

## Citizens' Report on

**PRIMARY EDUCATION**

from a Rights-based Perspective

*free education**non-discrimination**infrastructure**trained teachers**safe environment**relevant education**right to know**participation**transparency**quality learning*



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*trained teachers*



*safe environment*



*relevant education*



*right to know*



*participation*



*transparency*



*quality learning*

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## ACRONYMS

AAB	ActionAid Bangladesh
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GPS	Government Primary School
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
IID	Institute of Informatics and Development
LRP	Local Rights Programme
NEP	National Education Policy
NNGPS	Newly Nationalized Government Primary School
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PRS	Promoting Rights in Schools
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SYFP	Sixth Five Year Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
TSR	Teacher Student Ratio
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## FOREWORD

This study was conducted in 10 districts of Bangladesh with the help of 11 development partners of ActionAid Bangladesh. The partner organizations are Panchbibi Upazila Adivasi Multipurpose Development (PUAMDO), Balipara Nari Kalyan Samiti-BNKS, Udayankur Seba Sangstha, Bhumiya Foundation, Mukti Nari o Shishu Unnayan Sangstha, South Asia Partnership Bangladesh, Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts, Disabled Rehabilitation and Research Association, Dalit, Voluntary Association for Rural Development and Bangladesh Association for Community Education. We appreciate the support provided by all partner organizations and their people. From each of the working areas, five government primary schools were selected as sample. Thanks to all the students, parents, teachers, School Management Committee members and community for their support in data collection. We also appreciate the support of Upazila Education Officers; it would have been more difficult to carry out the process without their support.

Special gratitude to our LRP colleagues who have provided their valued comments and feedbacks in designing and preparing the study, especially Md. Mahbubur Rahman, Md. Najmul Haque, Mr. Peshal Chakma, Mr. Kaikobad Hossain, Mr. Mohirul Islam Babul, Ms. Jebonnahar, Mr. Jaglul Rajib, Mr. Bappa Chowdhury, Mr. Suranjan Das, Mr. Ujjal Mandol, Mr. Amirul Islam and Mr. Kamrul Hasan Khandaker.

Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh, Shahnaz Arefin, Director, ActionAid Bangladesh and Sajid Raihan, Deputy Director, ActionAid Bangladesh have helped us with their valuable and much needed advice. Colleagues from Communications, Programme Quality and Impact and other departments have also enriched us with their feedback. And last but not least, appreciation goes to our research partner Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) for carrying out the research and preparing this report and infographics in an easy and reader friendly way.

We hope this action research will contribute significantly in establishing basic rights in primary schools of Bangladesh.

With thanks,

**Education team,  
ActionAid Bangladesh**

# A. INTRODUCTION

The right to education is not just a right in itself, but also an enabling one. Education makes people aware of other rights and motivates them in claiming those. Given its importance, the right to education is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948. There are also a number of international human rights treaties that incorporate the right to education.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the global regulations, the right to education has also been incorporated into regional human rights treaties and states have reflected this right in their own constitutions, framing the basis for state level preservation of the right. However, although the last decades have seen significant progress in access to education globally, evidence also suggest that education is failing millions in terms of acquiring the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to meet their basic learning needs. In other words, the right to education involves more than mere access to education and students must receive a quality education that enables their personalities, talents and abilities to live a full and satisfying life within society, by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities'. Therefore, learning is to be monitored.

With the aim of securing free, compulsory, quality public education for all, the 'Promoting Rights in Schools' (PRS) initiative of the ActionAid and the Right to Education Project define the 10 rights at schools that describe what an ideal school that offers quality education would look like. From the perspective of monitoring education service delivery from a rights based approach, education rights situation mapping intended to assess the ground situation of selected schools in Bangladesh. Based on information gathered from field level evidence, the assessment aimed to map the school level situation in terms of the 10 core education rights. In the assessment process, the project will make use of a set of indicators for each of the 10 rights that have been suggested by the PRS initiative.

# B. BACKGROUND

Despite various initiatives to achieve the Millennium Development Goals of education worldwide, about 59 million children still remain out of school and 1 in every 4 children is not completing their primary education cycle.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the enrolment rates of

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<sup>1</sup> These include the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations 2013, *The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2013*.



student in 70 countries are below 80 percent, implying that the children, who were not enrolled in the schools by 2010, cannot complete education cycle by 2015.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the ultimate goal of ensuring primary education for all will not be materialized. Bangladesh is one of the five most densely populated countries of the world where 31.5 percent of the total population live below the poverty line (World Bank, 2012).<sup>4</sup>

Bangladesh's priority on education is reflected in its policy and planning documents, including the National Education Policy 2010, the Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP), Vision 2021, National Skill Development Policy (NSDP), and in its active responses towards international commitments such as Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, in order to ensure the right to education, several other interrelated rights need to be ensured at the same time.

Primary education system of Bangladesh is regarded as one of the largest primary education systems in the world<sup>5</sup> and Bangladesh has achieved significant progress in terms of enrolment rate (98.7 percent)<sup>6</sup> and gender parity (1.02)<sup>7</sup> in primary schools; however, dropout rate is still very high (21 percent). It can be assumed that like many other least developed countries, Bangladesh will also not be able to achieve the Education targets of MDG and EFA and the increasing trend of direct and indirect costs of education is one of the major challenges to achieve these goals.

The National Education Policy 2010 is a comprehensive policy designed with the aim of cultivating human values through our education system, ensuring implementation of the constitutional right to education, creating pathway for the progression of intellectual and creative thinking, removing discrimination from the education system, equipping students with life skill lessons and technological skills and creating equal access to education with proper health and social safety system. Other acts like the Primary Education Act, 1990 were designed to make primary education obligatory and also involve the parents, guardians, school management committees, teachers and students with an interactive and participatory system. It clearly defines how each committee will work under ward and union sectors with full responsibility as well as penalty for defaulters.

ActionAid Bangladesh has been working for the constitutional recognition of education as fundamental human right and facilitating citizens' movement at different levels to increase state financing in education with the aim to eliminate high drop out in schools owing to both direct and indirect costs in primary education.

'Promoting Rights in Schools' (PRS) is a collaborative approach between ActionAid and the

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<sup>3</sup> UNESCO. 2012. *Global Monitoring Report*.

<sup>4</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/bangladesh>

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF Bangladesh. 2009. *Quality Primary Education in Bangladesh*.

<sup>6</sup> Directorate of Primary Education, Bangladesh. 2012. *Annual Sector Performance Report (ASPR)*.

<sup>7</sup> As per gender parity index mentioned in ASPR, 2012.

'Right to Education Project' with the aim to promote free, compulsory, quality public education for all on the basis of citizen perspectives and mobilization. PRS approach is inspired both by education and human rights frameworks and by initiatives such as UNICEF's global Child-Friendly Schools and UK-focused Rights Respecting Schools Awards. At present PRS tool is adopted by almost all the ActionAid country programs where Education intervention is taking place.

The 10 Rights derived from international human rights treaties or conventions defined in the PRS approach are Right to free and compulsory education, Right to non-discrimination, Right to adequate infrastructure, Right to quality trained teachers, Right to a safe and non-violent environment, Right to relevant education, Right to know your rights, Right to participate, Right to transparent and accountable schools and Right to quality learning.

## C. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the education rights situation mapping are -

- i. To facilitate an assessment of ground realities in education service delivery in Bangladesh from a rights based perspective;
- ii. To help community identify specific areas in each school from the study to prepare school development plan;
- iii. To provide advocacy agenda for effective engagement at local (upazila) level with the duty bearers for promoting rights in schools.

## D. RIGHTS MAPPING PROCESS - METHODOLOGY

Education rights mapping has been done in 54 schools of 13 LRPs<sup>8</sup> of 12 districts through local education rights situation mapping, school level community consultation and Upazilla level public hearing. The schools have been selected purposively considering the geographical and socio-cultural context of the areas. A total of 2,435 participants were covered through the education rights mapping process; among them, 1,350 were students, 270 were teachers, 540 were parents and 275 were SMC members (LRP wise data is given in Annex 1). Moreover, 1,526 participants were covered through community consultation and 325 were covered through public hearing process (the output of this process is mentioned in

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<sup>8</sup> Local Rights programme – ActionAid Bangladesh's working area

'peoples testimony' part). In addition to that 104 local journalists were sensitized through public hearing on local education rights and expressed their commitment to engage with PRS work directly. It highlighted ten major rights and measurable indicators for assessing the degree of presence of each right. A comprehensive step by step approach was followed to conduct this assessment.

