

## 'Meritocracy' to 'Parentocracy': (De) constructing the Theoretical Dilemma in Basic Education of Japan and Bangladesh

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**Abstract**– Globally, access to basic education is a universal fundamental human right. Conversely, governments of underdeveloped and developing countries experience several challenges in ensuring equity in basic education. Along with the government initiatives, equity in basic education also depends on parental socio-economic status. Japan has achieved significant success in students' learning outcomes regardless of parental SES and might serve as a role model for Bangladesh to ensure equity in education. This case study research comprehends the dynamics of parental SES in accessing quality basic education for their children in Japan and Bangladesh. This paper argues that historically, meritocracy played a fundamental role in education. However, owing to the cultural paradigm shift, Parentocracy appears to be the better option for improving children's academic outcomes. The central theoretical argument of this study is to cognise whether meritocracy or Parentocracy in the modern education system can bring equity among children. This paper finds that Bangladesh can implement the Japanese experience through curriculum modifications and play-based learning approaches to ensure equity in basic education. Finally, parental involvement is vital in ensuring equity in education to accommodate all children to receive quality basic education in Bangladesh.

**Keywords** Basic Education · Equity · Meritocracy · Parentocracy · Japan · Bangladesh ·

### 1. Introduction

The social underpinnings of educational selection have long been a subject of interest, in addition to demonstrating the significance of basic education as a

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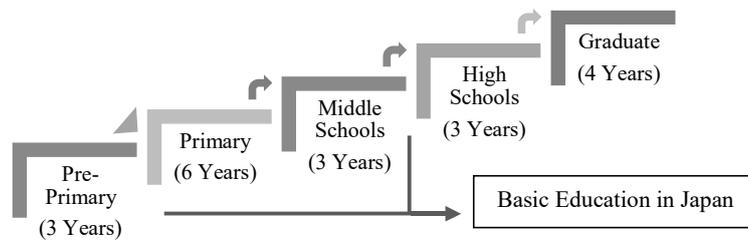
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predictor of future life opportunities, which demonstrates an expanded comprehension of the critical role of equitable educational opportunities (Cuervo, 2016). Sociologists have evaluated educational reforms' outcomes to determine which has resulted in more 'accessible' and 'equitable' for society. From a societal standpoint, two categories of enlightening theoretical approaches might be distinguished: meritocracy and parentocracy. According to Michael Dunlop Young's Meritocracy theory, every individual should be assessed purely based on merit and competence (Allen, 2011). In addition, Madzanire et al. (2012) argued that parentocracy is a social system in which a child's education is strongly influenced by parental financial means and ambitions rather than the student's aptitude and efforts. Meritocracy is minimally considered in Bangladesh, whereas many parents are moving towards a parentocratic educational policy. Basic education in Japan lasts nine years and consists of six years of elementary school and three years of middle school; in Bangladesh, basic education lasts five years of primary education. The Japanese educational system is well-organised, enabling students to succeed while growing into well-organised individuals (Cummings, 2014). Education in Bangladesh lacks co-curricular activities that enable brain development to unwind throughout their school years. Japanese children grow into competent and well-balanced adults due to a comprehensive educational system that includes moral education, physical education, clubs, and other engaging activities. Following the meritocracy principle, it could have been feasible to assure a reasonable distribution of education. Some children cannot attend primary school; additional educational substitutions should ensure equity. This paper shows that Bangladesh should unite the aspects of the Japanese basic educational model to restructure its academic approach to address the theoretical policy shifting from meritocracy to parentocracy over time.

