021, Bangladesh achieved a 6.9% GDP growth (World Bank, 2022a). Even amidst the global challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh moved up in the World Happiness Report 2022 to 94th place (from 101st in 2021) out of 146 countries (World Happiness Report, 2022).

Climate change

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world when it comes to natural disasters whose frequency has increased in recent years due to climate change (BBS, 2022). The impact on households has increased close to tenfold during 2015–2020 compared to 2009–2014 with flooding being the biggest contributing factor (BBS, 2022). According to the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index (Eckstein et al., 2021), Bangladesh as the world's 7th most vulnerable country to extreme climate events, 9th in annual fatalities, 37th in fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, 13th in losses and 37th in losses per unit GDP with 185 disaster events between 2000-2019. This is despite Bangladesh having a negligible impact on greenhouse gas emissions and a very low ecological footprint (Harmeling & Eckstein, 2013). The historic responsibility for global warming through carbon emissions and the resulting change in climate lies with the industrialized nations making Bangladesh one of the most vulnerable countries in the world (Carbon Brief, 2021). Indeed, the rich biodiversity of Bangladesh is under threat from climate change as well as from pollution, deforestation, river erosion, loss of soil fertility and land degradation.

In response to its vulnerability, Bangladesh is one of the first countries to develop a National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) in 2005 for addressing climate change through a consultative process among government organisations, NGOs, civil society, academia, professional bodies, private sector, research organisations, thinktanks and development partners. It is also the first country in the

world to adopt a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) in July 2009. Bangladesh has largely focused on adaptation (Pielke, 1998) and mitigation to an extent, committed to a low carbon development path endorsing a 'green development' concept that promotes a 'green economy' and provides 'green jobs' in the future. However, this must be in the context of Bangladesh's priorities for accelerating economic growth, poverty reduction, social emancipation and sustainable development. Bangladesh is now committed to achieving the SDGs. Any green development initiatives must be homegrown and country-driven, and externally imposed conditions are not acceptable. The 2030 Agenda requires a massive change in behaviours, decision making and pro-sustainability attitudes of the country's children, who will be left with the future earth.

Degradation of Traditional Values

With economic development and urbanisation, there has been a decline in traditional values (Tasnim, 2021). Education has not been able to preserve and encourage the aged-long heritage of social and traditional values of respecting others, living a simple life and serving others. This is causing a failure in social, economic and environmental sustainability. The situation also has complex historical roots. During the 1971 liberation war with Pakistan, many prominent meritorious people were killed leaving the new nation drained of intellectuals and talent. All governments formed after 1971 undervalued the education sector which was not prioritised and sacrificed in political duels.

There is a popular saying that destroying a nation does not require the use of atomic bombs or long-range missiles. It requires weakening the quality of education and allowing cheating during examinations by students seeking better grades. The results are patients dying from the hands of doctors, buildings collapsing at the hands of engineers, money being lost at the hands of economists and accountants, justice being lost at the hands of lawyers and judges, governance being lost at the hands of policy makers and legislators. Moral education emerges as a way to preserve and resurrect cultural and social values. The education system should carry human values and plans of actions, particularly as we face the challenges of sustainable development.

One of the reasons for the declining education system of Bangladesh is that the sector is entirely politically dominated. From teachers to students, officials and employees, everyone is directly involved in or influenced by politics in one way or another. There are some recognized and tested methods for destroying a nation and they begin with destroying its education system. In the aspiration for high grades, children have learned and have been allowed to be unethical. Obsession with secur

ing first place in the class or scoring a perfect grade points average (GPA) of 5 causes mental stress with pressure from parents and peers. The tendency to committing suicide among children has never been so high, 70 cases from January to April 2018 (Dhaka Tribune, 2017 & 2018). Whilst children are forced to be obsessed with excellence in literacy and numeracy, we forget to sow the seeds of harmony, sense of responsibility and stewardships towards self, society and the earth. Without a balance between academic success and moral values, economic success will come at the expense of transgressing the planetary boundaries. If Bangladesh is to repeat the pitfalls of other nations, this would come at a very high cost because of its vulnerability. The problem is very complex and needs to be approached from a variety of ways. What we argue is that the sustainability journey of Bangladesh needs to be supported from the very start of the formal educational process through embedding traditional folk values and wisdom.

Folk Values in Primary Education

Gandhi once said, "Earth has enough to meet everyone's need, but not everyone's greed" (Misra, 2007, p. 352). It is important to build stewardship in young children at the primary level of education to be more eco-friendly and that by following sustainable living guidelines, they can reduce the effects of climate change, pollution and other environmental factors that harm our health and the environment. This stewardship can be introduced and instilled in them through the school curriculum as well as through informal education or after school programmes. Showcasing traditional practices and values would be a good way to live sustainably.

Education is the prerequisite to any sustainable development and when a country designs its transition plan, priority should be given to the development of primary education. According to data from Macrotrends (2022), Bangladesh has had a very significant trend of a declining education budget during 1980-2022. This compromises the ability of children to take the country forward and how we are educating them will determine whether the progress is towards development or destruction. Values education is part of the sustainability journey and responding to any types of disasters – in the form of floods, cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes or molten lava as well as the world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Folklore has been used as a tool to inculcate morals and values in children across the time in every nation. Much of folklore has been created especially for children to serve them from birth (Jaffro, 2003). 'Folklore' has been translated as 'the wisdom of a nation' (Mailybaeva, 2015) and reflects the nation's morals and manners, people's lifestyle, knowledge of life, nature, cults and beliefs. All genres of

folklore, such as fairy tales, legends, epics and shezhire were widely used as techniques in children's education (Hartwick & Brannigan, 2008) considering the level of development of imagination, mentality, and the use of visual techniques combined with imaginative, expressive language. Bangladesh inherently possesses the enormous treasure of folk genres considered a source of sustainability wisdom and a 'code of life'. The values generated from those folk genres can be used as a powerful tool to explore effective and practical ways of cultural expressions of traditional folklore that can be maintained, with their wisdom transmitted through education to create citizens who are personally honest, modest, and healthy; economically solvent and self-reliant; socially respectable and kind to nature.

Primary education needs to apply lessons of how we learn from the stock of local knowledge to build spirituality for resilience under all circumstances, including the impacts of climate change. The curriculum of the conventional educational systems has reasonably failed to address social, economic and ecological sustainability and the lack of appropriate tools and pedagogical approaches is one of the reasons. Using examples from the traditional and available practices, the values for sustainability need to be addressed and acquired for them to become mainstream culture. Acquisition of certain values can influence attitudes and therefore can promote practices towards a more sustainable way of life. Thus, it is not possible to achieve a transition towards sustainability without sustainability education being values-based, for this helps develop the spirit of environmentalism valuing local traditions, knowledge, and culture; and access to appropriate technologies to live sustainably. To do this, sustainability in education needs to be in an acceptable format, such as folk tales, poems and songs, at an early stage.

Conclusion

Bangladesh's strong track record in economic growth in the last decade was also accompanied by the achievement of the MDGs. This country is also committed to achieving the SDGs and becoming an upper middle-income country by 2031 (World Bank, 2022a). These impressive achievements need to be supported by a different model of development where traditional folk values continue to guide the Bangladeshi people's habits and practices. The analysis presented in this study shows that this should start from primary education where there are ample opportunities to bring folk stories, songs and proverbs in building pro-sustainability attitudes.

Education can be the most powerful and transformative force (Agbedahin, 2019), but it can also fail the huge expectations put on it by other sectors of society. A dry scientific curriculum may convey the right ideas but not engage properly

with the minds and hearts of the learners. This is even more important at a primary level of education. Primary school teachers can enrich their way of communicating the complex sustainability values by drawing on powerful folk stories, proverbs, songs and other texts to create a vision for a better world but also a moral compass how this can be achieved.

Bangladesh is one of the prime stakeholders to implement and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Climate change, sustainable consumption, self-reliant lifestyle and value education are considered vital in the sustainability journey. For the achievement of these goals, the reinforcement of traditional knowledge, values and lifestyles through primary education can play a key role. Almost all obstacles or challenges for sustainable development identified so far have direct human involvement. In the same way, the solution to them is largely up to the people. A new vision for education, one that seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future, can be built on the basis of the knowledge and wisdom created by those from whom we have inherited the world.

An informal/social education and formal/classroom education based on folk heritage can convey values, such as respect for nature and ecological stewardship for the young pupils. The ultimate desirable outcomes are to prepare the future generation as individually consumption conscious, socially responsible, economically self-reliant, and respectful to nature (naturalism). Sustainability can then be reinstated within the timespan of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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Sustainability and folklore in primary education in Bangladesh: An empirical study of teachers

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate how sustainability aspects are currently communicated in primary education in Bangladesh and whether teachers are exploiting the synergies between folklore and learning in the curriculum and classroom. Conducted within government primary schools in 2020-2022, the study uses a mixed-methods methodology combining a survey (with 140 respondents) and interviews (12 interviewees) of primary school teachers. The interviews revealed a gap between the favourable survey results and the availability of resources to teach sustainability in primary schools. Using folklore, including childlore, is an important avenue to bridge this gap and bring together long-lasting sustainability values and delivery of school material.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Childlore, Folklore, Primary education, Pro-sustainability attitude, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Building values that encourage sustainable behaviour is essential for young people across the globe. The integration of pro-sustainability values into mainstream education can inspire them to live in a way that is sustainable, secure and respectful of the natural environment and other people (Hossain & Marinova, 2004). There are different ways to approach such a sustainability education and one of them is through exploring the use of folklore which has fascinated and captivated people for centuries. Traditional wisdom generated from the rich folklore of Bangladesh is generally sustainability-oriented and can be used in teaching young people to be pro-nature oriented and self-reliant, encouraging sustainability practices. Previous research shows that there is synergy between folklore and education as their aim is “to empower the learner and benefit the community” (Pryor & Bowman, 2016, p. 451). Based on this theoretical concept, the paper explores the use of folklore in primary education to promote sustainability. It conducts an empirical investigation among Bangladeshi primary education teachers related to educating for sustainability and the use of folklore.

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Sustainability requires certain values and attitudes to be developed since childhood, such as kindness, resilience, simplicity, modest consumption and prudent behaviour towards nature, including land, water, air and all natural resources (Khan, Hossain & Marinova, 2015). According to Mech (2015), embedding folklore in early school education is a gateway to personal development with its benefits related to strengthening cultural heritage, inspiring simple and logical thinking while offering deep insights into life and living and stimulating creativity. Folklore also helps develop better communication skills and can help bridge the gap between home and school (Mzimela, 2016). Stories drawn from folklore contain ideas, imaginations, objectives and morals that influence children's formation as social individuals and guide their attitudes and practices (Kartikasari & Tryanasari, 2020). There have been many calls for folklore as represented by stories, proverbs, riddles, songs and folkdances, to be embedded in formal education and used as an educational tool (Bowman, 2006; Banda & Morgan, 2013; Onuora-Oguno & Nwamara, 2014).

Many Bangladeshi folklore stories, songs and proverbs deliver sustainability messages (Tasnim, 2021; Tasnim, Hossain and Marinova, 2021) but is their power used by primary school teachers to build such attitudes? How do teachers at this level engage with the complex concept of sustainability in the school curriculum? The study is set to explore these questions with the aim to understand the way sustainability is communicated by primary school teachers in Bangladesh and whether they use the richness and power of Bangladeshi folklore to build synergies between education and learning to develop pro-sustainability attitudes among children.

The study has two objectives as follows: (1) Investigate how sustainability is currently communicated in primary education in Bangladesh; and (2) Explore how folklore is used in Bangladeshi primary schools. It does this by using a mixed-methods methodology (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) based on a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews. Government schools were selected for the study as they provide education for the largest share of Bangladeshi children (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2019). After collecting survey data about perceptions and views of the school teachers on the role of primary education in achieving sustainability, pro-sustainability attitudes and the overall state of sustainability education in the curriculum, subsequent questions searched for deeper meaning by asking what, how and why (Sinek, 2009) during interviews. With surveys, there is a chance that the respondents may select answers in a rush or without having rigorous understanding, however, during in-depth interviews people tend to become more engaged with the issues.

In the remainder of the paper, the methodology of the study is presented first followed by the empirical evidence collected through the survey and interviews. The discussion section highlights the findings of this study within the broader context of previous research. In concluding the paper, we emphasise the importance of including all aspects of sustainability, not just environmental components, in the primary education curriculum for Bangladesh, where material drawn from folklore can be a useful tool.