## 1. CONDUCTING FIELD SURVEY

A questionnaire survey was conducted in ten districts covered 54 local schools across the country. Seven sets of questionnaires were developed comprising of:

- i. *Observation by the enumerators*- where the enumerators made notes about the infrastructural and safety conditions of the schools.
- ii. *School records* - to procure documented records the school records were looked upon.
- iii. *Questionnaire survey* - 1,350 students were surveyed through specifically designed questionnaire consisting both open ended and close ended questionnaires.
- iv. *Two focus group discussions (FGDs)* were conducted in each of the 54 schools with two groups of respondents:
  - a. One with the School Management Committee (SMC), each FGD consisting of 5 members of SMC of 1 school
  - b. Another with the teachers, each FGD consisting of 5 teachers of 1 school
- v. *Questionnaire survey among the teachers* - specifically designed questionnaire survey was conducted among 270 teachers in total. Questionnaire survey among the teachers were compiled in one single set of questionnaire to obtain an easier procedure for data collection.
- vi. *Questionnaire survey among the parents* - specifically designed questionnaire survey was conducted among 540 parents in total.

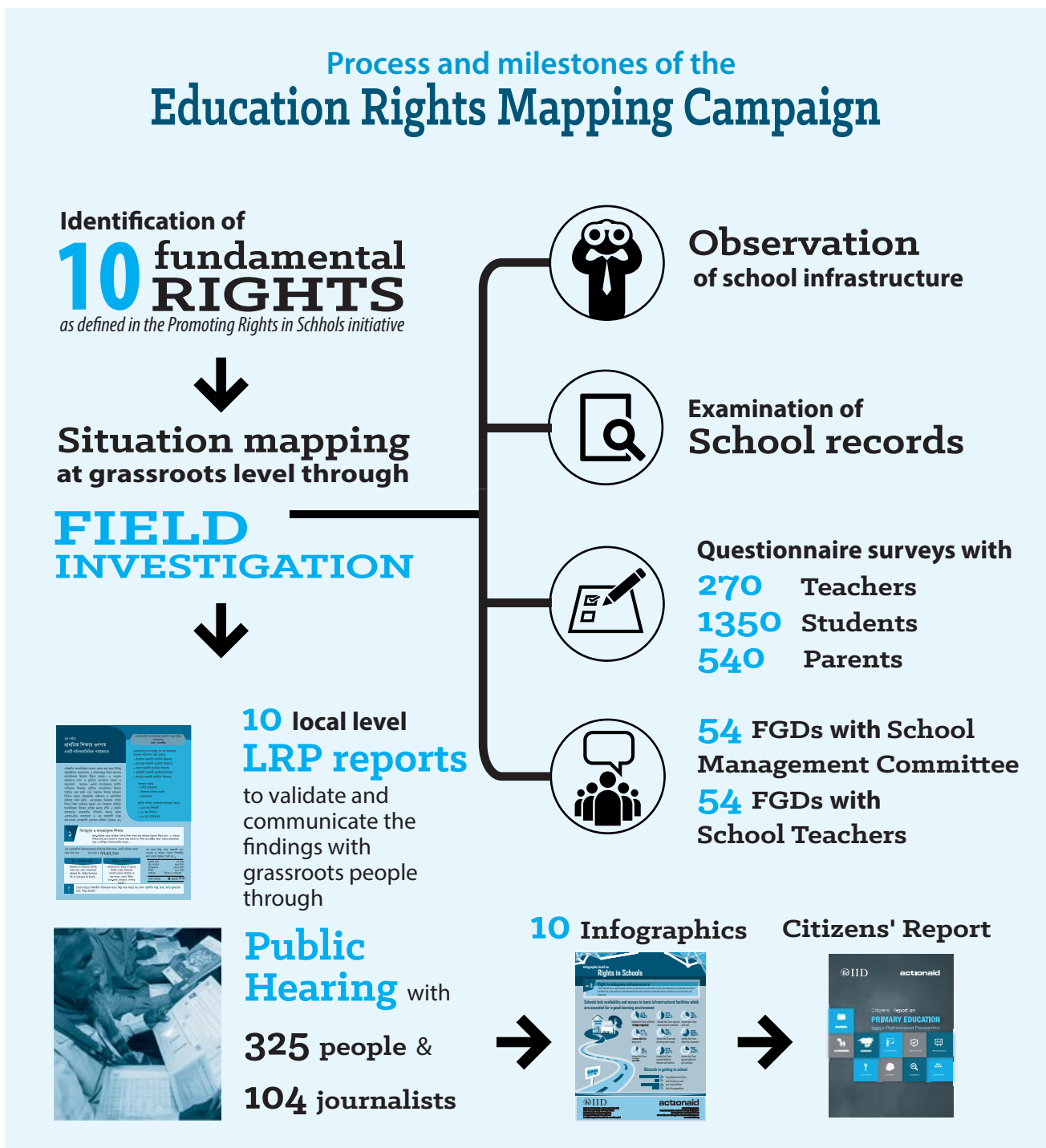
## 2. DATA AND INFORMATION VALIDATION

- i. *Preparing LRP Reports*: Focusing on the 10 rights under 'Access to Education' as per the PRS guideline - LRP (Local Rights Program of ActionAid) reports were developed.
- ii. *Validation of the LRP Report*: Hearings on the LRP reports were organized through FGD with individual LRPs after sharing the report. Individual LRPs provided feedback on those reports. Based on the feedback, the LRP reports were then modified and finalized.
- iii. *Info Page*: Finalized LRP reports were compiled together and 10 rights based Info Pages were developed. These info pages are the visual briefs or infographic representations of the current status of the 10 rights in the surveyed schools.

### 3. PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL REPORT

This National Report was developed as the final output, which is intended to be a comprehensive report based on all the information gathered from the above procedures of questionnaire survey, LRP reports and infographics.

This national level report highlights the aggregate findings from all the 54 schools under the study. The report is organized in 10 rights articulated in PRS.



## E. STUDY LIMITATIONS

A few obstacles faced during the study posed some challenges in taking it further. These were:

- *Survey timing and time limitation:* The month of Ramadan was in the middle of the survey when all schools were closed. As most of the interviews and observations were conducted in schools, this created serious time constraint in completing the survey and data analysis.
- *Limited enumerator training:* Limited enumerator training was conducted before the survey, which has impacted on data quality in some instances. Some erroneous data was received for some questions, forcing their analysis to be dropped although these were included in the questionnaire.
- *Fear of students:* Students were concerned of reactions by teachers for their responses. This could have led to restrained responses.
- *Presence of SMC members during some parents' interview:* In most of the cases students of the selected schools were from surrounding small communities where SMC members also lived along with the students' families. In a few occasions presence of SMC members who are usually local elites or people with political affiliation was noticeable. This could have affected the responses given by the parents.
- *Generalization issue:* Though the schools were selected considering the geographical and socio-cultural aspects, however, findings of the mapping should not be generalized as the mapping covered only 54 government primary schools of Bangladesh.

## F. RIGHT'S SITUATION

### 1. RIGHT TO FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION

'Right to free and compulsory education' appears at the top of the ten rights identified in the PRS guideline. In order to measure the extent to which this right is in practice, direct and indirect expenditure related to primary education were collected through field investigation.

From the responses of parents, the survey found that on an average a family needs to spend around BDT 9,095 per year on a single child who is attending primary school. Within this expenditure, there are certain costs that must be met, and failing to meet these costs may

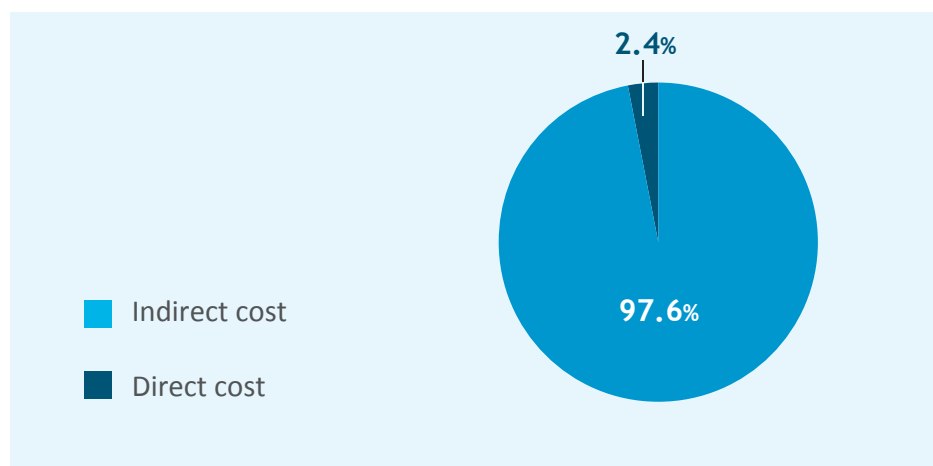
lead to discontinuation of a child's education. These costs constitute BDT 6,055 per year per child and include cost of home provided tiffin, cost of school dress, transport cost, cost of private tutors and guidebooks, and cost of pen, pencil, writing pad, etc. Table 1 shows the costs involved in these expenditure heads.