## **2. Background of Basic Education Policies in Japan and Bangladesh**

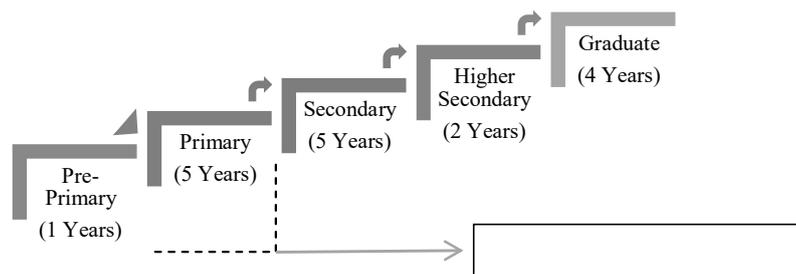
Being one of the world's most advanced nations in terms of technology and educational development, Japan has an engaging curriculum to offer. As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, education in Japan begins at the age of six with primary school and progresses through middle school, high school, and university (Kubota, 2016). The basic education period lasts until the end of high school (9 years) for Japan (Takayama, 2011), where the basic education is at the primary level (5 years) in Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh, 1990). There are four years of educational policy gaps considering the basic education system in Japan and Bangladesh.

Figure 1: Basic Education in Japan



Source: Prepared by the author.

Figure 2: Basic Education in Bangladesh



Source: Prepared by the author.

This research ascertained the flaws and loopholes from the Japanese basic education perspective. Due to the diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds, disparities are more likely to be seen in Bangladesh. The schooling process of children differs based on their socio-economic status. It is assumed that people with higher socio-economic status send their children to private schools rather than a nearby government institution. Nevertheless, the scenario is different in Japan, where government institutions are prioritised for their service, ambience, and teaching. The service quality of public schools in Bangladesh is substandard, and parents prefer sending their children to private schools despite private schools being more expensive. Parentocracy is more likely to be witnessed in the education sector due to the pandemic scenario in Bangladesh, where educational institutions were suspended for over 17 months. Compared to government counterparts, private institutions have been providing classes partially. Therefore, despite budgetary constraints, parents always want to provide their children with

the best possible quality of education. Bangladesh lacks a solid foundation on meritocracy makes it more likely to discriminate in the basic education system.

### **3. Conceptualising the Basic Education of Japan and Bangladesh**

Japan and Bangladesh have more similarities in education system management, particularly in the basic education system. In Japan, the education sector is decentralised, and each provincial government controls the education system of its own by possessing its autonomous education board. Currently, even the MEXT (Monbukagakusho) has significantly little authority over the school curricula in Japan (Wieczorek, 2008). Japan is one of the leading countries to ensure quality education for all. Education is compulsory and utterly free in Japan until the 9th grade, often known as junior high school (Stevenson, 1991). The Japanese government heavily subsidises education to ensure maximum output. Government budgets encompass infrastructural expenses, educational equipment expenses, teachers' salaries, and other several expenses. The majority of the students in Japan tend to go to public institutions rather than expensive private ones (Parmenter, 1999). This tendency indicates that public schools are providing quality education in Japan. The government of Japan also provides many privileges for children with disabilities to ensure basic education for all (Kayama, 2010). All these efforts from the Japanese government have played a vital role in making Japan one of the most advanced countries in education.

More importantly, Japanese students can choose their preferred career path while still in school. Before graduating from high school, most students have to fill up and submit a form about their own career choices and aspirations, which significantly impacts their future career pathways (El-agraa & Ichii, 1985). They are offered various courses concentrating on various career objectives, which significantly shapes their skills and expertise according to their intended career path. Unfortunately, students in Bangladesh do not get the same privileges as Japanese students, and Bangladesh has yet to develop a well-integrated educational system. Another unique feature of Japan's advanced education system is that all the schools arrange mandatory club activities and sometimes supplemental classes whenever needed, encouraging students to stay on track rather than drop out and get demotivated (Gibson, 2011). In Japan, the teachers in the public schools receive a decent salary from the government, which motivates them to value their jobs and continue providing quality education to their students (Wada, 1993). All of these approaches by the Japanese government have made it

possible to ensure quality education for every Japanese student, which Japan considers to be its most significant achievement.