2. Methodology

A mixed-methods approach has been used for 30 years to examine the same problem from different perspectives (Greene, 2008) and provide a deeper understanding compared to what can be achieved by applying only one research method (McKim, 2016). In this particular case, we used a survey and interviews, based on convenience sampling. We explain the actual methods used as well as the sampling and recruitment process. Both research instruments, namely the survey questionnaire and the interview schedule, are given as appendices.

Survey

Survey research is based on collecting information from a sample of individuals, i.e. the survey participants, by asking them to provide responses to a set of questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). There were in total 25 questions in the survey questionnaire to gauge the strength of the basic understanding, attitude and practice towards social, economic or environmental sustainability within the curriculum, classroom and school environment. Some of the questions in the questionnaire are used to generate quantitative data to be analysed numerically and others, to provide qualitative answers which are interpreted by the researcher. We wanted to survey primary education teachers regarding any pro-sustainability attitudes that need to be developed in children. It was also important to find out their opinions about the potential use of folklore to achieve sustainability attitudes. Survey data was used to quantify and justify the patterns and the phenomenon.

The objective of the survey was to determine the strength (degree of importance) of the attitudes held by teachers towards pro-sustainability practices in order to gauge the likelihood of them directing practices and behaviour (Rhaman, 2011). A Likert scale is a popular instrument omnipresent in contemporary surveys (Wang & Krosnick, 2020), measuring subjective phenomena such as attitudes and beliefs. A 6 points scale was used in many of the questions from “strongly agree/extremely important” to “strongly disagree/not important”, including offering a “neutral/not sure” option to improve the meaningfulness of the responses (Gilljam & Granberg,

1993). An additional option “not applicable” was given to provide freedom for teachers to express their position if they think none of these are applicable for sustainability.

A simple statistical analysis of the survey responses allows for a description of the prevalent attitudes. Frequencies, percentages and variance were calculated for the relevant questions which form the basis of the discussion. The survey was self-administered and the collected data was analysed quantitatively to determine any patterns (Bamford, 2015).

All questions required the teacher to self-report their attitudes and teaching techniques used in the school environment in relation to sustainability, including how they are reflected in the students’ day-to-day life. This method was chosen for being an efficient way to collect information about attitudes and beliefs as well as for providing more substantive answers from the educators, while still offering ease of completion.

The questionnaire was designed in four parts to help understand basic thoughts, ideas and practices by the primary school teachers about education for sustainability. Part 1 consisted of ten questions soliciting introductory information about the primary teacher, namely age, length of experience and training, and some basic information about the school environment. This was followed by Part 2 which consisted of 9 questions, asking about the importance of sustainability values and practices for children in the age group 5-11 years old; how the teachers personally evaluate the pro-sustainability attitudes of the younger generations and the place of sustainability aspects (social, economic and environmental) in the primary education curriculum. Part 3 consisted of 6 questions to investigate the use of folklore in primary education and how it is communicated. The final Part 4 gave the teachers the opportunity to provide their own insights about the study. Most of the questions were qualitative and structured, with some requiring open-ended responses. Participants were reassured that there was no right or wrong answer as some practices may be more important than others.

Interviews

Interviews are widely used as a tool for collecting qualitative data. They are typically applied as a strategy to gather information about the participants’ experiences, views and beliefs concerning a specific research question or phenomenon of interest (Lambert & Loisel, 2007). During an interview, in addition to the open-ended questions, the interviewer may also use probing comments to obtain more information or direct the flow of the conversation as well as request the inter

viewee to clarify or expand on their position (Singleton & Straits, 2009). When conducted at an interviewee's settings, interviews can also be combined with non-participant observation whereby the researcher observes without taking part in the participants' activities (Laurier, 2016).

This study required in-depth interviews with the primary school teachers to properly comprehend their perceptions, understandings and views on sustainability and to investigate any gaps in developing pro-sustainability attitudes and practices in the existing primary education curriculum and education system that challenge sustainable development. The use of folklore in communicating messages to the children was also discussed with the primary school teachers and observed at the schools' premises. A semi-structured questionnaire with 7 open-ended questions was used to gain a comprehensive view of the surrounding information.

As the content of the questionnaires was largely based on experience, knowledge, opinion, views, attitudes and circumstantial, thematic analysis was deemed the most effective tool for deriving insights from the semi-structured interviews and analyse the content, using a number of techniques for synthesising the qualitative data, through coding, into a structured thematic analysis (Boyatzis & Ratti, 2009). Defined as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data, the thematic analysis included a six-step process, namely familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

All interview questions were designed based on conventional wisdom, put in a straightforward, clear and non-threatening way with flexible wording that facilitated a different level of language used and clarifications made by the interviewer (Lune & Berg, 2016). They also permitted the teachers to explore any spontaneous issues. It was necessary to build the rapport, so that the teachers felt comfortable. After a self-introduction and an outline of the research project, the interviewer was engaged in the conversation while taking notes.

A particular care was taken for the questions not to be suggestive or threatening and to allow a free flow and exchange of ideas. The interviews conducted with the semi-structured questionnaire included some open-ended questions allowing the researcher to test the limits of the respondent's knowledge and gauge what the participant really believes is the essence of the issues. Comments and probes were used by the interviewer for clarification and elaboration only when the interview schedule was going off track, however this was carefully managed to avoid being judgemental or biased. All interviews were audio recorded with prior consent, transcribed, coded carefully and thematically analysed.

Transcription is an essential process for the deep understanding of research data. The interviews were taken in Bangla as both the interviewer and interviewee were native Bengali speakers. Instead of a literal transcription, the key points were extracted from the interview for coding (Saldaña, 2015) with help from the notes taken during the interview.

Data collected during the interviews were hand coded to avoid misunderstandings of the word meanings and to determine significant patterns. An inductive reasoning was complimenting the thematic analysis, a process of narrowing the codes created during the open coding to condense the data into fewer analytic concepts (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022). This helped the researchers begin summarising the data, followed by a semantic approach that involves analysing its explicit content. Finally, the themes extracted from the responses were compared to the patterns of answers from the survey to determine the degree of commonalities or differences. The coding of data was done through the experience and interpretation by the researchers. This deep understanding of the data was built up through the transcription process that required multiple listening, and helped formulate what concepts were important.

Sampling and Recruitment

The study aimed to reach primary school teachers from both urban and rural settings from the government educational sector. Respondents for the survey were recruited through “exponential non-discriminative snowball” sampling, a widely recruiting method which does not search for a statistically representative sample (Kumar, 2014). The survey started from one school (where the first author had been previously employed) and teachers from there volunteered to complete and distribute the questionnaire to other primary school colleagues.

Convenience sampling was used to conduct the in-depth interviews combined with non-participatory observation. It is used in social sciences and education research where it is convenient to survey pre-existing groups, such as students or teachers (Kumar, 2014). Such groups are easy to reach or readily available in their normal educational settings (Neuman, 2014). Geographical proximity, availability at a given time, willingness to participate in the study were considered on selecting the schools and interviewees. A verbal advice on selecting schools and consent were taken from the District Primary Education Officer prior to the field work.

Participants were provided the questionnaire for both survey and interview along with a brief introduction of the research and a consent form to sign in advance. The questionnaire was distributed through the school headmasters in both

urban and rural settings, and 12 teachers from 4 different government primary schools voluntarily consented and were interviewed, who have been directly over viewing the changing socio-cultural conditions of Bangladesh in terms of attitudes, behaviour, customs, and inconsistency in lifestyle, environmental changes, and technological dependency. The native language Bangla (Bengali) was used during the data collection process as the researcher can speak the same language as the respondents.

Participation in the survey and interviews was entirely voluntary and confidentiality was maintained (Neuman, 2014). Care was taken for the collected information to be protected from inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Data Collection

The survey was conducting between December 2020 and early 2022 including interruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection for the interviews was carried out in 2022.

A total of 200 survey questionnaires were distributed and collected by meeting the teachers physically, over telephone and through email as the schools were closed during the pandemic. Overall, 140 teachers took part in the survey generating a relatively high response rate of 70%. As the survey was completed in school, this method ensured a higher rate of survey return.

There were 12 interviews conducted to collect qualitative data through conversation with the teachers. Each interview took around 40 minutes to conduct and 4-5 hours each to transcribe with repeated listening to identify the key points.

3. Study Results

The results from the survey and interviews are presented in this section of the paper. To do this, we follow the structure of the survey questionnaire and the interview schedule.

Survey

Questions 1-5 provided background information about the teachers, including their age, education, work experience, trainings and skills set (see Table 1). The majority of the teachers, namely 61%, were in the age group 31-45, while 37% were

in the 46-60 years age bracket and only under 1% were in the youngest 20-30 years age group. Most participants, namely 55%, had 5-19 years of experience in teaching, 41% had more than 20 years and only 4% less than 5 years. Overall, the teachers were appropriately educated with 55% having completed a master’s degree, 21% a bachelor or equivalent degree, 18% had a diploma equivalent degree in teaching and 5% with only a secondary school certificate. Although the recruitment process in the government primary schools does not require any specific qualifications or degrees in teaching, attending a one-year primary teachers’ training is mandatory during the tenure. In the interim, teachers also receive training on particular subjects such as computers, mathematics or scouting. Music, arts, co-curricular events specified in the curriculum and sports are some of the few commonly listed as extracurricular activities, by the participants on an open-ended question.

	Your age group (20-30/ 31-45/ 46-60)			How many years do you have in teaching? (Less than 5/ Between 5 - 19/ More than 20)			Your last education qualification or training						Please state your specialised area / subject of teaching (if any)					
	20-30	31-45	46-60	5	5--19	20	Masters	Graduate	SSC	PHD	BED/ Diploma	Other D	Teachers Training	Computer Training Course	Math Trainer	Scouting	lecturer Nibondhon	Nothing
Frequency	57	83	2	5	55	58	77	29	7	1	25	1	81	12	19	8	3	17
Percentage	1.429	61.4	37.1	3.6	55.0	41.4	55.0	20.7	5.0	0.7	17.9	0.7	57.9	8.6	13.6	5.7	2.1	12.1
Variance	0.260			0.309			0.242						1.374					

Table 1: Background of the respondents (SSC- Secondary school certificate, BED- Bachelor’s in education)

From the total of 140 teachers, 57 (41%) were from urban and 83 (59%) from rural areas. Questions 6-10 investigated the basic set-up in each school, including some sustainability aspects, such as the source of water and power as well as involvement in extracurricular activities such as tree planting, outing and camping (see Table 2). A large share of the participants indicated a significant time spent in the natural world and community engagement with 96% reporting tree planting events in their school’s premises, 72% involved with community gardens and various field trips to nature. Less than 1% of the schools used renewable solar energy.

	Where is your school located? (Urban / Rural)		Do you have a tree plantation programme in your school? (YES / NO / NOT SURE)			Do you have outdoor activities (such as, excursions / sight- seeing / picnic for your students? (YES / NO / NOT SURE)			What is the source of drinking water in your school? (Tap water/ Tubewell/ Others)			What is the source of power in your school? (National Grid/ Poili Bidyuthi/ Solar/ Others)			
	Urban	Rural	Yes	No	N/S	Yes	No	N/S	SW	TW	Other	PDB	REB	SE	Other
Frequency	57	83	134	2	4	101	19	20	37	92	11	60	79	1	0
Percentage	40.7	59.3	95.7	1.4	2.9	72.1	13.6	14.3	26.4	65.7	7.9	42.9	56.4	0.7	0.0
Variance	0.2431		0.043			0.281			0.311			0.260			
Standard Deviation	0.49		0.207			0.530			0.558			0.510			

Table 2: Geographic location of the school, co-curricular activities, source of power and water

(N/S- Not sure, SW- Supply water, TW-Tube well water, PDB- Power development board, REB- Rural electrical board, SE- Solar energy)

The second part of the survey consisted of 9 questions measuring the importance of primary education for sustainability values and practices for children in the age group 5-11 years and how the teachers personally evaluated the social, economic and environmental sustainability aspects in the primary education curriculum (see Table 3). Social sustainability aspects were seen as very important with the majority of respondents indicated scores of 6 and 5 on the Likert scale. Interesting responses were also obtained when asked about the availability of resources in the school curriculum to educate children in this area.

The share of participants who rated highly the importance of the role of primary education in building the attitude of children to be kind and helpful to other children and people was 99%. However, 78% agreed that the primary curriculum had enough resources, 9% disagreed with this statement and 9% were neutral or not sure. For a deeper understanding of an extended attitude of kindness and helpfulness, the next question was about the importance of primary education to teach the children to be kind to all living and non-living beings. Although the importance was rated highly by 97% of the teachers, only 69% agreed that there were enough available resources in the curriculum with 14% staying neutral and 16% disagreeing. Participants were asked to rate the importance of primary education in teaching children respect to people of all genders, ethnicity and religion and by doing so, investigate their attitude towards equity and social harmony. Again, a large share, namely 95% rated the role of primary education as important but only 69% agreed about having enough available resource in the curriculum with 18% being unsure and 13% disagreeing with this statement. It is important for children to be responsible and accept responsibility for their actions (what they say and what they do) in order for them to become responsible citizens as they grow up. Participants were asked to rate the importance of the role of primary education in teaching

children to take responsibility about their actions and 95% believed this to be important but only 74% agreed that primary education had enough resources, with 11% being neutral and 15% disagreeing with the stance.