**Table 1**  
**Essential cost of education**

Cost head	Cost/year (in BDT)	% of total essential cost
Direct payments to the school	223	3.7
Home tiffin	1,361	22.5
School dress	440	7.3
Transport	41	0.7
Private tutor and guidebooks	2,287	37.8
Pen, pencil, writing pad etc.	1,703	28.1
<b>Total essential cost</b>	<b>6,055</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to the survey, 97.6 percent of the total expenditure is indirect expenditure on schooling. As figure 1.1 represents, the largest share of education expense is spent on private tutors and guidebooks (37.8 percent). The second largest cost goes to fuel (electricity and others) (24 percent). Share of this cost may be over reported from the chances of this cost being mixed with overall family expenditure on fuel. The other major cost arises from the cost of school stationeries like pen, paper etc. (19 percent) and the cost of family provided tiffin (15 percent).

**Figure 1**  
**Education expenditure**



## 2. RIGHT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION

Although it is a constitutional right to have non-discriminatory policies in Bangladesh, social stigma and inappropriate facilities may lead to discriminatory behaviour in schools. The indicators for this survey on the right to non-discrimination were enrolment count of disadvantaged groups at school, attendance of disadvantaged students, facilities for disabled children and discrimination reports by students and teachers.

### **Attendance of disadvantaged groups**

Right to free and compulsory education cannot be ensured if disadvantaged children are not provided with meaningfully equal access to education opportunities. The mapping findings show that despite the cost of education being the same for all children, their accessibility to educational institutions varies depending on their vulnerabilities. It is found that, in 7 percent of schools attendance rate of children from religious minority groups is lower and in 6 percent of schools attendance rate of ethnic minority students is lower compared to other children in class.

Attendance rate of children from poor or landless family is lower in 57 percent of schools. At the same time, 24 percent of schools have poor attendance from children with special needs in classes. It is found that children from low caste families ('Dalits' and others) demonstrate lower attendance in 4 percent of the schools.

### **Facilities for students with special needs**

The survey found that children with special needs do not receive necessary support in government primary schools,, which, in turn, limits their access to schools. There are ramp at the entrance of surveyed 16 percent government primary schools for wheel chair users. In only 20 percent of schools the children with special needs get required assistance during examination (e.g., extra 30 minutes or writer support for students with visual impairment) through these supports are already mentioned in government policies and does not require additional resources.

### **Discrimination reports by minority students and teachers**

None of the teachers belonging to minority groups reported to have faced any discrimination in the school owing to their social status. However, 12% of such students mentioned that they do face some discrimination in the school because of belonging to minority/vulnerable groups. It is to be noted here that of those who reported to have discriminated, 87 percent could not articulate any type or nature of such discrimination and 61 percent could not mention by whom they faced the discrimination. But of those who could, 39 percent referred to the teachers as the discriminators, 27 percent referred to other students and 34 percent to groups from higher casts. For those who referred to teachers and other students to be the discriminators, they did/could not, however, mention what type of discrimination they faced. But those who mentioned the groups of higher casts to be the discriminators, they reported that they were demeaned by those of the higher casts because of their social status.

## **3. RIGHT TO ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Right to adequate infrastructure refers to safe and disaster resilience school infrastructure and adequate teaching materials with proper sanitation and safe drinking water. In this case, the indicators considered are sitting arrangements in the classrooms, roof condition, sanitation and safe drinking water availability, infrastructural obstacles,S etc.

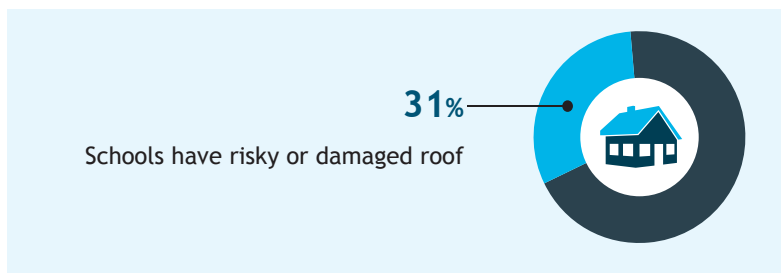
### Sitting arrangement

From the responses of the teachers, the survey found that 40 percent of schools do not have sufficient sitting arrangement for all students.

### Roof condition

About one third (31 percent) of all schools have risky or damaged roof.

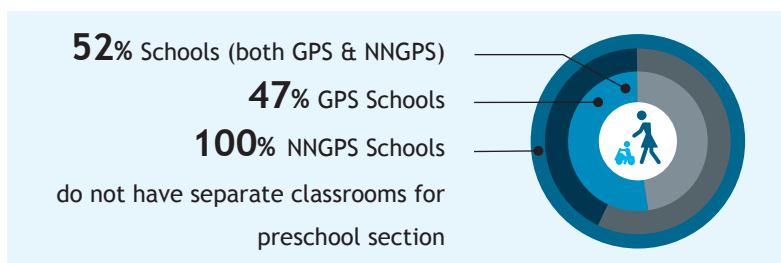
**Figure 2**  
**Roof condition**



### Classroom for preschool

Although government direction requires all schools to have preschool sections with dedicated pre-primary classroom, over half of the schools surveyed (52 percent) did not have separate classrooms for preschool classes. This indicates the lack of readiness of the existing schools in accommodating preschool classes and this is exclusively a reality for newly nationalized government primary schools. On the other hand, 43 percent GPSs do not have separate preschool classrooms.

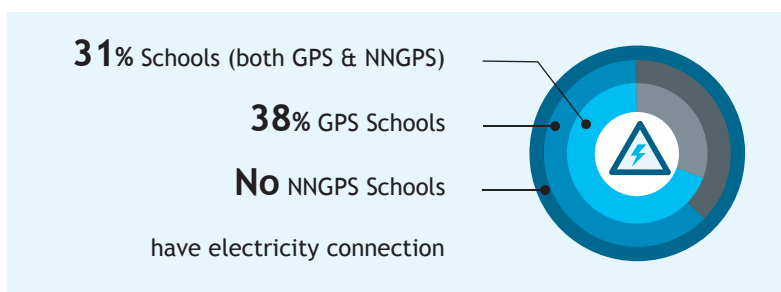
**Figure 3**  
**Separate classroom for pre-school**



### Electricity

Thirty-one percent of the 54 schools have electricity connection. Among them, no newly nationalized schools have electricity connection, whereas 38 percent GPSs have electricity.

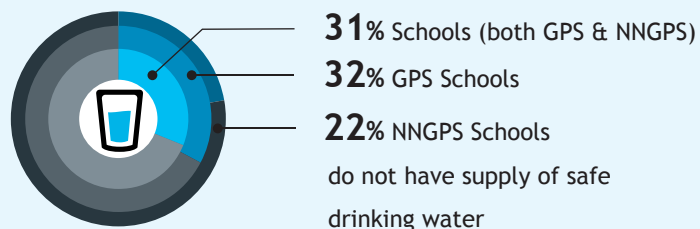
**Figure 4**  
**Electricity supply in schools**





### Safe drinking water

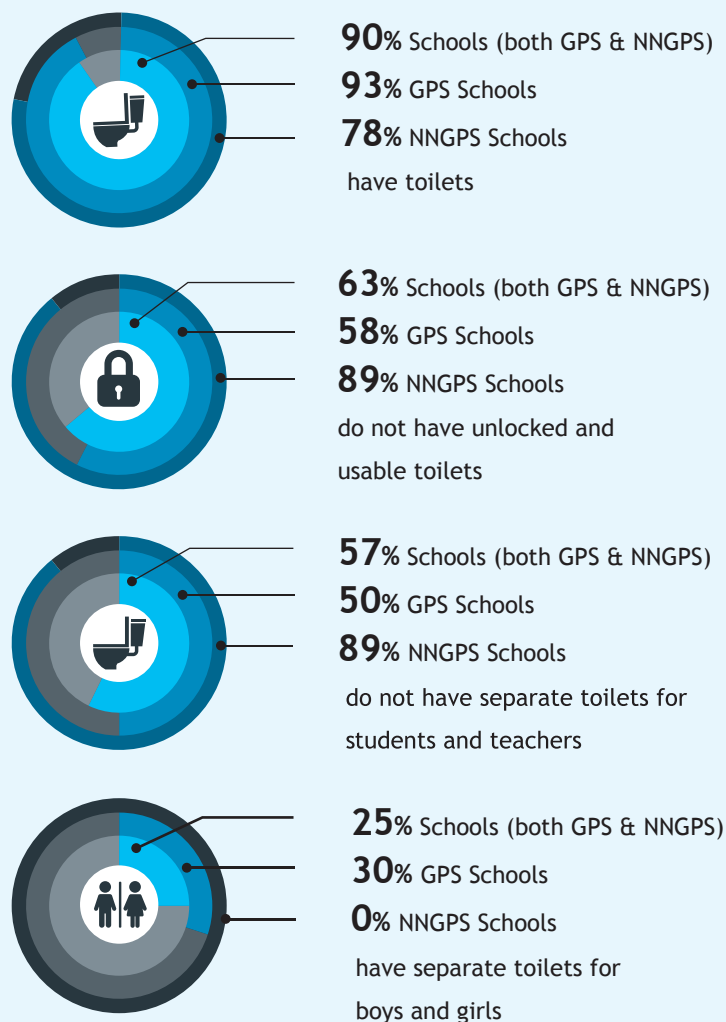
About one third (31 percent) of all schools lack safe drinking water for students. In this case, however, newly nationalized schools compare better: 22 percent of NNGPSs do not have supply of safe drinking water compared to 33 percent of GPSs.