In Bangladesh, the scenario is quite different, as many students drop out just after the fifth grade. Basic education is still not free for all in Bangladesh in a true sense, and most parents afford to provide their children with the necessary educational opportunities. However, the government of Bangladesh is planning to ensure compulsory education for every student until 8th grade, completely free of cost for the government school only, although the procedures are yet to be implemented (Mujeri, 2010). What is more startling being that the government-owned schools fail to provide quality education in most cases, and not all parents can afford to send their children to private schools? In the remote areas of Bangladesh, many public schools are left vacant or simply with a handful of students to enrol in the education process, raising serious concerns about the sector's future. Due to poverty and lack of support from the respective stakeholders, many students cannot receive the minimum standard education. Unfortunately, children with disabilities have the most difficulty getting a basic education in Bangladesh, as there are only a few special schools. The government also lacks sufficient passion for ensuring children with special needs receive compulsory basic education, resulting in an unwanted inequity (Calarco, 2014).

On the contrary, teachers working in public schools of Bangladesh are underpaid, which demotivates them from continuing their noble profession. The students also do not participate in club activities in most schools, as there are no facilities (Nath et al., 1999). Thus, they also get demotivated because of the obsolete curriculum, and it severely hampers the manifestation of their potential. Bangladesh has a lot to learn from Japan to ensure quality basic education for all.

#### **4. Review of literatures**

DeWiele and Edgerton (2015) argued that the parentocracy refers to social strategy, promoting parenting authority and market-oriented schooling resolutions, and a practical, interactive parenting elegance focused on structured, progressive, and extra-curricular activities which encourage early education. Socially disadvantaged children are more prone to academic insufficiency than their more advantaged peers, and the impact is even worse among those with the highest degree of academic performance. Geographic factors such as district poverty and local educational opportunities may explain the socio-economic discrepancy in the academic match. These matching issues in basic education significantly influence individual future income and career opportunities,

including university participation and labour market performance (Maragkou, 2020). However, social justice comes in several situations, from developing the vision of culturally responsive schools not to leaving children behind (Hytten & Bettez, 2011; Cuervo, 2016). It fosters the active participation of students in their education and assists teachers in creating environments that promote empowerment, participation, and critical learning (Hackman, 2005). It is described as a process and an end-goal that aims to engage everyone in a collectively designed society to meet their desires and necessities (Bell, 1997). Far from being supplanted by a 'philosophy of parentocracy,' meritocracy remains the primary legitimation standard for allocating life opportunities and the primary reason for the persistence of social disparity in democracies. The meritocratic concept is firmly entrenched in basic education (Waldow, 2016; Madzanire & Mashava, 2012).

Basic education is more important than higher education in most modern education economies. Households without formal education are six times poorer than those with school access. It is necessary to increase basic educational opportunities and cultivate fundamental intellectual skills vital to global achievement (Haque, 2014; Rahman et al., 2005). Bangladesh has taken numerous initiatives to advance primary education, including the implementation of laws for public education, the provision of free school textbooks, the abolition of fees for schools, the provision of financial aid for rural and underprivileged students as well as girls through to the secondary level, supplementary participation in education outside schools and an extension of pre-primary education. It has already achieved tremendous progress in elementary education, notably in the enrolment of gender equality. However, low-quality learning offsets quantitative enrolment gains, making learning for all essentially unproductive (Banu et al., 2018).

The national curriculum of Japan did not formally mandate sustainable development of education; instead, it highlighted a fundamental educational process that contributes to the accomplishment and building of a sustainable society from the very beginning of basic education. This paradigm has been replicated and adapted to different situations across East and Southeast Asia and generated a promise for South Asia (Didham et al., 2012). Basic education in Japan was appreciated in the early 1980s because of its egalitarianism. Indeed, inequities and inequalities between places prompted education in Japan to be viewed as a social problem in the post-war period, and uniformity of education was attained by progressive investment in education and more extravagant government expenditure per student in disadvantaged prefectures (Matsuoka,

2014). Now, the national curriculum of Japan exposes pupils to equitable treatment of students recognised for their balanced and fundamental education. They standardised the standards of quality education to be deconstructed, to move away from the burden of national examinations, and to emphasise each student's interests and abilities (Wieczorek, 2008). However, Japan is a robust closed society, not a stable open society with its atmosphere, commonly demonstrated in the education sector. The introduction of a market mechanism from the fundamental educational stage, where global competition for the initial project will rise and boost academic production; moreover, further assistance from this confined framework (Arimoto, 2015).