Question 5-7 were investigating participants’ understanding about the importance of the role of primary education for environmental sustainability (see Table 4). Again, a large majority of the participants, namely 93% rated important to extremely important for primary education to teach children about climate change, but only 70% agreed there was enough resource in the curriculum to do so, with 14% being unsure and 15% disagreeing with the statement. The role of primary education in teaching children about protecting the environment and the natural world when they eat, play and work was rated as high by 95% of the participants but only 72% agreed that there were enough available resources in the curriculum, while 18% were unsure and 10% disagreed with the statement. Educating primary school children about preserving natural resources, such as water, minerals, soil, plants and animals, was seen as important by 96% of the participants but only 77% agreed that the curriculum had enough resources with 14% disagreeing and 9% being unsure.

	How important is the role of primary education to teach children to be kind and helpful to the other children and people?							How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to be respectful to all genders, ethnicity and religion?							How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about being kind to all living and non-living beings (including wild animals, plants)? If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough useful resource in our curriculum to teach children about all living and non-living beings?							How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to be responsible and accept responsibility for their actions (what they say and what they do)?						
Scale	6	5	4	3	2	1		6	5	4	3	2	1		6	5	4	3	2	1		6	5	4	3	2	1	
Frequency	115	24	1	0	0	0		87	49	4	0	0	0		94	39	4	3	0	0		88	45	5	2	0	0	
Percentage	82.1	17.1	0.71	0	0	0		62.1	35.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0		67.1	27.9	2.9	2.1	0.0	0.0		62.9	32.1	3.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	
Variance	0.167							0.301							0.429							0.406						
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you agree we have enough useful resources in our curriculum to teach children to be kind and helpful to the other children and people?							If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough useful resource in our curriculum to teach children about respectful to all genders, ethnicity and religion?							If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough useful resource in our curriculum to teach children about all living and non-living beings?							If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to be responsible and accept responsibility for our actions?						
Scale	6	5	4	3	2	1		6	5	4	3	2	1		6	5	4	3	2	1		6	5	4	3	2	1	
Frequency	61	48	18	12	1	0		60	37	19	12	11	1		63	34	25	15	3	0		58	46	15	14	7	0	
Percentage	43.6	34.3	12.9	8.57	0.714	0		42.9	26.4	13.6	8.6	7.9	0.7		45.0	24.3	17.9	10.7	2.1	0.0		41.4	32.9	10.7	10.0	5.0	0.0	
Variance	0.965							1.720							1.259							1.379						

Table 3: Participants’ views on the role of primary education for social sustainability

Aspects of economic sustainability were covered in Questions 8 and 9 in relation to waste generation when children eat, play and work and the practice towards using everything in moderation or using what we need (see Table 5). In relation to waste, 99% of the respondents believed that primary education plays an important role, however, only 72% agreed that curriculum has enough resources, with 17% being unsure and 10% disagreeing with this position. A relatively substantial percentage, namely 94%, of the surveyed teachers saw the role of primary teach

ers in educating for moderate consumption as important with 68% agreeing that there are enough resources available, 10% being unsure and 21% disagreeing with the statement.

	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about climate change?							How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about protecting the environment and the natural world when they eat, play and work?							How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to keep/save natural resources (water, minerals, soil, plants, animals etc) for future generations?						
Scale	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1			
Frequency	73	57	6	4	0	0	66	67	6	0	1	0	100	35	5	0	0	0			
Percentage	52.1	40.7	4.3	2.9	0.0	0.0	47.1	47.9	4.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	71.4	25.0	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0			
Variance	0.505							0.416							0.292						
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about climate change?							If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about protecting the environment and the natural world when we eat, play and work?							If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about keeping/saving natural resources?						
Scale	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1			
Frequency	53	46	20	11	10	0	61	40	25	11	3	0	65	43	12	18	2	0			
Percentage	37.9	32.9	14.3	7.9	7.1	0.0	43.6	28.6	17.9	7.9	2.1	0.0	46.4	30.7	8.6	12.9	1.4	0.0			
Variance	1.471							1.128							1.195						

Table 4: Participants’ view on the role of primary education for environmental sustainability

	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to produce less waste when you eat, play and work?							How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to use everything in moderation (what we need) so that there is some left for others?						
Scale	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1		
Frequency	93	46	1	0	0	0	71	60	5	3	0	0		
Percentage	66.4	32.9	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.7	42.9	3.6	2.1	0.0	0.0		
Variance	0.241							0.538						
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about to produce less waste when you eat, play and work?							If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to use everything in moderation (what we need) so that there is some left for others?						
Scale	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1		
Frequency	62	39	24	12	2	1	54	41	14	21	9	1		
Percentage	44.3	27.9	17.1	8.6	1.4	0.7	38.6	29.3	10.0	15.0	6.4	0.7		
Variance	1.208							1.735						

Table 5: Participants’ views on the role of primary education for economic sustainability

Part 3 consisted of six questions (Questions 10-15) aimed at investigating participants’ views about the importance of folklore in educating for sustainability in primary schools as well as the state of folklore in the way they work and how they communicate complex concepts (see Table 6). Not everybody agreed about the importance of keeping and using orally transmitted traditional values and wisdom, however a large share of 92% of the participants saw this as important. Childlore or children-friendly elements of Bangladeshi folklore were seen as helping to enhance the morals, values and wisdom of children by 89% of the surveyed teachers. This includes aged-long proverbs, maxims, idioms, legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa’r Jhuli and others, Ishop’s story, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature among

many others. Only 7% were unsure and less than 4% did not agree with this. Folklore being able to offer a way to teach kindness, self-reliance, honesty, resilience and other sustainability attitudes in children was appreciated by 90% of the participants. Furthermore, 80% agreed to using childlore in the classroom as a tool of teaching sustainability and 84% already use different folkloric genres in the classroom while 16% do not do so. A large share, namely 81% of the participants agreed that primary curriculum does not make proper use or have enough folklore/childlore resources, with 9% being unsure and only 9% disagreeing with this.

	How much do you agree that it is important to teach TRADITIONAL wisdom and wisdom which are orally transmitted from generation to generation? (e.g., our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuil, Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)										How much do you agree that the CHILDLORE or children-friendly elements of our folklore help enhance the morals, values and wisdom in our children? (e.g. our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuil, Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)										How much do you agree that our aged long FOLKLORE offers a way to teach kindness, self-reliance, honesty, resilience and other sustainability attitudes to our children?										How much do you agree that teachers SHOULD use different genres of folklore in the classroom to teach sustainability to children?										Do you use genres of folklore in your class? (e.g. our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuil, Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)					How much do you agree that FOLKLORE IS NOT USED PROPERLY in the primary education curriculum? (e.g. our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuil, Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)				
Scale	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	Yes	No	N/S	N/A	6	5	4	3	2	1																
Frequency	81	48	6	1	4	0	75	50	10	2	3	0	77	49	5	3	6	0	56	56	15	4	9	0	117	23	0	0	48	66	13	10	3	0																
Percentage	57.9	34.3	4.3	0.7	2.9	0.0	53.6	35.7	7.1	1.4	2.1	0.0	55.0	35.0	3.6	2.1	4.3	0.0	40.0	40.0	10.7	2.9	6.4	0.0	83.6	16.4	0.0	0.0	34.3	47.1	9.3	7.1	2.1	0.0																
Variance	0.722					0.724					0.946					1.207					0.138				0.919																									

Table 6: Participants’ views on the importance of folklore and its status in primary curriculum.

Two open-ended questions formed Part 4 of the survey. The participants were requested to list the challenges in teaching sustainability in the classroom and their feedback on this study, including anything that the survey did not cover. These questions wanted to also elicit the supposition of the factors that primarily determined the prevalent ratings given by the participants. The list below summarises the challenges stated by the participants:

- **School and classroom environment:** The abnormal teacher-student ratio (1:70), long school hours and the high number of classes to attend each day, insufficient practical educational material, classroom learning environment being not child-friendly;
- **Socio-economic factors:** Students in government primary schools being mostly from lower income sections of society who need to deal with poverty and malnutrition; teachers being poorly paid compared to the needs for a basic living standard;
- **Socio-cultural:** Impertinence to own tradition and culture, and overwhelming effect and impact of western culture (or satellite culture), consumerism and materialistic lifestyle;
- **Curriculum:** Resources being textbook-based failing to attract children with

pleasant learning experience and failing to reconcile with reality; focus on memorising material for exams; educational materials being insufficient and not up-to-date;

- **Political and administrative domination:** Teachers being strictly obliged to follow the structured and scheduled classroom program developed by the National Academy of Primary Education (NAPE), restricted teachers' creativity and freedom to use unconventional strategies to demonstrate sustainability to the students; pressure to complete the syllabus in a limited timeframe; teachers mandatory involvement in other non-teaching activities, such as collecting and updating voter lists, arrange rallies for other government events;
- **Sustainability perspective:** Teachers not being trained on educating for sustainability, having limited knowledge and understanding as well as negligence and/or not being obligated to discuss sustainability in the classroom.

Interviews

During the interviews, the teachers were asked whether they faced any challenges in teaching sustainability in the classroom while following the existing curriculum. We use italics when quoting from their answers. The most common response was: "children are too young to understand about sustainability". Some also believed sustainability should only be discussed within subjects, such as science, religious studies and social sciences, not in subjects such as English or mathematics. A commonly expressed opinion was that it is difficult to talk about sustainability in the classroom as students cannot relate this concept with their real lifestyle and their materialistic life in particular. However, some stressed that "we only teach what is stipulated within the lesson plan, or the chapter, we don't feel accountable to relate sustainability with the lesson delivered".

When questioned as to why the teachers would think of sustainability as challenging, the participants answered that textbook-based resources, teaching methods used, pressure of deadlines for completion of the syllabus material and preparation for examination, inadequate practical materials, the socio-economic and socio-cultural background of the students, combined with an abnormally high teacher-student ratio, all played part in the way they relate to this issue. "We follow the textbook. We neither have the time nor opportunity, nor the obligation, to incorporate sustainability into it. Because the teacher is responsible for completing the syllabus and students passing the exam", said one of the participants. In response to the question to list down the subjects or chapters they find related with any sustainability aspect, only a few responded naming Bangladesh O Bishwa Porichoy in class 3 and 4, climate change in class 5, soil pollution in class 5, Eid in class 4, Opochoy (misuse/waste) and in religion as a subject. Regarding students' reactions towards

sustainability issues, all participants stressed that students responded well to informal discussion complemented with practical materials.

Sustainability depends on the choices we make in our daily life, e.g. what and how much we eat, what and how we use, how we travel, what waste we generate etc. The participants were asked how they prepare students to learn to keep a balance between “need” and “demand”, the role of the classroom and traditional values in this regard. Some teachers explained that they use oral sayings to remind children about the consequences from their actions, others draw examples from real-life stories. Most teachers monitor the daily habits of the students, such as whether they are overspending on tiffin and encourage them to be mindful of other students who cannot afford much. They also advise students to be happy with whatever food is provided by their parents and not to compare themselves with others. “One day I saw one student brought 50 taka for tiffin. So, I told him, you have three other siblings, if everyone brings 50 taka every day, this would really be a burden for your father as he is a day labourer. I would suggest you spend 10 taka each day, so that 50 taka can go for more days. See I bought a very healthy snack, which costs only 10 taka”, explained one interviewee. Another shared: “One day I saw a student brought a very expensive toy in the classroom. Then I discretely told him, not everyone in the class can afford such toys, they will be upset. You better play with this at home and not at school to be more respectful to your classmates”. The teachers try to involve parents into the process of not allowing their children outweigh demand over need. Some lead by example, recycling cloths, bringing simple and healthy food, showing sympathy to other students.

The participants are aware that the students in the government primary schools are largely from poor socio-economic backgrounds and have limited or no learning opportunities in their home environment. Therefore, the responsibility lies on primary schools and on the teachers there to help children grow responsible. The participants also believe that bringing the traditional values of Bangladesh into daily practice will help building simplicity, kindness, compassion and empathy in the students. Regarding the curriculum, all respondents felt that only textbook-based resources cannot help the children to be empathetic to all living creatures, refrain from wasting resources, and look after the environment.