**Figure 5**  
Supply of safe drinking water

### Toilet facilities

Although 90 percent of schools have toilet, 63 percent of the schools surveyed (89 percent NNGPSs and 58 percent GPSs) do not have all-time open (unlocked) and usable toilets. Ten



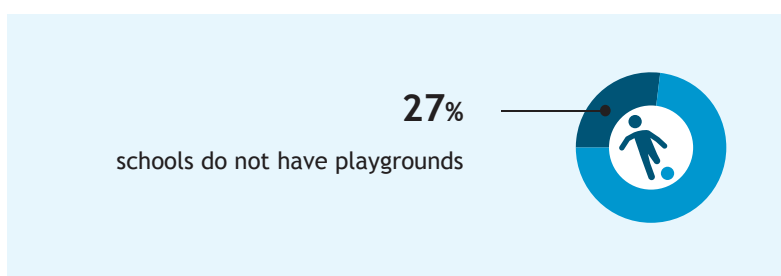
**Figure 6**  
Toilet facility in schools

percent of schools have no toilets at all (22 percent NNGPSs and 8 percent GPSs). Fifty-seven percent of schools do not have separate toilets for teachers and students [43 percent of schools have separate toilets for students and teachers; however, 77.6 percent of toilets are usable and 36.4 percent of student toilets that are not locked are usable] (irrespective of their usability status). None of the NNGPSs have separate toilets for male and female students, whereas only 25 percent of GPSs have separate toilets for boys and girls.

## Playground

Twenty-seven percent of schools do not have playgrounds.

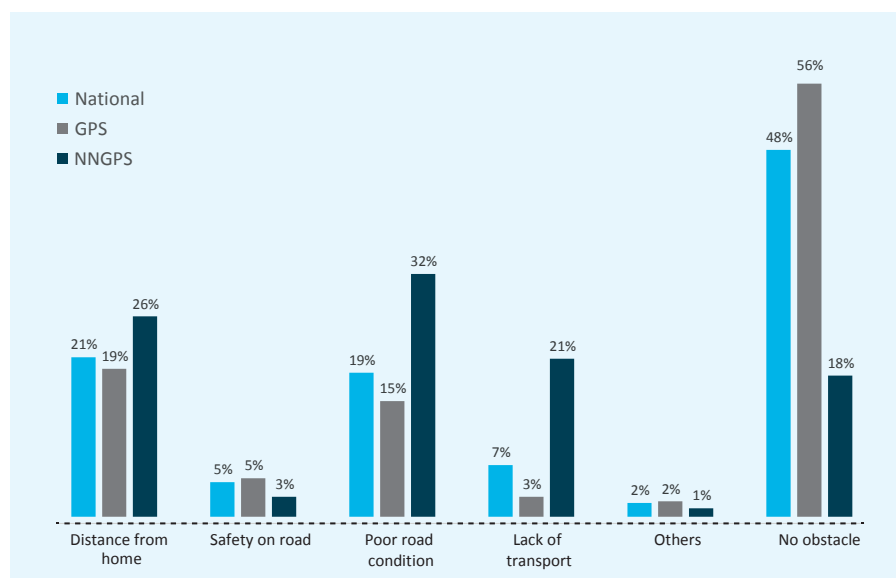
**Figure 7**  
**Availability of playground**



## Obstacles to reaching school from home

When asked what kind of obstacles they face while coming to school, distance from home and poor road condition were mentioned by the students to be the major issues they face. Twenty-one percent of students (26 percent NNGPS students and 19 percent GPS students) said distance between school and home is the major obstacle, while 19 percent (32 percent NNGPS students and 15 percent GPS students) said for poor road condition. Distance from home is probably a reflection of inadequate number of schools, each catering for students over a large geographic area. Also, unplanned establishment of schools often tends to create geographic concentration of schools, leaving many settlements without schools. Other

**Figure 8**  
**Obstacles in reaching school from home**



obstacles identified by the students were the problem of finding proper transportation facilities (7 percent of all students) and safety on road while travelling to and from school (5 percent of all students).

#### 4. Right to quality trained teachers

Qualified, trained and equipped teachers are a key factor in providing quality education. The indicators of this factor are: number of teachers appointed and available per student, gender mix of teachers, teachers education level, type of training received, salary of teachers and involvement in teachers' associations.

##### Teacher-student ratio

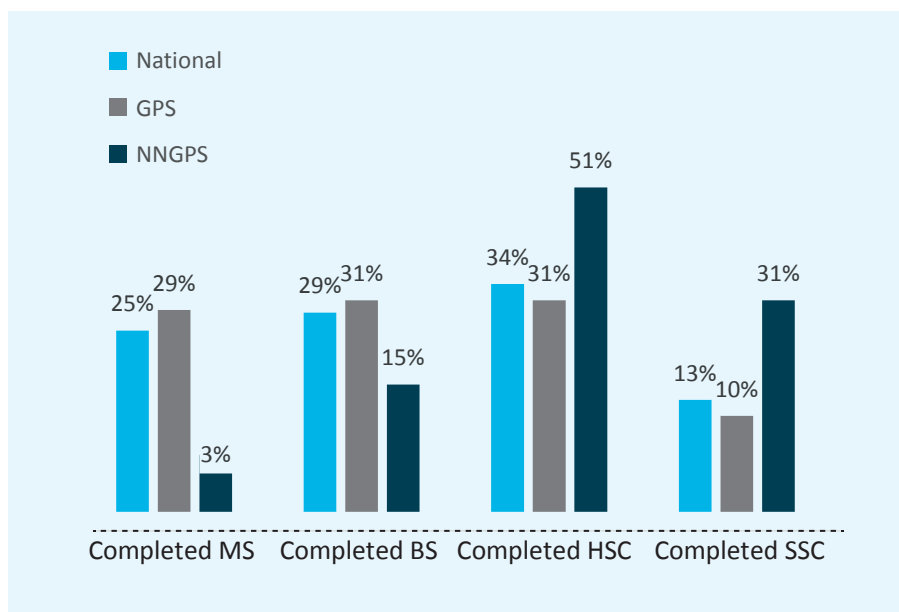
In the schools surveyed, average teacher-student ratio is 1: 59. This is 1:60 in government primary schools and 1:53 in newly nationalized government schools. The commitment of the government is to achieve 1:30 in government primary schools, by 2018. Hence, progress is lacking in that direction and teachers are forced to manage higher number of students affecting teaching quality in class rooms.

##### Gender parity in teachers' recruitment

In government primary schools, 56 percent of teachers are female and in newly nationalized government schools 49 percent teachers are female.

##### Education of teachers

More than one-third of the teachers (34 percent) are higher secondary graduates. Twenty-nine percent have completed bachelors, and 25 percent completed masters or post-graduation and 13 percent have completed SSC level of education. However, as figure 9 below depicts, the situation is particularly concerning for the NNGPSs - 51 percent of teachers have completed HSC level and 31 percent completed SSC level education.

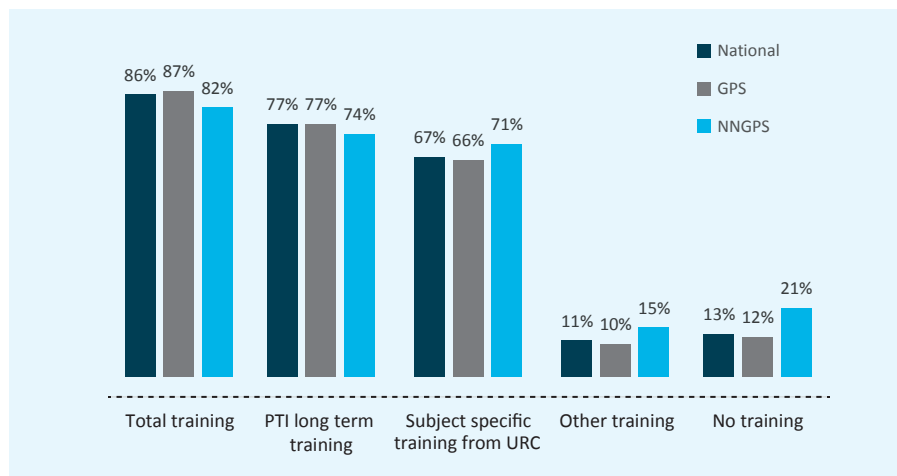


**Figure 9**  
Educational qualification of teachers

## Training of teachers

The survey found that 77 percent teachers have long term PTI training, 67 percent have subject specific training and about 11 percent teachers have other forms of training. However, 12 percent of GPS teachers and 21 percent of the NNGPS teachers do not have any training at all.