According to Diaz-Serrano (2020), the transition to secondary education is accelerated in impoverished and lower-middle-income countries by extending mandatory schooling times. This strategy is successful only in countries where the duration of compulsory education surpasses the duration of basic education. Kubota (2016) noted that the modifications to Japanese compulsory education in 2002 decreased the number of pupils attending schools, and school breaks increased. The changes have increased the household expenditure for students in public junior high schools on supplementary education, for example, pre-schools, artwork, athletics, and culture. In higher-income families than in lower-income households, the effect of modifications on expenses was more significant. A longer compulsory school term reduces the time allotted to tertiary education and the average time spent in schooling (Lu, 2018).

## **5. Theoretical framework of Basic Education**

This study adopted the prominent theories, namely Meritocracy, Parentocracy, and Social Justice theory, to understand the basic education scenario in Japan and Bangladesh. Meritocracy is a political process in which people are granted economic and political authority based on their competencies rather than their wealth or social status (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Sociologist Michael Dunlop Young (1958) introduced meritocracy through his dystopian political and satirical novel 'The Rise of the Meritocracy' (Dench, 2006; Willetts, 2006; Young, 2001). The concept 'Parentocracy' refers to the notion that parents are in charge of their children's education. It specifically relates to Phillip Brown's (1988) 507 arketization initiatives of education, which attempted to offer parental greater control over children's education. Social Justice is a philosophical and political theory that claims that the theory of justice has elements beyond those contained in civil and criminal law, economic supply and demand, or conventional ethical

framework. Nancy Fraser (2008) formulated the theory of Social Justice in education, shown in Figure 3, to show the interconnections with meritocracy and parentocracy for education and development.

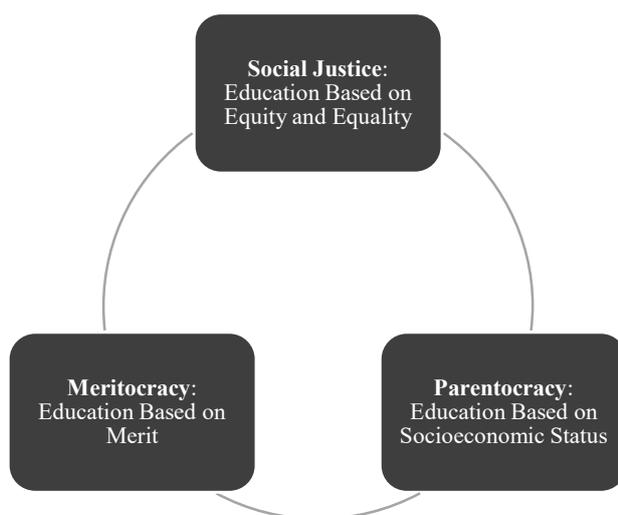


Figure 3: Theoretical Framework relating to Basic Education

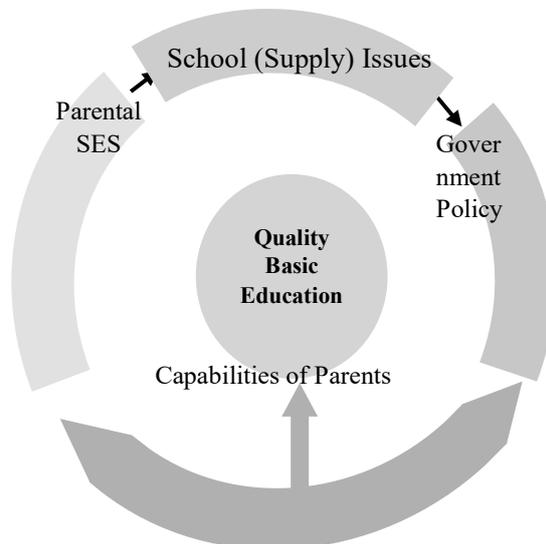
Source: Prepared by the author.