A question was asked on how the teachers communicate existing social issues, such as consumerism, corruption, degradation of cultural and moral values, adverse behaviours, such as suicide, rape, drugs, copying in exam etc. The teachers explained that they discuss such issues in the classroom by telling stories, following current events and news. At least one social issue is discussed during the assembly every day followed by analysing the consequences and people’s duties as responsi

ble citizens. Positive quotes encouraging good citizen behaviour are displayed on the classrooms' walls. It was probed about the role of primary education in addressing these issues and how our traditional values and wisdom can contribute in this respect. The interviewees affirmatively suggested that primary education inevitably plays an important role; "children learn the dos and don'ts from the school environment". One teacher said: "Children can learn how to be respectful to other religions by sharing food, greet and celebrate each other's festivals, this will bring harmony in our social life and we, the teachers should practice this first for them to see and learn". Projects, such as the "honesty store" and the "wall of greatness" were helping students to practice honesty and kindness; however, they have been stopped since the school's reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic. One teacher also stressed that some of the values students conquered at primary level, gradually decline as they grow up, due to the effects of globalisation, socio-economic and political influences, the attractiveness of the western materialistic life and we could have protected them by practicing Bangladesh's very own traditional values that guide people to be liberal (non-sectarian) and respectful to all religions, casts, creeds; building social harmony and maintaining family bonding.

The participants were asked about the aged-long traditional values and wisdom transmitted orally from generation to generation in Bangladesh and how well today's students understand this oral folklore. Most reported that the students do not contemplate the cultural values of the oral tradition when delivered in the classroom as they do not observe this practice neither in their family nor in society nor in the form of entertainment in the media. They also added that the curriculum does not have enough resources on folklore and school events do not portray traditional Bangladeshi music or any form of art. "Students these days think traditional music is backdated and western music is a symbol of modernism. They arrange class parties with western music on their last day of school", said one respondent. However, some participants use proverbs, moral quotes, riddles, rhymes and stories in their classroom to create a joyful learning environment. "I often use the story of Unity is Strength in my class", said one interviewee and another explained: "In an overcrowded classroom, I told them the Bengali proverb 'Jodi hou su-jon, tetul patay no-jon' (like-minded people can accommodate even in a tiny place)". One interviewee also excitedly described how there was a pin-drop silence when she was telling a story one day and once she finished, students were very curious and interacting with questions. "I sometimes bribe them that if they finish this maths exercise, I will tell them a story", said another teacher.

Another interview question investigated teachers' perceptions about the importance of establishing traditional values in children. "Gone are those days, when we used to respect our teachers, the most after parents", said one participant

and with a big sigh he continued: "... and today, students are not hesitant to even physically humiliate their teachers". Most stated it is of high importance to establish the traditional values in the next generation, for them to be living in harmony and sustainably. "A generation without traditional values, is a citizen without a passport", said one participant, "no matter how modern and technologically developed Japan is today, they never fail to display their culture, their values, their tradition", she continued. When asked, what values they consider timely and should be established in children that support building pro-sustainability attitude, the participants stated stewardship, respect to others, kindness, simplicity/non-consumptive lifestyle, honesty, resilience, patriotism, accepting right or wrong in decision making. "We want to live well alone, succeed alone. But one of the mantras of sustainable development is Living No One Behind, and so now it's time to establish 'WE' values instead", added one participant. The role of primary education in order to sustain our oral tradition was probed along and one of the teachers said: "stop for a moment, if you sneeze; don't touch books or pillows with your feet, use your right hand to give away something, these are some customs we have learned orally from our ancestors". They concluded that oral tradition is necessary for both establishing and practice of values. The class will end, the chapter will end, but the oral tradition will continue to be practiced. However, many good customs of our heritage have been lost or are going away. Oral tradition at the elementary level, will have a long-lasting impact on children and for society.

The final area of investigation was the changes in the primary education system or curricular they are suggesting for teaching sustainability more effectively in the classroom and in the school environment. A widely shared opinion was that the length of the school time and the number of classes per day should be reduced. In addition, a life-oriented learning system or curriculum should be provided with ample practical materials, as the learning process remains incomplete in a classroom-based education system. "I can't teach students how to plant a tree and nurture it until I go out with them and show them practically", said one teacher. Other teachers also added, there should be an informal class every day, children will learn through free participation in various social, economic and environmental issues, hands-on learning, there will be no pressure of the conventional learning method or lesson plan, children will have opportunities to develop the sense of their own culture through stories, songs, rhymes, drawing, creativity and other cultural activities. They should be rewarded for practicing and displaying pro-sustainability attitudes. "If one school can produce 250 good citizens, 60,000 schools can produce 15 million good citizens and this requires a holistic and long-term plan involving everyone. Again, it is not enough to make a policy, its proper implementation should be ensured. We are pressured by the local office and they are pressured by the district office, and the district office is pressured by the Director General (DG)

office. The syllabus may be completed by imposition, but not the teaching–learning process”, said one participant.

4. Discussion

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to tackle the synergies between folklore and primary education within the context of sustainability. Using the mixed-methods methodology allowed us to go deeper into the issues and reveal the gaps between on one hand, the impressions obtained from the quantitative results in most cases overwhelming supporting the importance of sustainability and possible synergies from using folklore as a tool in the primary school curriculum, and on the other, the challenges and barriers teachers have.

The study’s first objective was to investigate how sustainability aspects are currently communicated in primary education in Bangladesh. The participants rated over 90% the importance of every indicator – social, economic and environmental sustainability aspects, that was asking about the role of primary education in teaching children sustainability attitudes, such as simplicity, kindness, resilience, consumption in moderation and stewardship. These are quantitative results that support the importance of educating for sustainability in primary education, considered as an essential prerequisite in achieving a more sustainable development and in particular the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A second aspect of the first objective was to investigate the status of sustainability in primary education in Bangladesh by exploring the resources in the curriculum that support teaching all three aspects of sustainability. There was overall agreement that the curriculum has resources to teach the social aspects of sustainability, including kindness, respect for all other living beings and resource stewardship, with the shares of teachers who agree being respectfully 78%, 69% and 74%. However, what the interviews revealed is that the teachers adhere mainly to the prescribed curriculum where sustainability does not feature in a prominent way and where more practical issues, such as student–teacher ratio and socio-economic background of the students require more urgent attention. This explains that behind the surface of positive attitudes, there is a dearth of consideration for sustainability. The shares of those who are unable to judge about the availability of resources or consider them inadequate are very revealing as they cover between a third and a quarter of the teaching population. Despite all participants acknowledging the importance of educating for sustainability at a primary school level, the task at hand seems often unsurmountable. External influences on students, such as the effect of globalisation, socio-economic and political influences and the attractiveness of a western materialistic lifestyle which focusses on the individual, rather than the

community, contribute towards unsustainable behaviours, even when the primary school teachers are successful in developing certain sustainability values. These tendencies are unduly presented as being a value-neutral expression of development, however, they embody assumptions that lead towards overexploitation of the Earth's resources and do not support a sustainability ethics (Hussaini, 2021).

It was interesting to see from the interviews that sustainability values, such as kindness, honesty, respectfulness and stewardship, are demonstrated and practiced outside the walls of the classroom during the daily assembly, in the "honesty store" or informal discussions. Although the environmental and economic indicators also show an average of 70% ratings in favour of available resource in the curriculum that teach children about climate change, protecting environment and saving natural resources, building prudent attitudes in children when it comes to consumption leaves a lot to be desired. These results are consistent with the assertion found in the interviews with all participants feeling that only textbook-based resources cannot help the children to be empathetic to all the creatures, refrain from wasting resources, and look after the natural environment.

There was a tension between the results from the survey which rated highly on having sufficient resources for the sustainability aspects in the curriculum, and the interviews that argued the curriculum was not well equipped for children's education and failed to achieve the sustainability perspective. The study did not ask specifically whether the teachers perceived their school as being green but instead inquired about practices that express environmental practices, such as planting trees and using renewable energy. Although most schools believe that sustainability is important, they are faced with limited resources (Veronese & Kensler, 2013) and budget concerns are a limiting factor (Rahman & Ali, 2004). While planting trees is a common educational activity for 95% of the respondents, access to renewable energy is very limited. The primary education curriculum of Bangladesh emphasizes achievable competencies and learning outcomes significantly determined by the student's reading, writing and listening competencies (Chowdhury et al., 2019). There is no requirement for the schools to embed greening practices or encourage more sustainable practices, such as recycling or ecological transportation. This explains another observation from the interviews that teachers do not have a clear idea how to relate sustainability to subject teaching and do not feel obligated to bring this aspect into the classroom.

Engagement with sustainability issues can occur with proper communication that leaves a long-lasting impact on children's learning. The second objective of the study was to explore whether the use of folklore in the curriculum can deliver this. There was a widespread agreement with 90% of the teachers concurring that

folklore offers a way to teach kindness, self-reliance, honesty, resilience and other sustainability attitudes to our children. Furthermore, 89% agreed that childlore helps enhance the morals, values and wisdom of children. Some teachers already use different genres of childlore in the classroom as a tool of teaching sustainability (e.g. proverbs, maxims, idioms, legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuli, Ishop's story, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc) to which children respond well. Maintaining the oral tradition in transmitting values and wisdom was seen as important by 92% of the teachers and further supported by the interview material. The hallmarks of the Bengali culture based on peace loving, social harmony, sympathy, family ties, love for language and country, loyalty to parents among others, have survived over the centuries through the oral tradition. Folklore in primary education can engage children in the classroom and at home (Gasouka & Arvanitidou, 2014) and make this oral culture a part of their daily life supporting social, economic and environmental sustainability in Bangladesh. It can make students stronger and more resilient to western influences (Nguen et al., 2016).

Changes in how teachers teach, not just what they are teach (Hasan et al., 2011), are essential and folklore offers such an opportunity. Student backgrounds also matter, especially in government schools. Teachers may find teaching children from poor backgrounds difficult and unrewarding, particularly if they are untrained for the challenges of reaching first generation learners, and if the system is under-resourced, or designed on the assumption that children come from backgrounds where learning is prized and supported (Hossain et al., 2017). Childlore can be a way to reach out and communicate with children in a caring way that builds confidence and understanding. The study revealed other problems that humper the educational environment and delivering of primary education - poor physical environment in schools, the shift system, with short contact hours, lack of support materials and inadequate number of trained teachers, traditional classroom teaching and learning practices. One of the most commonly addressed issues by the participants was, teachers engaging in non-teaching tasks. This includes voter lists, celebrations, maintaining different registers (e.g. wheat distribution register and inspection register (Chowdhury et al., 2019; Rahman and Ali, 2004). This affects the delivery of primary education and with sustainability seen as an add-on to the curriculum, it often is pushed aside.

Sustainability is now a global priority to which the entire world, including Bangladesh is responding respond and primary education is part of this journey of transformation and renewal. A Bengali proverb says: "Let's get together in a group and do the job, then there is no shame whether we win or lose". In the case of sustainability, we need to get in a group as a global humanity including the weakest and most vulnerable; otherwise future generation will shame us.

5. Conclusion

The study emphasised the role of primary education in sustainability and pro-sustainability behaviours which require to be developed from childhood, such as kindness, resilience, simplicity, modest consumption and prudent behaviour to nature (land, water, air and all natural resources). A way of building those habits by using folklore could help develop those attitudes unifying the past and the present for better future outcomes. Folklore opens doors to teaching and learning that other educational tools cannot deliver (Bowman, 2006).

The insights from this research display some positive results about the educators' responses regarding their understanding of the importance of sustainability education. Folk values and childlore can become a tool to enrich the currently available primary school curriculum as well as in motivating students in developing pro-sustainable attitudes and behaviours. This will create synergistic effects to empower the students and benefit the community in Bangladesh and across the world. We hope that these findings can assist in developing more fine-tuned, efficacious sustainability education programs. Future sustainability education curriculum would benefit from embedding folklore in the sustainability agenda for primary schools. The children whom we are educating now will be the ones who will shame us if the job is poorly done.

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Appendix 1

Interview questionnaire



Integrating Folk values in Primary Education in Bangladesh: Sustainability Perspective

In-depth interview questionnaire for the teachers:

1. Are there any challenges in teaching sustainability in the classroom following the existing curriculum and why?

Probe

- Do you teach sustainability messages in your class? Give examples.
- How do the students respond to sustainability issues?

2. Sustainability depends on the choices we make in our daily life e.g. what and how much we eat, what and how we use, how we travel etc. How do we prepare our children to learn to keep a balance between need and demand?