**Figure 10**  
Teachers' training



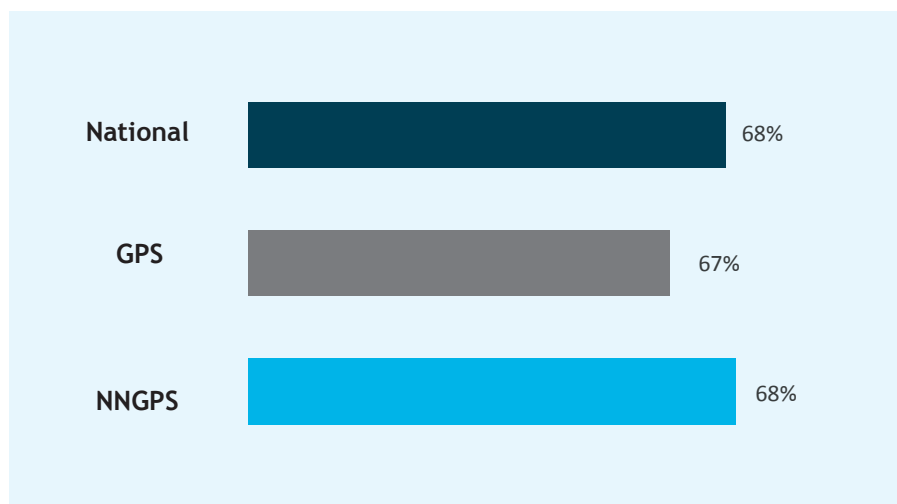
## Salary of Teachers

On an average, head teachers' salary in the surveyed schools is BDT 11,354/month (GPS: 12,141 BDT/month; NNGPS: 8,554 BDT/month). Trained teachers' salary ranges between BDT 7,375/month and BDT 10,768/month. As for teachers with no training, salary range varies between BDT 6,750/month and BDT 9,615/month. For trained and non-trained teachers, salary range is similar for both GPS and NNGPS teachers.

## Participation in teachers' association

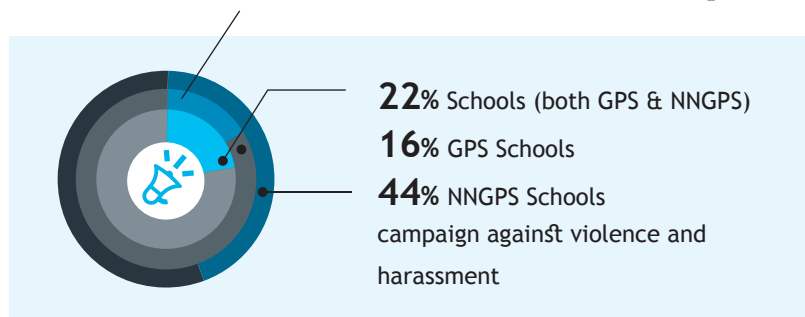
Participation level in teachers' association is low in the surveyed schools. About 68 percent of the teachers are not involved in any type of teachers' association, which is almost similar for both GPS and NNGPS.

**Figure 11**  
Participation in teachers' association



## 5. RIGHT TO SAFE AND NON-VIOLENT ENVIRONMENT

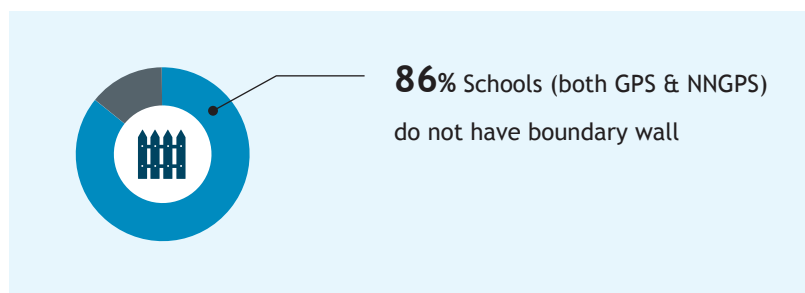
Students should not be subject to mental or physical harassment at schools either by students are not bullied even outside school premises by friends or family.



**Figure 12**  
**School campaign against harassment**

### Student harassment incidences during the last one year

Two reports of student harassment incidences were recorded in the survey. In both cases, involved teachers were given warning. Only 22 percent of all schools have taken some form of campaign against student harassment (discussion sessions, awareness of students and parents, etc.)



**Figure 13**  
**Schools with no boundary wall**

### Existence of school boundary wall

School boundary is a key indicator of school safety and security. The survey found that only 14 percent of schools have boundary walls while the rest 86 percent don't.

## 6. RIGHT TO RELEVANT EDUCATION

Education should be such that does not discriminate and is relevant to the socio-cultural, environmental and economic contexts and language of learners. The mapping attempted to assess whether or not the education system of the schools were designed to promote social equity, environmental awareness, health consciousness, respect for other nations, tolerance/respect for other racial, ethnic, caste or religious groups, etc. among the students and help them relate such issues with their lives. The survey also assessed the learning environment for the students.

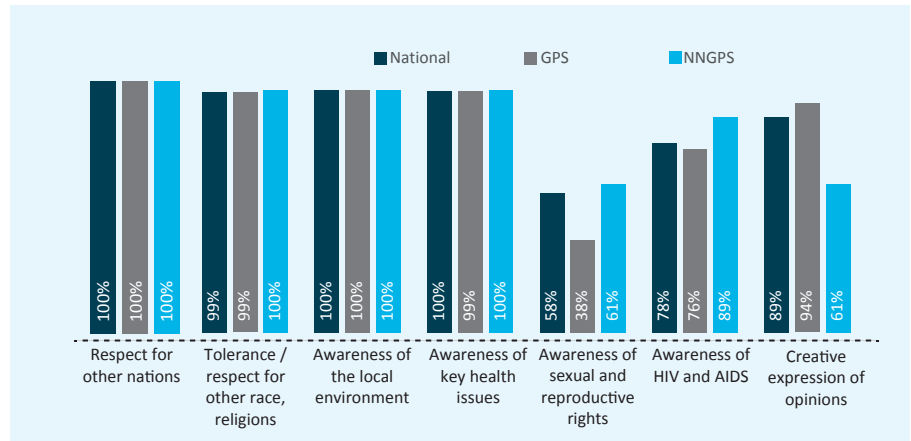
It was found that in all of the schools the following topics are taught as part of the curriculum:

- Being respectful towards other nations/countries

- Being tolerant and respectful to diversity in race and religion
- Being aware of surrounding environment
- Being aware of health issues

However, education on reproductive health and awareness on HIV and Aids are areas which teachers do not feel comfortable to discuss in class. When asked if these subjects are taught in the class, 42 percent negative responses were received for reproductive health and

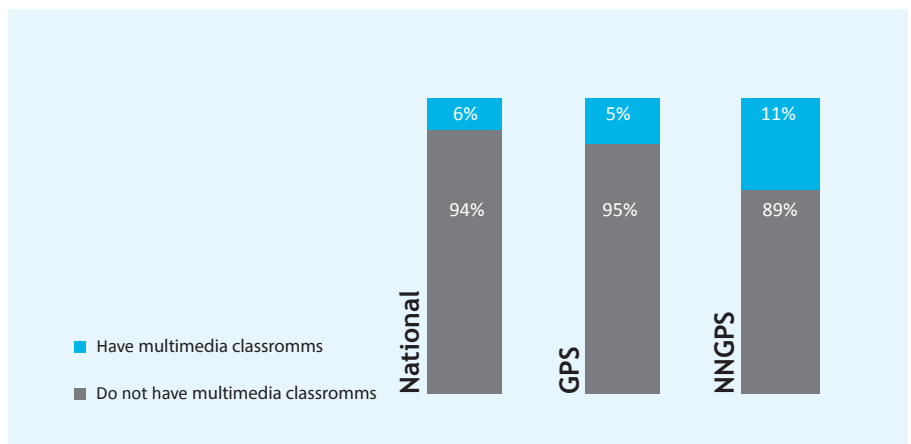
**Figure 14**  
Subjects taught to create social awareness



22 percent for HIV and Aids. This is not surprising and needs to be dealt with special care since social norms and conservative values in societies of Bangladesh make adults hesitant in discussing such issues.

As for learning environment, 11 percent responses were negative regarding a creative approach and a facilitative environment for creative skills of the children in the class. This situation, however, is worse in NNGPSs where 38 percent of such negative responses were received. This could be linked with lack of effective training of teachers as well as lack of classroom facilities.