Probe

- What is the role of the classroom in primary education in this regard?
- What role can our traditional values or folklore play in this regard?
- Do you think there are sufficient elements present in our textbooks that provide teach children to be empathetic to all the creatures, refrain from wasting resources, look after the environment etc.?

3. How do you communicate issues related to social problems within the Bangladeshi community, such as poverty, consumerism, unemployment, corruption and adverse behaviour?

Probe

- Is there a role for primary education in relation to this?
- Can traditional values and wisdom contribute in this respect?

4. Bangladesh is rich with aged-long traditional values and wisdom that are transmitted orally from generation to generation. How well do today's students understand this oral folklore?

Probe

- Do you use genres from folklore to teach sustainability in your class?
- What are the forms or genres that you use mostly in your class?
- How do students respond to Bangladesh's folkloric tradition?

Interview Questionnaire for Teacher Version 4, -18.07.2018-

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Integrating Folk values in Primary Education in Bangladesh: Sustainability Perspective

5. As a teacher how important is for you to establish traditional values in children?

Probe

- What values do you consider timely and should be established in children in relation to sustainability?
- What role can primary education play in order to sustain this oral tradition?

6. Do you think any contents should be included or changed in our primary education curriculum to make it more effective in teaching sustainability in the classroom and school environment? Why?

7. If you have any comment, feedback, advice, input regarding this interview and the project, please feel free to discuss.

Appendix 2

Survey Questionnaire

**Some information about this survey:**

First of all thank you for your consent and time for taking part in this survey to help me in the project. I used to be a teacher in a Govt primary school and currently I am doing my PhD in Curtin University in Western Australia. The topic of my research is Integrating folk values in primary education in Bangladesh: Sustainability perspective.

The survey is designed in four parts:

- First part is about you and your school;
- Second part is about sustainability;
- Third part is about Bangladesh's traditional folklore and
- Fourth part allows you to give your open input and thoughts about this project.

There is no right or wrong answer and some practices may be more important to you than others. There is no need to write your name. Therefore, no one will know your answers. However, it is important to give **honest answers based on how you truly feel** about what is asked in each question. You can even skip any question if you feel you do not want to answer. Please use the following guideline to rate your answers.

Strongly agree / extremely important
 Agree / Important
 Neutral / not sure
 Disagree / of little importance
 Strongly disagree / Not important
 Not applicable

- If you believe that a practice is very important, circle a high number (for example very important/ agree or extremely important/ strongly agree).
- If you believe a particular practice is not very important, then circle a low number (for example of somewhat important /disagree or not important /strongly disagree).
- If you are unsure about any of the question and do not want to respond, then circle (for example, neutral / not sure)
- If the question is not relevant to you and your work, circle not applicable.

**Part 1: You and your school**

1	Where is your school located?	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban area <input type="checkbox"/> Rural area
2	Your age group	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 60
3	How many years do you have in teaching?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> Between 5 and 19 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 years
4	Your last education qualification or training	
5	Please state your specialised area / subject of teaching (if any)	
6	Please list the extra curriculum activities you perform in your school (if any)	
7	Do you have a tree plantation programme in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
8	Do you have outdoor activities (such as, excursions / sight-seeing / picnic for your students?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
9	What is the source of drinking water in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Tap water <input type="checkbox"/> Tube well <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
10	What is the source of power in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/> National greed <input type="checkbox"/> Polli Bidyuth <input type="checkbox"/> Solar <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____



Part 2: Sustainability values

In this part I will ask you about the importance of sustainability values and practices for children in the age group 5-11 years. How do you personally evaluate, as a teacher, the importance of the sustainability aspects (social, economic and environmental) in our primary education curriculum?

Social sustainability

1	How important is the role of primary education to teach children to be kind and helpful to the other children and people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you agree we have enough useful resources in our curriculum to teach children to be kind and helpful to the other children and people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
2	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to be respectful to all genders, ethnicity and religion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough useful resource in our curriculum to teach children about respectful to all genders, ethnicity and religion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
3	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about being kind to all living and non-living beings (including wild animals, plants)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough useful resource in our curriculum to teach children about all living and non-living beings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
4	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to be responsible and accept responsibility for their actions (what they say and what they do)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to be responsible and accept responsibility for our actions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

Environmental sustainability:

5	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about <i>climate change</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about climate change?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
6	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about <i>protecting the environment and the natural world when they eat, play and work</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about protecting the environment and the natural world when we eat, play and work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
7	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to <i>keep/save natural resources (water, minerals, soil, plants, animals etc) for future generations</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about keeping/saving natural resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

Economic sustainability

8	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to <i>produce less waste when you eat, play and work</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to produce less waste when you eat, play and work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

9	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to <i>use everything in moderation (what we need) so that there is some left for others</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to use everything in moderation (what we need) so that there is some left for others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

Part 3: Folklore

10	How much do you agree that it is important to retain our aged-long TRADITIONAL values and wisdom which are orally transmitted from generation to generation? e.g., our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, , legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuli , Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
11	How much do you agree that the CHILDLORE or children-friendly elements of our folklore help enhance the morals, values and wisdom in our children? (e.g. our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, , legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuli , Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
12	How much do you agree that our aged-long FOLKLORE offers a way to teach kindness, self-reliance, honesty, resilience and other sustainability attitudes to our children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
13	How much do you agree that teachers SHOULD use different genres of folklore in the classroom to teach sustainability to children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
14	Do you use genres of folklore in your class?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / not sure
	If your answer is yes, what are the genres or elements of folklore you normally use in your classroom? Please list the genres you use the most.	



15	How much do you agree that FOLKLORE IS NOT USED PROPERLY in the primary education curriculum? (e.g. our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, , legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuli , Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
----	---	--

Part 4: Open question:

- What do you find challenging about teaching sustainability in the classroom following the existing curriculum.

- If you have any comment, feedback, advice, input regarding this survey and the project, please add them in the blank space attached

Re: HRD Students Permission Request - Saria Tasnim, Curtin University

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Article

How Can Stories in Primary Education Support Sustainable Development in Bangladesh?

Saria Tasnim *, Amzad Hossain and Dora Marinova 

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Abstract: Stories are considered to be the most popular form of lore, which can facilitate the moral and ethical deliberation of sustainability for our children. It is evident that children respond better to stories than any other form of communication. Once the stories end, the lessons remain. The values tangled with the lesson transmit as they grow. Stories have always been instrumental and the most conventional way of teaching values by using illustrations from our lives. The major aim of this paper is to explore the values expressed in Bengali childlore through stories and tales and develop a framework by using a scaffolding and mapping approach. This framework attempts to analyse two commonly recognised stories, namely “Shukhu and Dukhu” and “Jackal, The Judge”, by scaffolding them with the generally acknowledged principles of sustainability and mapping them to investigate how stories can influence children to build a pro-sustainability attitude. This approach has been chosen, as recent research already points out the issues in implementing sustainability in education, but no one has yet found the way forward. The premise at the core of this theoretical article is that an interdisciplinary approach and different pedagogical tools could help build the bridge towards implementing sustainability in education as well as in society.

Keywords: Bangladesh; primary education; stories; sustainability; sustainable development; pro-sustainability attitude



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1. Introduction

A Native American proverb says, “Tell me a fact, and I will learn it. Tell me the truth, and I will believe it. Tell me a story, and it will live in my heart forever” [1]. A story always tells a little more than just the story line. It leaves a reason for the listener to think and re-think, to try to understand better the people and the world, to share experience and knowledge, to scare and challenge, to plan and dream. A story is an anthropological vehicle from the teller to the listener to transmit a message or a lesson [2]. According to Pellowski [3], a story is any connected narrative, in prose, poetry, or a mixture of the two, that has one or more characters involved in a plot with some action and at least a partial resolution. It may or may not have fictional aspects. The use of storytelling can create a dramatic narrative that not only stirs the emotions but also adds to their cognitive power, making valuable contributions to moral learning [4].

Storytelling is increasingly being used in educating and communicating for sustainability “to simultaneously convey information, explain problems and evoke emotions” [5]. It is a powerful pedagogical tool in the classroom to either represent reality or create an imaginary situation. The story stipulates people (who), facts and situations (what), place (where), reason with consequences and resolution (why). Through the story and the teacher-learner interaction, the audience can smoothly relate a current situation, its facts, consequences and resolution while a moral lesson is transmitted. With the idea of sustainability often being traced to traditional cultures, storytelling can also build a bridge between the past and the future by combining different bodies of knowledge, values and practices—local and global,

indigenous and scientific. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) specifically highlights the potential of storytelling for transformative engagement [6], encouraging reflective discussions that deepen students' understanding and promote critical thinking [7]. Storytelling can have a transformative pedagogical role at all levels of education for sustainability—from kindergarten to university.

Notwithstanding this, storytelling is often overshadowed by other pedagogical tools [7] and is not properly integrated into the classroom's learning process. This could be a missed opportunity to link wisdom from the past with the search for solutions for today and tomorrow, particularly given the complex and multifaceted nature of sustainability, which may be difficult to communicate to younger people. While storytelling is being rediscovered for teaching sustainability, the art is as old as time and has been used through history to influence human views and experiences [8]. It has become a way to counteract content dominated by facts and figures by bringing in emotions and values [8].

Nowhere is storytelling as important as at the beginner's stage of formal education, where it fosters imagination, creative thinking and cognitive skills as well as cultural and moral understanding [9]. The stories, fables, myths, legends and songs used in storytelling come not only from literature but also from folklore. Every culture has its own stories that explain natural phenomena, describe human behaviour, answer difficult questions, nurture values and develop emotional connections. They can be communicated orally and through the written word. Such stories are vivid and entertaining; they symbolise cultural beliefs and contain fundamental human truths by which people have lived for centuries [10]. They are also brief, and although they may contain elements of fantasy, they always hold a resolution or a moral lesson about the problem.

Teachers as storytellers play an essential role in this process not only through their knowledge and approach but also through the interpersonal relationships of trust and respect that facilitate communication in the classroom. Children are usually quick to separate fact from fantasy and are able to grasp the underlying message of the story [11]. They can sort out the good from the evil and identify with the positive characters. This paper examines the power of storytelling within the context of primary education in Bangladesh, with the aim of facilitating the development of sustainability values that can withstand the test of time and any influences contributing towards making our world untenable. The main argument of the study is that folklore-based storytelling can be a powerful tool in primary education in Bangladesh, a country that has embraced the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals [12].

Given the age of the students and the formative importance of primary education, the emphasis of the study is on the development of moral and ethical reasoning related to sustainability. While morality and ethics are closely related, there are some differences. Ethics describes what is acceptable within certain social settings or a community, while morality relates to a person's individual judgement of what is good or bad [13]. From this point of view, it is important to use ethical stories to teach moral lessons in primary schools.

2. Materials and Methods

The objective of this study is to explore the use of folklore-based storytelling in primary education in Bangladesh. It is based on a qualitative analysis through a traditional literature review with a thematic analysis of current or recent sources [14]. Being a non-structured qualitative analysis, such a literature review does not aim to provide completeness of coverage but instead aims to understand the nature of the problem [7]. No date restriction was used in the searches so that we could capture relevant literature and identify gaps. The databases consulted are the specialised Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), which contains education-related journal articles and other materials, as well as the broad Google Scholar.

Three bodies of literature were canvassed using appropriate keywords. Firstly, literature describing the use of storytelling in primary education (keywords: storytelling in primary education) is reviewed to identify the practical problem in Bangladesh. Secondly,

literature related to framing the use of storytelling in the classroom (keywords: framing storytelling in the classroom) is explored to develop an approach to identifying and utilising existing story material. Thirdly, two folklore-based stories are analysed using the developed framework to draw morals from the perspective of sustainability. The researchers applied their own reasoning and preferences in selecting the literature sources to build an informed context about the issue and provide suggestions.

The main materials for identifying appropriate folklore-based stories are two eminent Bengali books. The first is “Thakur Ma’r Jhuli” or “Grandmother’s Bag of Tales” in English. Around 1907, its author, Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar, collected folk tales from villages and towns across Bengal and rendered them into a unique collection to preserve the old tradition of Bangladesh. This collection was praised by the 1913 Nobel Laureate in Literature Rabindranath Tagore, who acknowledged the importance of turning these outstanding oral tales into a hard copy, preserving the ancestral creativity of Bangladesh. The second book is “Chalak Shiyal o Boka Shiyal” or “The Clever Jackal and the Foolish Jackal”, a masterpiece of children’s stories by Shah Jahan Kibria. Known as one of the best childlore writers in modern times, Kibria [15] served as director of Bangladesh’s Children’s Academy for more than a decade. In almost all his works, he combines the spirit of children’s rights with storytelling. He has also enriched Bengali children’s literature by translating foreign fairy tales and folklore with pro-life and welfare ideas.

According to Hofman-Bergholm [7], traditional literature review is a fruitful method when seeking the way forward. It does not aim to cover all possible sources but instead uses the researchers’ reasoning to draw insights and conclusions about the role of storytelling in building sustainability values in primary education. As the study is based entirely on publicly available information, no ethics approval was required.

3. Storytelling in the Primary School’s Classroom

Regarding the impact of oral storytelling on children’s self-concept [16,17], it was found that it exposed children to “long-standing archetypal models” [17] that engaged the imagination, stimulated sympathetic responses and helped children process their social experiences at school. Stories play a significant role in shaping children’s psychological development and have pedagogical value in the classroom to develop critical reading skills [18]. Valuable research and evidence on storytelling from around the world show that this ancient art can be blended with contemporary needs and tools to improve children’s development and skills [19–21], including values acquisition [22], moral lessons [23], and the development of identity and empathy [24]. Moreover, research shows that the most engaging stories used in the classroom are those to which children can relate [25].

Stories or folktales are considered a source of entertainment, able to create interest and excitement in children. Fables in particular present moral truths, while certain characters can represent powerful symbols in themselves of the good and bad or weak and strong [26,27]. As one of the major forms of folk literature, folktales can help in evaluating the intrinsic relationship of humans with the natural world and can assist in developing a nature consciousness and responsibility towards Mother Earth.

However, research on storytelling in Bangladesh’s educational system, particularly the use of this educational tool in primary education, has been scarce. On the other hand, Bangladesh is rich with folklore-based stories with traditional or folk values considered to harness the principles of sustainability [10]. In the past, children were entertained and instructed with folktales. This tradition has been overtaken by the written culture. Some writers have tried to preserve the oral tradition of Bangladesh in books aimed at children with the intention of instructing and entertaining them. The folk stories’ succinctness, action, fantasy elements and characters to whom children can relate, combined with happy endings, make them appealing to young listeners and help them develop a sense of morality [28]. They guide children in distinguishing the good from the evil in the world and encourage them to start identifying with the good.

The stories in 'Thakur Maa'r Jhuli' by the legendary Sri Dakhhinaranjan Mitra Majumder, published in 1907 [29], have inspired the children of Bangladesh in the past. Many remember the famous story of the Rabbit and the Tiger, where the Rabbit could find a way to save its life and punish the Tiger only with prompt intelligence, saying that the Rabbit could do so because it "regularly eats vegetables". Thus, the message given is that having vegetables regularly makes you intelligent. The stories of the Prince and the Demons describe how the Prince fights the Demons with massive courage and crosses thousands of hurdles to bring back the Princess's life or for other greater causes. They teach children to be confident, courageous and ready for sacrifices to reach the goal and to bring good to the journey of life.

Other Bengali folk stories have also survived the test of time. For example, the word "Bhombal Dass" [30], taken from a folktale, is stipulated in our day-to-day lives to give someone a name who is considered a fool. The story of "Tetan Buri and Boka Buri" (The Two Old Women), a Bengali folk tale [31], graciously inspires young children to share their belongings with each other. The story "takar apod" from the collection of Shukumar Roy's [32] stories can help you realise that money cannot buy peace and happiness and teach you how to be happy with less with the famous tale "Shukhi Manusher Golpo" (The Story of a Happy Man).

Although these folk stories are still alive in Bangladeshi culture, many children, especially those born and raised in the urban areas of the country, are not in touch with the oral traditions of their ancestors. In their city lives, they are rarely exposed to the richness of Bengali folklore. Using storytelling in the classroom can help establish connections between present-day life and the cultural heritage of a country. This, however, is not as simple as reading or telling a story, as many folk stories also contain outdated ideas, such as recognising the gender of the baby from the way the pregnant mother looks [33] or patriarchal attitudes now considered misogynist, such as kings with multiple wives or male dominance [34]. The art of using this precious folk material is to slightly tweak the story while preserving its goodness and conserving the right attitudes and honourable behaviours [34]. As the award-winning author, educator, poet, storyteller and translator Sutapa Basu [34] explains, if you bring the enchanted realms of folk stories to the classroom, somewhere in the process they will change the way children view the world.

The intertwined environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability are often present in folk stories. Developing a conceptual framework is essential for bringing any story into the primary school's classroom as a tool for value education and encouraging sustainability [35]. For example, nature and the natural environment can be represented in different ways in folklore, with negative (e.g., being frightening) or positive (e.g., offering shelter or beauty) messages to humans and other species [36]. Stories are rememberable and entertaining [37]; they develop the landscapes of action and consciousness [38]; and in the form of a fairy tale, they can improve the language, creativity and self-expression of the students in the classroom [39]. In addition to the development of basic skills such as listening, speaking and reading, stories help young children's emergent literacy outcomes [40], analytical capacities [41], make them more resilient and encourage their ability to make meaning and understand the world [42]. It is this power of stories that needs to be brought out when educating for sustainability.

4. Conceptual Framework for Analysing Stories

Storytelling is a useful pedagogical tool in primary education to develop values that encourage sustainability and transformation [7]. To achieve this, the selection of stories and their suitability become major decisions for teachers to make. The conceptual framework for analysing the suitability of stories in teaching sustainability used in this study is synthesised from a constructivist perspective as a bridge between theory and practice [43] based on the theoretical and empirical literature on storytelling. Scaffolding [44] is used in this study as a framework for examining how stories in the classroom may facilitate moral or ethical reasoning. According to the constructivist perspective, the teacher does not directly

present the knowledge but guides the students in the learning process to develop this knowledge [45]. Scaffolding is a metaphor to describe the educational process, like putting support in place in the construction of a building that is removed upon completion.

The approach is grounded in Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development in children based on thinking about concepts and ideas [46] that the student can learn with the support of a better-informed individual. It was first introduced in education by Wood, Bruner and Ross [47] in the 1970s and has since been frequently used to explain the role of the teacher in the learning process from kindergarten to university [48]. According to Zurek, Torquati and Acar [49], "educators engage in scaffolding by providing the necessary level and type of support that is well-timed to children's needs". In this way, they improve student engagement and motivation to achieve better cognitive outcomes [48]. Supported by teachers, children can use storytelling as a scaffolding process for making meaning, comprehending the complexities of the surrounding environment and developing cultural values. This helps lay the foundations of self-regulation and responsible behaviour [50].

In the literature, there is no agreed-upon way of determining exactly how scaffolding should be used [51] and different approaches have been put forward. The 3C approach (Context, Content and Concept) [52] is used as scaffolding to analyse the suitability of folk stories to teach sustainability (see Figure 1). This approach has been endorsed in qualitative research to capture unstructured observations and offer insights into human behaviour [52] or to explore intangible techniques, such as creativity in communicating meaning [53]. It allows the teacher/storyteller to determine the compatibility of the story from a sustainability perspective. The context represents the circumstances—theoretical or real-life—in which sustainability is introduced. This could describe a school within a particular community with a certain demographic and socio-cultural profile. Content refers to the matter of the story—what happened, including characters, their actions and consequences. The concept is the larger theoretical or practical sustainability issue, which the story and its moral help explain. Figure 2 shows the application of the 3C approach and attempts to link the approach and mapping to create a comprehensive understanding of the sustainability perspective.

Figure 1 portrays the 3C approach (Concept, Content and Context) that will help the teacher/storyteller predominantly determine the compatibility of the story with the sustainability perspective, while Figure 2 presents the link between the approach and mapping to create a comprehensive understanding of the sustainability perspective. Given the rationale and framework for the study, the research sought to outline the approach to analysing two commonly recognised stories from Bengali folk tales and mapping them with the major aspects of sustainability (social, economic, and environmental) to investigate how stories can influence children to build a pro-sustainability attitude.

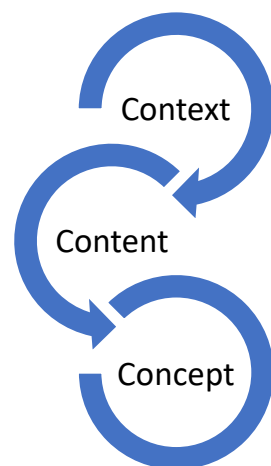


Figure 1. The 3C (Context, Content and Concept) scaffolding approach.



Figure 2. Mapping with the scaffolding approach.

The selected stories can function as a linguistic resource in pragmatic interaction between the teacher and students [35]. This process can create a web of interactions in the classroom and give the teacher an opportunity to bring sustainability into the conversation. Specifically (see Figure 2), the context of the folk story will determine: the demographic understanding of the platform of the story (e.g., folks and place), the socio-economic rationale of the folks and the cultural interpretation of the folks where the story belongs. The content of the story will determine the characters of the story, the actions taken by the characters and the consequences revealed from the actions. Finally, the concept of the story will determine the ultimate motif of the story and the sustainability perspective carried out by the motif. This approach is used below for two commonly recognised Bengali folk stories, after the process of their selection is explained.

5. Two Examples of Folklore-Based Stories

Two stories from Bengali childlore are selected for story-telling in the classroom. According to Dundes [54], folklore reflects the past and the present, but it can also be used in primary education to shape the future. Fairy tales, combining animal tales, fables and anecdotes, are particularly appropriate as they are simpler and can be used as examples to carry a unique lesson or moral. They can illustrate certain moral points, as is the case with Bengali folk stories such as Lalkamal-Nilkamal, Byangoma-Byangomi or Duo rani—Suo rani. An objective of such stories is to help stimulate children’s imagination and relate the moral to their own lives and circumstances. They create avenues for thinking and questioning as well as adopting certain values.

There is no prescribed method that a storyteller or the teacher must follow to select and prepare a story for telling [35]; each storyteller finds a method that works best for them. Mundy-Taylor [35] emphasises the importance of devoting care and time to the selection of stories, as the success of any storytelling relies on the acceptance and enjoyment of the stories by both the teller and the listener. In our case, stories should originate from folklore and need to be published with content appropriate for the 5–11-year-old age group. They should play with the themes of good and evil to provide a value judgement. Another consideration is the teacher’s personal knowledge and experience in being able to convey the context, content and concept of the story.

Any religious bias or cultural taboos should be avoided or explained. The two selected stories, respectively from “Grandmother’s Bag of Tales” (Story 1: ‘Shukhu and Dukhu’) [55] and “The Clever Jackal and the Foolish Jackal” (Story 2: ‘Jackal, The Judge’), are presented in Appendix A. The first story, once translated by Sutapa Basu [56] as Princesses, Monsters, and Magical Creatures, is from the original book of “Thakur Ma’r Jhuli” (“Grandmother’s Bag of Tales”) by the author Dakshinaranjan Mitra [54], but has been slightly modified to reflect modern-day reality. It is very difficult to translate the texture of a language and the interlacing of the words [57], but care has been taken to adhere as closely to the original as possible. The second story did not require modification.

6. Discussion

Both stories comply with the three criteria identified by Buell [58] for evaluating a literary text for its sustainability educational value, namely: (i) The non-human dimension is an actual presence in the text and not merely a façade implying that the human and non-human worlds are integrated; (ii) The human interest is not privileged over everything else; and (iii) Humans are accountable to the environment and any actions they perform that damage the ecosystem [58]. The moral messages conveyed in the two tales help instil an ethics in the minds of the young listeners that will help them grow into mature adults who are caring, considerate, responsible in their consumption and free of greed. They encourage joy and satisfaction with life that can persist no matter how much people age. The pedagogical use of the stories, however, needs to be understood within the 3C scaffolding approach.

6.1. 3C Approach: Context

The analysis of each story begins by setting it within the respective geographical, socio-economic and cultural context, incorporating religious and other social aspects into its narrative [59], while keeping the core objectives unchanged. A teacher has some freedom inside the classroom to make any adjustments to the content, background and other elements of the story as needed, taking into consideration the socio-economic status of the children, achievable competences and cultural, including religious, characteristics. For example, when the story 'Shukhu and Dukhu' was originally written in 1907 [55], polygamy was culturally accepted, and the main characters were the two wives and daughters of the weaver. However, in the modern context, having two wives is not legally acceptable. Hence, these characters are replaced by two daughters and their husbands. The teacher (as well as everybody else) should have the freedom to make reasonable adjustments when narrating folk stories to the children while preserving the moral message. As Castle explains [60], folk tales are continuously changing and have always done so, but they also exist in a time where magic is possible. This magic brings hope and conveys confidence in children that if they do the right thing, they will live in a beautiful world. Such values and attitudes are extremely important for sustainability.