**Figure 15**  
Schools with multimedia classrooms

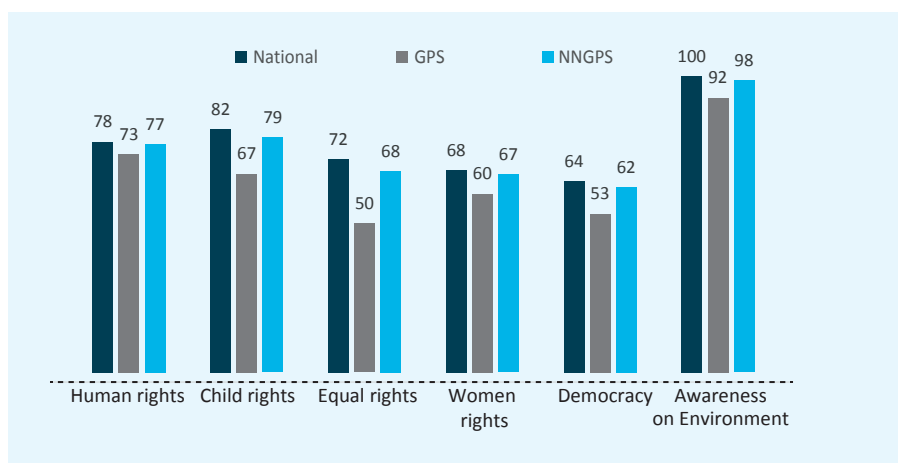


Very limited use of multimedia is found by the survey. While there is a growing acceptance with regard to importance of multimedia classrooms globally, only 6 percent of the schools

(5 percent of GPSs and 11 percent of NNGPSs) surveyed were found to have any multimedia infrastructure in the class. This can be linked with the fact that 69 percent of schools do not have electricity, which is a pre-requisite to establishment of multimedia classrooms.

## 7. RIGHT TO KNOW THE RIGHTS

In our expectations for children to be conscious of their rights, they would require to have knowledge on what they can expect as their rightful share. This responsibility also lies to a great extent on the schools. But, at the same time, this learning process should be designed intelligently to make it age appropriate with special focus on human rights education, children’s rights and sexual and reproductive rights.



**Figure 16**  
Rights discussed in the class

### Knowledge on Rights

Seventy-seven percent of students (78 percent of GPS students and 73 percent of NNGPS students) reported that they are taught about human rights, while 79 percent of students (82 percent of GPS and 67 percent of NNGPS student) said they are taught about child rights in the school. However, in the case of equal rights and women rights, less positive responses were received (68 percent and 67 percent respectively).

### Democracy and Environment

Almost all students (98 percent) reported that they are taught about environmental issues and concepts. However, as it appears, democracy is less prioritized in the lesson plans, as 62 percent of students reported that they are not taught about it. This is particularly true for NNGPSs as only 53 percent of such students replied positively against 64 percent of GPS students.

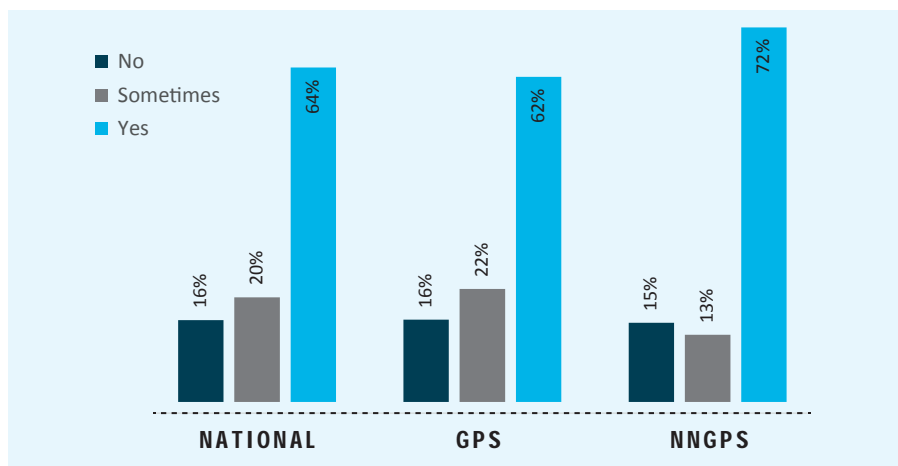
## 8. RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Girls and boys have the right to participate in decision making processes in school. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place to enable the full, genuine and active participation of children. At the same time, effective learning must incorporate participatory learning. It is from this perspective this right has been explored in this study.

## Opportunities for children to express and participate

Opportunities for children to express themselves and participate regularly and meaningfully in the class were practiced according to 64 percent of students. NNGPS students (72 percent) feel more satisfied with the opportunities compared to GPS students (62 percent).

**Figure 17**  
**Children's opportunity to participate in class**



Effective and meaningful participation of students, however, largely depends on teachers' facilitative role towards this. About 46 percent teachers mentioned that their training covered such aspects as motivating and encouraging students to participate. This percentage is even lower in NNGPSs (28 percent) than GPSs (50 percent).

## Participation in school decisions and lesson plans

Overall, 42 percent of students reported that they are denied of their right to participate in school governance and decision making. Interestingly, this situation is better in NNGPSs where 70 percent of students mentioned that they can participate in school governance or decision making in varying degrees, whereas only 34 percent students from GPS think the same. The same situation is found in the case of students' participation in lesson plans. Among the surveyed students in all schools, almost half of them mentioned that they have no scope to participate regarding their lesson plans. Again, the situation is better in NNGPSs where 61 percent of students think they have some role in developing lesson plans, compared to only 38 percent students of GPSs.

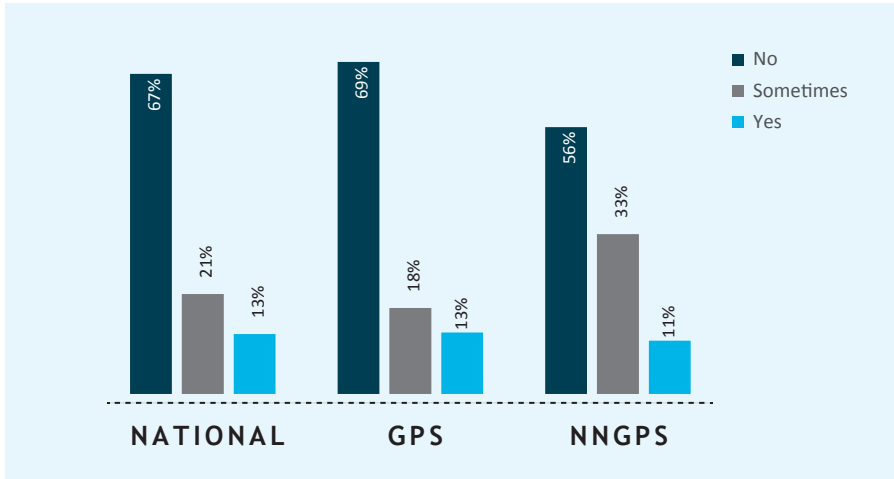
## Student Councils

Students' participation in school decisions may require them to be organized and accustomed in participation in groups. Participation in student councils can play a role in this regard. However, the survey reveals that only in 67 percent schools (56 percent in NNGPSs and 69 percent of GPSs) there are active student councils. In another 21 percent schools, students mentioned that there are student councils, but are inactive.<sup>9</sup> It is to be

<sup>9</sup> Bangladesh Government asked to form student council through election in each primary schools mandatorily in 2012.



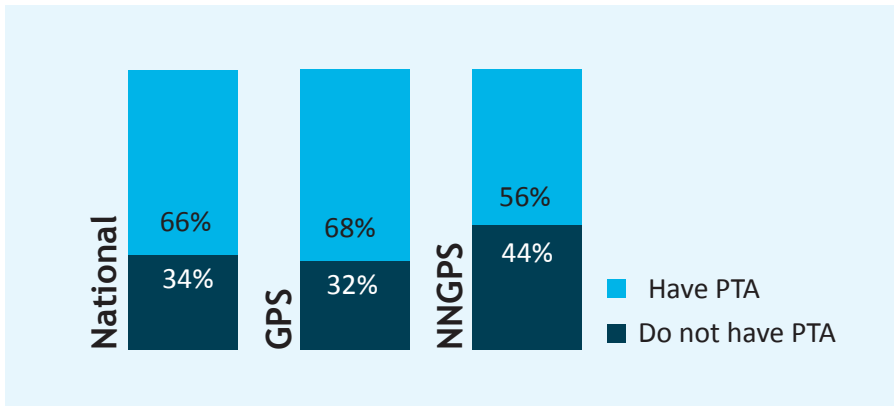
noted that the survey found no separate girls' student club in any of the schools surveyed, GPS or NNGPS.