When a story is presented to children through a contextual agent, such as the teacher, its acceptance will increase, and the desired response or result will be obtained. Although stories are being translated and analysed from a research point of view, in a practical application, it will be easier for a teacher to present his/her own rearranged plot if the text is converted into the context. In fact, the story's text is translatable while the context is not [58], and this is essential to the scaffolding approach.

The story 'Shukhu and Dukhu' (see Appendix A) portrays the simplicity of rural Bengal, as many other Bengali stories do. They transmit cultural values of simplicity and living of one's own accord. The story also reveals that nature rewards or punishes humankind based on how humans treat the land, air, water or any other living beings that exist on this planet. The younger daughter-husband duo merely managed to make ends meet, yet they were humble, thankful for what they had and kind to other beings. Dukhu's own misery could not stop her from being kind to the animals seeking help on her way. Shukhu, on the other hand, is greedy and aspires for more possessions and wealth without due consideration of other living beings. This story conveys a picture of how rural people in Bangladesh find happiness in simple living and how a greedless life brings ultimate joy, making the story relevant with an educational focus on sustainability. Unrestricted consumption and greed lead to an ugly, unhappy existence and, ultimately, death. The story's focus is intended to explore the moral understanding of the children in the classroom. It is presented as a metaphor for a naturalistic view of two sides of society where one group is overall more successful in finding peace and joy.

The second story, 'Jackal, The Judge' [15] (see also Appendix A), begins by illustrating how poachers are hunting the tigers for their own satisfaction. Its plot can be used to explain to children how animal poaching is causing the extinction of different species and

impacting biodiversity. The traveller was asking for the opinions of four people before making a final decision, and this represents how the justice system works as well as how to give importance to other people's opinions in social life. Furthermore, the story incites young minds to keep patience in danger and still be tactful in the decision-making process.

6.2. 3C Approach: Content

Archetypal characters are preeminent in folk stories, and their function is to harness a child's understanding by establishing clear connections between the particular and the universal [61]. In both stories, the characters of the humans and the animals are archetypal, but they are used to carry morally simplistic meanings. Giving non-human objects, such as plants and animals, a voice is intriguing. In many tales, animals and plants speak to people in a cooperative relationship [62], warning them of dangers and about remaining loyal. This also provides such characters with significant importance. Without them, the traveller, or Dukhu, would not have made the journey. Dukhu was rewarded by every non-human character in the story for her kindness towards them, while Shukhu received the opposite for her cruelty and selfishness. In the second story, the man's life was saved by the wisdom and spontaneous intelligence of the fox. For a child, this teaches them to take care of inanimate objects and other non-human living beings in the same way that they would care for a human.

It is conventionally acknowledged that good teachers are good storytellers [63], but analysis of how stories function pedagogically lags behind this recognition. A close textual analysis of the content and process of storytelling is needed to grasp the full importance of teachers' storytelling [64]. As the stories are mostly examples, with the teacher and students using them to convey opinions and value judgements, they give the opportunity to generate a sense of connection [65]. This creates an avenue where the learner will be able to relate the content—characters, equipment, any specific event of the story, consequences etc.—through the value inherent in the content to real-life experience related to sustainability.

In most folktales, as in the two used here, a lesson about what happens if the human is grateful for the animal's aid and the consequences of being ungrateful is also communicated [65]. Children with an emotional attachment to non-human beings are likely to become more friendly towards the natural environment in adulthood [66]. The beliefs, values and ways of life that have evolved from living close to nature naturally have a stimulating effect on people by inducing empathy, developing environmental ethics and creating ecological values and pro-environmental emotions [67].

6.3. 3C Approach: Concept

Moral principles are considered the fundamental gateway to achieving sustainability [68]. In the words of Albert Einstein: "The most important human endeavour is the striving for morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life" (in [69]). The reason for using folk stories for the purposes of moral education is that they are archetypes, comprehensible and accessible to be explored [61]. Each story should represent an example by being a 'moral tale'. In each example, a problematic incident is presented and then interpreted, with children having the opportunity to comment on the behaviour of the characters involved [70]. The students and teacher share the storytelling process, using exchanges to bring out moral values. These stories possess interrelated evaluative and social functions for the listener [71], who can create a relational construct not just based upon the characters in the story embedded in relationships, but through the relationship of the listener to the characters themselves. Likewise, stories provide commentary upon significant life experiences and can be understood as a means of "constructing and seeing one's self in relation to others, appreciating difference, and evaluating ourselves" in relation to others [72].

The two stories offer the children several possibilities as to the intended implicit morals and values: if you are kind to nature, you will be rewarded; no matter how poor

you are, you should not be greedy and live the simplest possible life even when you are offered abundant wealth. Children were given the example of a bad ethical decision and the consequences for the greedy pair who were unkind to the creatures seeking help. This will create an avenue for children to imagine the contribution of a tree, a cow or a dog in their everyday lives and how they should be treated in return. All living, non-living, human and non-human beings are crucial for a joyful co-existence on our planet and, hence, for sustainability [66,67]. Children are evidently capable of recognising a wide variety of good and bad ethical behaviours within the context of one simple story whose moral will persist in the primary school classroom.

The emergent themes from this research explore how the process of storytelling in the classroom can be used to scaffold moral/ethical deliberations. First, the storytelling process and facilitation offer complexity and multi-dimensionality to the discussion of ethical issues because students are asked to place themselves in the context of the story. Students demonstrate their own interpretations of the context as it applies to their real lives. It cannot be generalised how students will interpret and relate to individual stories because their interpretations and understandings of the morals are drawn from their own experiences. While children may be able to reason abstractly about the right thing to do, this does not necessarily equate to their ability to handle moral situations that arise in their daily lives. The narrative approach to moral education serves to create a situation in which the individual student reasons through the process of reflecting upon oneself in the place of a character that one has thought of metaphorically [72].

6.4. 3C Approach: Scaffolding

A folkloristic approach [64] demonstrates how a teacher can bring up the actual topic by using stories along with the textual content to emphasise sustainability in the content of the story. Another aspect of a folkloristic approach is that, just as different genres of folklore have been transmitted orally from one generation to another, through this approach, a teacher can first introduce children to a pro-sustainability attitude that will persist through their education. The first stage brings the textbook story of the past into the present situation by removing the boundaries of time and space, and then draws the student in the present context into relevant sustainability behaviour. Teachers have limited authority in the classroom, particularly as we transition to student-centred models of education in the 21st century [73]. They can only speak from their own experience, and their understanding of the experiences of others is filtered through their own experiences. Therefore, in the second part, the teacher narrates any story or tale and not only interprets the textual content but also brings together personal and local knowledge with professional, academic, nationalised and localised knowledge of sustainability.

If the first of these exercises enables children to deconstruct the values embedded in the narrative, the latter allows them to begin to reconstruct the moral of the story in light of the ethical sense they make of the characters' actions. However, both the content and context used allow teachers to glean new insights into the children's complex ethical dilemmas and how they reason through them. This is a benefit of the use of storytelling in the classroom. The complexity inherent in storytelling allows for interpretation. Students interpret their own meanings—those that are most relevant to their personal experience and most closely related to their own ethical deliberations. This interpretation by the students then provides insights for teachers to better understand how the students apply ethical reasoning in their everyday experiences. The flowchart in Figure 3 represents the steps needed to be taken by the teacher when using storytelling in the classroom.

Education is considered an opportunity for change towards sustainability through value development [74]. The teacher should be able to reach out to the children's hearts with sustainability messages and tell them they need to be gentle on earth, modest in living and kind to others [75].



Figure 3. Using storytelling in the classroom.

7. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to add to the body of work around sustainability education by offering an approach building on the socio-emotional effects and benefits of oral storytelling in primary school. Despite the significant benefits to children's education and development, oral story telling at school is underutilised in primary education around the world [24] and specifically in Bangladesh. Hence, the paper stressed that the integration of folk values from stories into primary education would particularly help build moral values encouraging sustainability. It provided a way to design activities that bring sustainable development into the classroom [76,77].

Stories are a convenient, available, and easily resourced tool to incorporate values in primary education and to transmit values between generations [78]. The moment we start a story, a child connects to it through their imagination, which drifts from one layer to another as the plot unfolds. This journey creates an opportunity to introduce the child to the real purpose of the story and then subtly transport them back to reality. While the story ends, it leaves a footprint on the child's subconscious mind and psyche. This helps them relate to the reality of life.

However, students will learn better from folk stories when they receive guidance from their teacher through the scaffolding approach that can be traced back to Russian psychology, including the work of Vygotsky [79]. Scaffolding needs to build on the context,

concept and content of the folk story as they relate to sustainability. We put forward two folk stories, namely ‘Shakhu and Dukhu’ from the book “Grandmother’s Bag of Tales” by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar and ‘Jackal, The Judge’ from the book “The Clever Jackal and the Foolish Jackal” by Shah Jahan Kibria, which can be used in primary education in Bangladesh to convey sustainability values, such as simple living, kindness, being humble, patience and careful decision-making. The two examples demonstrate that folk stories contain powerful messages that help build capacity in learners to act in a self-determined, competent way.

There are many other folk stories that teachers can adapt and use. It is important, however, that the stories reflect the realities of modern life and are brought up to date so that children can make sense of the situations and lessons portrayed in them. The scaffolding approach allows to clarify the context—targeted demography (including gender issues), socio-economic background (e.g., social status) and cultural interpretation (as it relates to a particular geographic place and its cultural history), develop the concept—build appropriate characters (to which students can relate), their actions and consequences, and reflect on the concept with the main motivation being educating children for sustainability through appropriate perspectives. It is important to keep in mind the diversity of impacts storytelling can have and guide them towards building sustainability values in children.

Storytelling is a tool that teachers can use to foster awareness, challenge assumptions, clarify values and ideas about what sustainability means, and empower individuals and groups to act accordingly. Teaching at the primary level is a challenging and responsible job that plays the role of a curator in the most crucial period of educational life, sowing a seed that will sprout and bloom into a sapling and eventually turn into a tree.

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Appendix A. Two Folklore-Based Stories

Story 1: Shukhu and Dukhu

A weaver sadly passed away, leaving behind two married daughters. The older daughter and her husband took all the wealth and the better places of the house while throwing the other pair into the dark, dingy chambers behind the house with no resources for surviving. The younger daughter, Dukhu, spins a little cotton and makes a towel or tablecloth from it and sells them in the market, which is hardly enough for a meal for the two of them.

One day, Dukhu sits and watches damp cotton dry in the sunlight. Suddenly, a mischievous little breeze swooped on the cotton balls, leaving Dukhu crying. Mother Wind, who was passing the crying Dukhu, said, ‘Do not cry, dear Dukhu. Come with me. I will get your cotton back for you’. Wiping off the tears, Dukhu rushed after Mother Wind and was soon called out by a cow. ‘Dukhu, Dukhu! Where are you going? My cowherd has forgotten to sweep my shed. Will you please do it for me?’ The soft and kind-hearted Dukhu could not brush off the request and hurriedly swept out the cowshed, put fresh hay and water in it, and started running again behind Mother Wind. Soon a banana tree called out: ‘Dukhu! O Dukhu! Weeds are choking my roots; please pull them out for me.’ Dukhu tugged out the weeds from the roots of the banana tree and rushed after Mother Wind. Soon she was called out again by a banyan tree to sweep away dry leaves from its branches and by a horse to give him a few handfuls of grass. Dukhu could not

avoid either of them despite being stressed by her own agony. Hence, Dukhu swept the dry leaves, making the turf under the banyan tree neat and clean, pulled out clumps of green grass and placed them in front of the horse before she continued running behind Mother Wind until they came upon a silver-white mansion. Dukhu passed large, clean halls, gleaming courtyards and sparkling windows until she reached a wide staircase where an old woman was sitting and spinning yarn on a wheel and weaving it so quickly on a loom that a pair of saris flowed out before Dukhu could blink. This enchanting old woman was nobody else but the Moon Lady, or the Granny of the Moon. Heavily nervous, Dukhu came close to Granny, bowed to her and pledged to return the cotton. Otherwise, she and her husband had to starve, as these cottons were the only source of the little food they earned. With a honey-sweet voice and a heart full of kindness, the Granny said: 'Oh, my good child, bless you! You have come such a long way. Why do not you bathe, eat some lunch and rest first? In the next chamber, you will find a towel, some scented oil and soap. There are also saris for you to choose from. You can bathe in the pond behind the mansion. Once you feel fresh, go to the other chamber and have lunch. Then I will give your cotton back.'

Dukhu found the next chamber full of towels of all kinds, saris of silk, cotton and muslin in all colours, and shelves full of oil and soaps. Despite all the fancy items, she only took a simple sari, a little towel, a few drops of oil and a little soap. The moment Dukhu dipped her head into the pond, she became more beautiful, with long, thick hair, soft peach skin, large eyes and red lips. She found herself covered in gold jewellery around her body after the second dip and wrapped in the silk sari. After finishing the bath, Dukhu found a hall full of feasts but chose to eat very little. The Moon Lady then asked Dukhu to pick up her cotton casket from the next chamber. Out of all the big caskets, Dukhu picked the smallest, as she knew she did not own any big caskets. Amazed by the honesty of this poor girl, Granny bestowed her blessings on Dukhu, who happily started her way back home. Here came the horse, who called her out and offered her his pakshiraj (little pony); the banyan tree gave her a large jar filled with gold coins; the banana tree gave her a large bunch of golden bananas; and finally, the cow gave her lucky calf to Dukhu.

Seeing her coming back home, her husband streamed down with joy and surprise, revealing his wife had become more beautiful with all the jewels and gifts. After hearing everything that had happened, Dukhu's husband delightfully went to the older sister's door and offered a good share of all the jewels and gifts. Scowling, frowning and making ugly faces, Shukhu's husband refused to take anything from them and slammed the door on his face. At the same time, a beautiful baby came out of the casket and gave love and joy to the sweet and kind Dukhu. The lucky cow gave them bucketsful of creamy milk and they rode the Pakshiraj everywhere. Dukhu and her husband then lived in peace and comfort.

Greedy Shukhu and her husband could not resist but sitting on the same plot of drying cotton piles in the sunlight. Shukhu's husband went to bathe, leaving Shukhu with the cottons. Soon the wind blew and lifted Shukhu's cotton pile. Wasting no time, Shukhu started following Mother Wind, and she encountered the banana tree, banyan and horse the same way Dukhu was called out. However, the shellfish Shukhu paid no attention to them. She even did not show any respect to the Moon Lady when she arrived in the same mansion and rather yelled at her to give out the gifts. The Moon Lady felt intimidated and softly asked her the same thing she did with Dukhu.

Shukhu hurried into the next chamber and picked the best towel and sari for her to rush to the pond. She recalled Dukhu's steps in the first dip, which gave her beauty; the second dip gave her ornaments. The greedy Shukhu dipped her head three times and was horrified when she looked in the mirror. Her face had swollen into a black balloon and ugly blisters had broken out on her skin. The Moon Lady calmed her by saying that what is done cannot be undone; she should not have taken the dip three times. The Moon Lady then asked her to have food and choose a casket from the next chamber. The greedy Shukhu ate until her mouth was full and picked the largest casket. With no farewell wishes or greetings, she left the Moon Lady, showing no respect. On her way, she begged for help and everyone refused. The horse kicked her, the banyan dropped a thick branch on her and the banana tree dropped a bunch of bananas on her back. The cow lowered its head to stab her. Stumbling and staggering, panting and gasping, Shukhu reached home. The devastated husband and wife waited for the night when they were expecting a baby to come out of the casket, and their misery would be over. Shukhu's husband found out that Shukhu was gobbled up instead by a huge python that was inside the casket. Sobbing and howling, Shukhu's husband battered his head on the wall until he died.

Story 2: Jackal, The Judge

The bravest of all beasts in the jungle, a tiger, was trapped captive by a group of poachers. He was feeling tired and helpless after all his attempts to get out of the cage. A moment later, the tiger requested that a gentleman who was passing by open the locker for him to go out and drink some water from the river. He promised to come back. 'You will break my neck and eat me if I open it; I do not trust you', said the passer-by with fear and doubt. The tiger made a gentleman's promise, and his heartfelt plea melted the traveller's heart. He freed the tiger from the cage.

The nature of the wicked tiger said: 'I will eat you before drinking water'. The traveller realised he had brought his own danger, but there would be no use of force here; rather, he was thinking of using his intelligence. 'I know you will eat me, but before that, the opinion of four juries should be taken', trickily said the man.

A moment later, they approached a gigantic banyan tree. The traveller asked the banyan tree and said this tiger was imprisoned in the cage of hunters. 'I freed him up at his request. Now he wants to eat me. How can he do so?' The banyan tree sighs: 'I stand in the sun and give shade to people; they sleep comfortably under me. Following that, they broke my branches, lit a fire at my base, and cooked rice. Humans are very ungrateful. Thus, this man should be fed.'

'Get ready for death', said the proud tiger. 'We are yet to ask three more juries before you eat me', said the frightened man, looking for the second jury.

After going some distance, they met a dog. The dog heard everything and said: 'When I had strength, I used to guard the master's house without sleeping all night. Once, I saved the life of the master's little son by lifting him out of the water. Now that I am old, I cannot work like I used to. The master stops my meal and chases me away when he sees me. Humans are ungrateful, and this man should go into the tiger's belly'. Death was coming closer, and then they came across a cow.

The traveller said to the cow: 'I have done a favour to this tiger by freeing him from the hunter's cage. Now he wants to eat me. Is this the result of helping anyone?' Hearing all this, the cow said: 'In my youth, I ploughed my master's field, pulled cartloads of goods, gave birth to five calves, and the master fed my milk to all his children. Now I am old, I cannot give milk, and I cannot pull a car. The master has stopped feeding me and will sell me to the butchers. Humans are ungrateful, and this man deserves to be in a tiger's belly'.

The devastated traveller was looking for the last jury, the last hope, and a jackal was passing by. After hearing everything, the jackal understood that the traveller could not be saved if he did not have a little wisdom. The jackal pretended not to understand the matter and said: 'I cannot make a proper judgement without seeing with my own eyes how the matter happened'. The overjoyed tiger explicitly demonstrated the whole story: 'I was sitting inside the cage when this man was passing by the back of the cage'.

'How can the man open the door from behind the cage?', pretending not to be understood, the jackal said with wonder. The tiger became impatient and jumped into the cage and said: 'I was here.'

The jackal said: 'What was the condition of the door?'

The tiger said: "The door was closed.'

The jackal said to the passerby: 'Close the door', and the man closed the door without delay.

The jackal said to the tiger: 'You are ungrateful. The man opened the cage door at your request and set you free, as he felt pity for your suffering, and you wanted to eat him instead'. Never harm those who do you a favour or benefit you.

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Some information about this survey:

First of all thank you for your consent and time for taking part in this survey to help me in the project. I used to be a teacher in a Govt primary school and currently I am doing my PhD in Curtin University in Western Australia. The topic of my research is Integrating folk values in primary education in Bangladesh: Sustainability perspective.

The survey is designed in four parts:

- First part is about you and your school;
- Second part is about sustainability;
- Third part is about Bangladesh's traditional folklore and
- Fourth part allows you to give your open input and thoughts about this project.

There is no right or wrong answer and some practices may be more important to you than others. There is no need to write your name. Therefore, no one will know your answers. However, it is important to give ***honest answers based on how you truly feel*** about what is asked in each question. You can even skip any question if you feel you do not want to answer. Please use the following guideline to rate your answers.

Strongly agree / extremely important

Agree / Important

Neutral / not sure

Disagree / of little importance

Strongly disagree / Not important

Not applicable

- If you believe that a practice is very important, circle a high number (for example very important/ agree or extremely important/ strongly agree).
- If you believe a particular practice is not very important, then circle a low number (for example of somewhat important /disagree or not important /strongly disagree).
- If you are unsure about any of the question and do not want to respond, then circle (for example, neutral / not sure)
- If the question is not relevant to you and your work, circle not applicable.

Part 1: You and your school

1	Where is your school located?	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban area <input type="checkbox"/> Rural area
2	Your age group	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 60
3	How many years do you have in teaching?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> Between 5 and 19 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 years
4	Your last education qualification or training	
5	Please state your specialised area / subject of teaching (if any)	
6	Please list the extra curriculum activities you perform in your school (if any)	
7	Do you have a tree plantation programme in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
8	Do you have outdoor activities (such as, excursions / sight-seeing / picnic for your students?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
9	What is the source of drinking water in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Tap water <input type="checkbox"/> Tube well <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
10	What is the source of power in your school?	<input type="checkbox"/> National greed <input type="checkbox"/> Polli Bidyuth <input type="checkbox"/> Solar <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Part 2: Sustainability values

In this part I will ask you about the importance of sustainability values and practices for children in the age group 5-11 years. How do you personally evaluate, as a teacher, the importance of the sustainability aspects (social, economic and environmental) in our primary education curriculum?

Social sustainability

1	How important is the role of primary education to teach children to be kind and helpful to the other children and people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you agree we have enough useful resources in our curriculum to teach children to be kind and helpful to the other children and people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
2	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to be respectful to all genders, ethnicity and religion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough useful resource in our curriculum to teach children about respectful to all genders, ethnicity and religion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
3	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about being kind to all living and non-living beings (including wild animals, plants)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough useful resource in our curriculum to teach children about all living and non-living beings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
4	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to be responsible and accept responsibility for their actions (what they say and what they do)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to be responsible and accept responsibility for our actions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable



Environmental sustainability:

5	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children about <i>climate change</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about climate change?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
6	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children <i>about protecting the environment and the natural world when they eat, play and work</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about protecting the environment and the natural world when we eat, play and work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
7	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to <i>keep/save natural resources (water, minerals, soil, plants, animals etc) for future generations</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children about keeping/saving natural resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

Economic sustainability

8	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children <i>to produce less waste when you eat, play and work</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to produce less waste when you eat, play and work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable



9	How important is the role of primary education to teach the children to <i>use everything in moderation (what we need) so that there is some left for others?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely important <input type="checkbox"/> Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/> Not important <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
	If your answer is important or extremely important, do you think we have enough resource in our curriculum to teach children to use everything in moderation (what we need) so that there is some left for others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

Part 3: Folklore

10	<p>How much do you agree that it is important to retain our aged-long <i>TRADITIONAL</i> values and wisdom which are orally transmitted from generation to generation?</p> <p>e.g., our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, , legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuli , Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
11	<p>How much do you agree that the <i>CHILDLORE</i> or children-friendly elements of our folklore help enhance the morals, values and wisdom in our children?</p> <p>(e.g. our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, , legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuli , Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
12	How much do you agree that our aged-long <i>FOLKLORE</i> offers a way to teach kindness, self-reliance, honesty, resilience and other sustainability attitudes to our children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
13	How much do you agree that teachers <i>SHOULD</i> use different genres of folklore in the classroom to teach sustainability to children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
14	Do you use genres of folklore in your class?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / not sure
	If your answer is yes, what are the genres or elements of folklore you normally use in your classroom? Please list the genres you use the most.	



15	<p>How much do you agree that FOLKLORE IS NOT USED PROPERLY in the primary education curriculum?</p> <p>(e.g. our aged long proverbs, maxims, idioms, , legends, fairy tales from Thakur Maa'r Jhuli , Rupkathar golpo, Ishop er golpo, folk songs, Palagaan, folk literature etc.)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p>
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Part 4: Open question:

- What do you find challenging about teaching sustainability in the classroom following the existing curriculum.

- If you have any comment, feedback, advice, input regarding this survey and the project, please add them in the black page attached.

In-depth interview questionnaire for the teachers:

1. Are there any challenges in teaching sustainability in the classroom following the existing curriculum and why?

Probe

- Do you teach sustainability messages in your class? Give examples.
- How do the students respond to sustainability issues?

2. Sustainability depends on the choices we make in our daily life e.g. what and how much we eat, what and how we use, how we travel etc. How do we prepare our children to learn to keep a balance between need and demand?

Probe

- What is the role of the classroom in primary education in this regard?
- What role can our traditional values or folklore play in this regard?
- Do you think there are sufficient elements present in our textbooks that provide teach children to be empathetic to all the creatures, refrain from wasting resources, look after the environment etc.?

3. How do you communicate issues related to social problems within the Bangladeshi community, such as poverty, consumerism, unemployment, corruption and adverse behaviour?

Probe

- Is there a role for primary education in relation to this?
- Can traditional values and wisdom contribute in this respect?

4. Bangladesh is rich with aged-long traditional values and wisdom that are transmitted orally from generation to generation. How well do today's students understand this oral folklore?

Probe

- Do you use genres from folklore to teach sustainability in your class?
- What are the forms or genres that you use mostly in your class?
- How do students respond to Bangladesh's folkloric tradition?



5. As a teacher how important is for you to establish traditional values in children?

Probe

- What values do you consider timely and should be established in children in relation to sustainability?
- What role can primary education play in order to sustain this oral tradition?

6. Do you think any contents should be included or changed in our primary education curriculum to make it more effective in teaching sustainability in the classroom and school environment? Why?

7. If you have any comment, feedback, advice, input regarding this interview and the project, please feel free to discuss.