**Figure 18**  
Existence of student councils

## 9. RIGHT TO TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOLS

Right to transparent and accountable schools requires all schools to have a transparent and effective monitoring system. Active and unbiased participation of both children and the community in the school governing bodies, management committees and parents-teacher associations has to be ensured.



**Figure 19**  
Existence of Parents-Teachers Associations

### Existence and Activity of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)

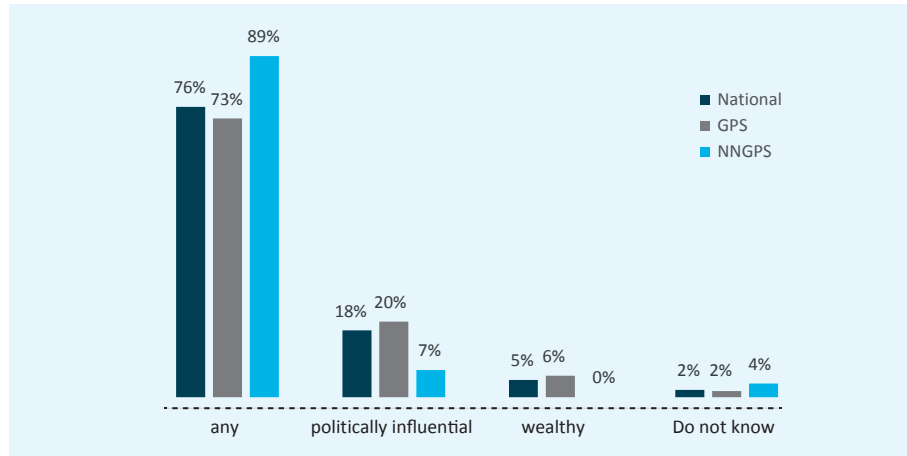
One of the important indicators of a transparent and accountable school is the existence of an active and fully functioning PTA that monitors school performance, teaching procedure and learning environment and method and suggests corrective measures to the school authority, if necessary. The survey found that 66 percent of the schools (56 percent of NNGPSs and 68% of GPSs) have active PTAs (from the responses of the members of SMCs).

### Representativeness of PTA

PTA should have representation from all backgrounds of society; however, 22 percent of the

respondents believe that the PTA membership is dominated by the political influential and wealthy people. In NNGPSs, only 7 percent of the respondents think such as true. In GPSs, 25 percent of respondents think members of PTA are mostly from political influential or the wealthy people. Seventy-six percent think memberships are open to anyone irrespective of socio-political background.

**Figure 20**  
PTA representation

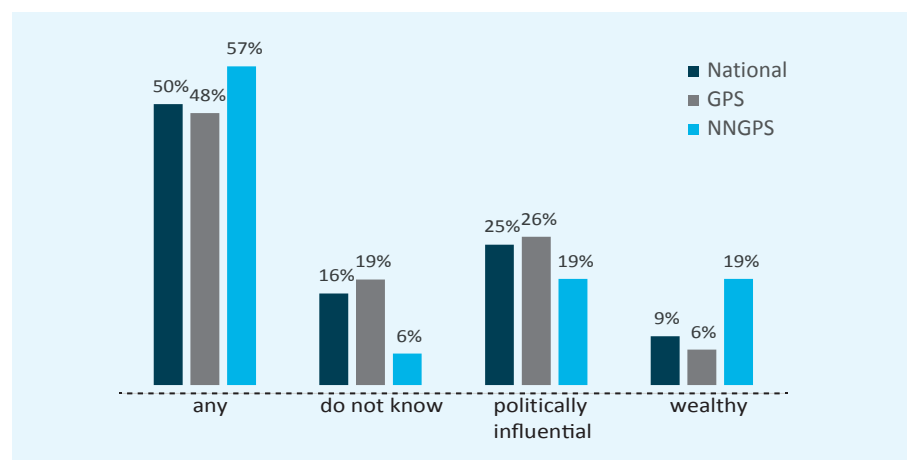


### Representativeness of SMC

According to half (50 percent) of the parent respondents, anyone can become a member of the School Management Committee (SMC). However, a significant portion of the parents found bias regarding political influence (25 percent) and wealth (9 percent).

In 89 percent of schools, SMCs have 3 or more female members. This is the same across the GPSs and the NNGPSs. However, in 73 percent of schools, no vulnerable or marginalized population participation is present in the SMCs.

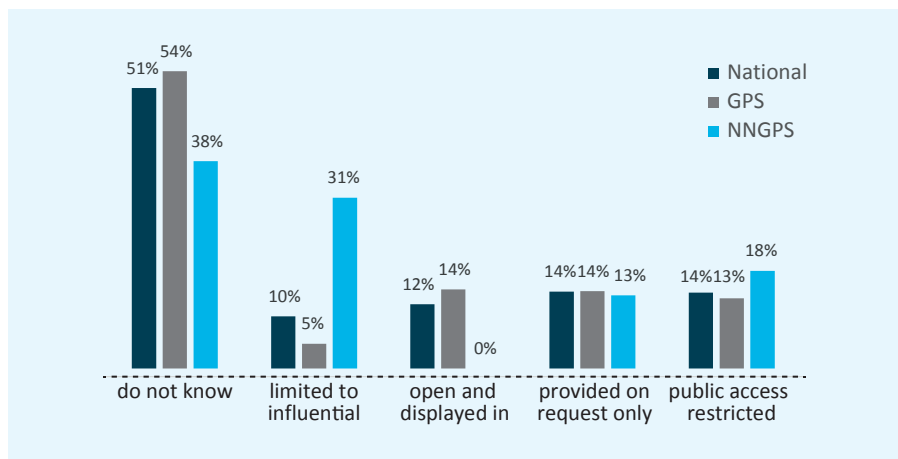
**Figure 21**  
SMC representation



### Access to School Budget

A major accountability and transparency issue with school management is the access to budget and expenditure related information of the school to all the relevant stakeholders.

The school budget should be publically available and independently monitored. According to 14 percent of parents, the surveyed schools mostly provide budget information only if someone requests for such information. Another 13 percent mentioned that public access to such information is restricted while only 12 percent parents mentioned that they are open and publicly displayed, 10 percent thought such information is only available to influential groups. However, 51 percent of the parents surveyed did not know about the availability of such information.



**Figure 22**  
**Access to school budget information**

## 10. RIGHT TO QUALITY LEARNING

Regardless of gender, age, socio-economic background girls and boys are entitled to the right to a quality learning environment and to effective teaching processes that are favourable for the development of their personality, talents and physical and mental abilities to their fullest potential. The study attempted to evaluate a few relevant indicators.

### Active learning hours

It is understood that there are scientifically proven optimum attention span and minimum time requirement for understanding any topic, with refreshment periods (breaks) impacting on concentration of the children. On an average, at the preschool level, students attend 2.4 hours of classes in a day. This was found by the survey to be 2.6 hours for class I and class II students and 4.3 hours for class III, IV and V students. Average class hour per day in different levels was found to be more or less the same across the GPSs and NNGPSs.

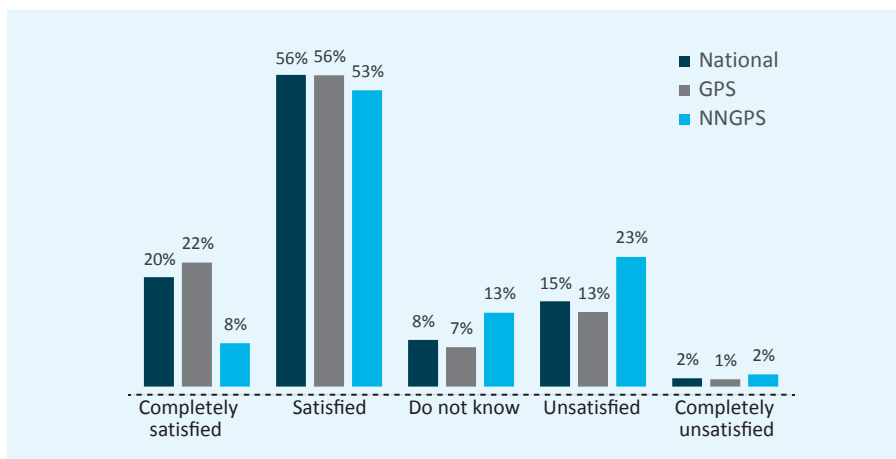
About 4 percent students mentioned that there is no tiffin breaks in the schools, both in GPSs and in NNGPSs. This statistics, however, needs to be interpreted alongside the fact that for some classes (preschools) learning hours are too short for giving tiffin breaks. Apparently, all schools have tiffin breaks for classes with relatively long learning hours.

### Parents' satisfaction with what is taught in school

According to the survey findings, "completely satisfied" and "satisfied" parents constitute 20 percent and 56 percent of the total respondents (parents) respectively. While "satisfied" parents constitute approximately same percentage of parents across GPSs and NNGPSs,

"completely satisfied" parents are much lower in percentage in NNGPSs (8 percent) compared to GPSs (22 percent). However, this only depicts parents relevant satisfaction level regarding their children's education as their satisfaction level depends on their perception of quality education.

**Figure 23**  
**Parents' satisfaction**



### Game instruments and facilitation

According to most of the students (93 percent), the schools provide some playing instruments for the students and 79 percent students said teachers encourage them as well as helps them in playing. This situation is, however, better in GPSs compared to NNGPSs.

## G. PUBLIC HEARING FOR PEOPLE'S TESTIMONY

Public hearing was organized in 11 LRPs<sup>10</sup> and in total 325 participants, including Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Upazila/Thana Education Officer, local journalists, teachers, student council members, SMC members, Education Watch Group Members and community people have taken part in these public hearings.

Discussion in the upazila level public hearing was based on the education rights situation mapping report. The local education authorities and people representatives (elected) were engaged with the consultation and hearing process; most of them expressed their solidarity with this initiative. Present situation of each and every right has been discussed and scrutinized in a very in-depth manner. Participants from different angles expressed their thought openly. Education officer of Tala, Satkheera (LRP 36) said "Though the mapping process covered only 5 schools of Tala Upazilla, the findings of the mapping represent the

<sup>10</sup> PUAMDO (LRP-24); BNKS (LRP-34); USS Jhenaidah (LRP-25); USS Chilahati (LRP-35), Bhumija Foundation (LRP-36), Mukti Nari (LRP-38); SAP-BD Golachipa (LRP-40), BITA (LRP-41); DRRA (LRP-42); DALIT (LRP-42) and BACE (LRP-46).



**Figure 24**  
**Public hearing**

situation of almost all schools of Tala.” Education officer of LRP 41 said that all the primary schools under his ward (Mehedibag, Chittagong) will continue this effort from coming years and commended his support towards this initiative. On the other hand, in LRP 46 one senior journalist (secretary of Upazilla press club) said, “we have not yet experienced such comprehensive intervention to assess education rights situation of primary school.”

Not only that the spontaneous involvement of student council members and SMC members made the entire process effective and successful. The sessions were spontaneous and interactive; participants from different segments shared their ideologies and uphold their voice and came to a consensus to work hand in hand in order to have better and meaningful scenario. It was a great pleasure to experience that all the participants endorse this initiative as an effective means of promoting right to education through school monitoring through community people engagement

## **H.** SOME CHALLENGES IN ACQUIRING QUALITY EDUCATION IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1. Annual indirect expenditure is high and includes essential costs such as tiffin, school dress, transport, private tutor, guidebooks, pen, pencil, writing pad, etc. This is a major challenge in attaining education and most of the families cannot continue their children’s education for these costs.
2. Access to educational institutions is more difficult for children from disadvantaged communities, such as religious minority groups, ethnic communities, poor and

landless families, children with special needs, children from Dalit and other marginalized communities.

3. Major obstacles in getting to school for the children are long distance from home, the way towards school is not safe enough, lack of transportation and poor road condition. Most of the schools lack availability of and access to basic infrastructural facilities like electricity connection, separate classrooms for preschools, separate toilet facilities, etc.
4. Teacher-student ratio is too high in the schools, which is a big challenge in acquiring quality education. Lack of teachers' educational qualification is also a major difficulty.
5. Most of the schools are found to be unsafe because there are no boundary walls.
6. Majority of the students said that they are not taught about sexual and reproductive health in school.
7. Students cannot participate in school governance, decision making and lesson planning. Inactive student council and absence of separate club for girls are also the reasons behind this. These types of lack of participation are certainly an obstacle to attain quality and meaningful education. To a large extent, effective and meaningful participation of students depends on teacher's facilitative role. It has been identified that most of the teachers have no training in regard to promoting children's participation.
8. It is duty of SMCs to ensure transparency and accountability in schools, but in most schools SMCs are found to be not working effectively. It is quite evident that SMC members are dominated by politically influential and the wealthy people.
9. Newly nationalized government primary schools need special attention as they, in many cases, have special requirements than other government schools, especially quality of infrastructure, education level of teachers, etc.

# ANNEX 1

## LRP & PARTICIPANT DETAILS INVOLVED IN SITUATION MAPPING

Sl	LRP No.	Name of Organization	Address	Number of Participants
01	LRP 24	Panchbibi Upazila Adibasi Multipurpose Development (PUAMDO)	Panchbibi, Joypurhat	Student: 125; Teacher:23; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
02	LRP 34	Bolipara Nari Kalyan Somity (BNKS)	Ujanipara, Bandarban	Student: 125; Teacher:21; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
03	LRP 35	Udayankur Seba Sangstha (USS)	Jordarga, Nilphamari	Student: 125; Teacher:37; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
04	LRP 36	Bhumija Foundation	Tala Upazila, Satkhira	Student: 125; Teacher:20; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
05	LRP 38	Mukti- Nari -O-Shishu Unnayan Sangstha	Pramanik Road, Thanapara, Kushtia	Student: 125; Teacher:21; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
06	LRP 40	South Asia Partnership Bangladesh	Golachipa, Patuakhali	Student: 125; Teacher:40; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
07	LRP 41	Bangladesh Institute of Theater Arts (BITA)	Mehedibagh, Chittagong,	Student: 100; Teacher:20; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
08	LRP 42	Diasabled Rehabilitation and Research Association (DRRA)	Shamnagar, Satkhira	Student: 125; Teacher:20; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
09	LRP 42	DALIT	Keshabpur, Jessore	Student: 125; Teacher:22; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
10	LRP 43	VARD	Bishwamvorpur, Sunamganj	Student: 125; Teacher:25; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25
11	LRP 46	Bangladesh Association for Community Education (BACE)	Madarganj, Jamalpur	Student: 125; Teacher:21; Parents: 50; SMC Member: 25

## ANNEX 2

### SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE (FOR PARENTS' SURVEY)

অভিভাবক জরিপ

১. সন্তানদের শিক্ষায় সরাসরি কিংবা পরোক্ষভাবে নিচের কোনোও খাতে অর্থব্যয় হয় কি?

ক: প্রত্যক্ষ খরচ

খরচের খাত	বাধ্যতামূলক	ঐচ্ছিক	খরচ নেই	আনুমানিক ব্যয়
ক) মাসিক বেতন				
খ) বিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি ফি (এককালিন)				
গ) পরীক্ষার ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
ঘ) পাঠাগার ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
ঙ) বার্ষিক ক্রীড়া ফি				
চ) বার্ষিক মিলাদ ফি				
ছ) অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
জ) শিক্ষক বিদায় ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
ঝ) পাঠ্যপুস্তকের জন্য ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
ঞ) কম্পিউটার ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
ঠ) স্কুল প্রদত্ত কোচিং ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
ড) স্কুল প্রদত্ত টিফিন ফি (বাৎসরিক)				
ঢ) অন্যান্য				



খ: পরোক্ষ খরচ

খরচের খাত	বাধ্যতামূলক	ঐচ্ছিক	খরচ নেই	আনুমানিক ব্যয়
বাড়ি থেকে আনা টিফিন (দৈনিক)				
পোশাক (বাৎসরিক)				
যাতায়াত (দৈনিক)				
বিদ্যুৎ/কেরোসিন/মোমবাতি (মাসিক)				
ছাতা (বাৎসরিক)				
জ্যামিতিবক্স (বাৎসরিক)				
কোচিং/ প্রাইভেট পড়া (মাসিক)				
গাইডবই (বাৎসরিক)				
শিক্ষা উপকরণ (মাসিক)				
অন্যান্য (মাসিক)				

২. বিদ্যালয়ে 'শিক্ষাক্রম বহির্ভূত বিষয়ে' শিক্ষার্থীদের সম্পৃক্ততা বিষয়ে আপনার ধারণা?

পুরোপুরি সন্তুষ্ট	সন্তুষ্ট	অসন্তুষ্ট	পুরোপুরি অসন্তুষ্ট	ধারণা নেই

৩. বিদ্যালয়ের বাৎসরিক বাজেট বা আয়-ব্যয় বিষয়ক তথ্যের প্রাপ্যতা কতটুকু?

উনুজ্ঞ ও দৃশ্যমান স্থানে প্রদর্শিত থাকে	শুধুমাত্র দেখতে চাইলেই দেখতে দেয়া হয়	সর্বসাধারণের জন্য উনুজ্ঞ নয়	কতিপয় প্রভাবশালী ব্যক্তি নিয়ন্ত্রন করেন	জানি না

৪. বিদ্যালয় ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটিতে কারা প্রতিনিধিত্ব করেন?

সকলশ্রেণী পেশার মানুষ	রাজনৈতিকভাবে প্রভাবশালী	ব্যবসায়ি - বিত্তবান	জানি না

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