Since World War II, education has been considered the principal 'saviour' of the meritocratic ideal in advanced capitalist economies. Meritocracy is a broad sociological term often used in modern sociological research, notably in education. Most people consider meritocracy an ideal societal selection based on an individual's accomplishments, ambitions, and competitiveness, and it is frequently compared to other historical, social selections in a positive light. Even though the term 'meritocracy' had not yet been coined, the theory of merit-based rewards was essential to the systemic functionalist concepts that have evolved to characterise sociology in recent decades (Liu, 2016).

In the emergence of a modern educational paradigm, Parentocracy has significant implications for sociologists' understanding of the role of education in advanced capitalist cultures, particularly the link between education and authority. Instead of merit, parentocracy emphasised family, class, gender, and ethnicity. The king's son will be king is the perfect instance of parentocracy (Dale, 1989). Liberals prioritise state control of education to guarantee it is organised on meritocratic

principles. This level of government involvement is expected, and it is believed that the best people should be placed in the most challenging jobs, regardless of class, gender, or ethnicity. The state maintains socio-economic inequities by legitimising school selection outcomes as fair contests rather than competitions (Brown, 1990). However, parental capabilities primarily ensure the quality education for better learning outcomes of their children (Hartas, 2014), shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Parental Capabilities for Quality Education



Source: Prepared by the author.

The connection of theory and practice with the moral use of power shows why social justice is vital at all times as an educational intervention. The theory explains that students of all social classes are equal as individuals, and they all should get equal access to basic education. Social justice necessitates active struggle and is inextricably linked to educational theories and activities of practitioners, schools, academic institutions, and government officials (Bogotch, 2000). The previously cohesive interpretation of Social Justice is now increasingly split between demands for restructuring and rights for perception. Claims of recognition are becoming more prevalent. The fall of communalism and

the emergence of free-market dogma in fundamentalist and progressive forms are manifestations in education (Henderson & Waterstone, 2008).

## **6. Methods**

This study followed a qualitative case study method that included document reviews, cross-case analysis, and theoretical discourses to understand the academic dilemma in Basic education of Japan and Bangladesh. In recent years, our world has evolved increasingly sophisticated, making it more challenging to understand what others perceive and experience. In-depth discussions, document evaluation, and case study research are popular in qualitative research. Ten case studies were selected based on purposive sampling to understand Japan and Bangladesh's basic education development phenomena. The collected data were analysed based on thematic content analysis to explain the basic education scenario in Japan and Bangladesh. Finally, expert interviews were also conducted to triangulate the findings in explaining the theoretical dilemma in Basic education.

## **7. Findings**

### **7.1 Parental capability approach for equity**

The parental socio-economic conditions in Bangladesh primarily impacted the basic education access for all children. Most parents reported that they decide on schooling for their children, where the government does not control them. The government should provide equal access and financial benefits for all children; however, many parents mentioned that parents decide their child's schooling due to government limitations, teachers' qualifications, and overall institutional qualities and environment. On the other hand, in Japan, in most of the reported cases, parents do not concern about the delimitations like in Bangladesh. Although, they are more concerned about the learning outcome and government support in ensuring equity in basic education. Based on the reported cases in Bangladesh, parental actions support the emergence of parentocracy in ignoring the meritocracy for basic education. However, in considering the reported cases in Japan, considering the school facilities, meritocracy is still the ultimate consideration among the parents.

## 7.2 Curriculum substances

Considering the importance of basic learning, although there are discrete curriculums in Bangladesh, namely the Bangla version, English version, English medium, and Madrasa education, could be mentioned. In Bangladesh, the discrete curriculum in a single education system is causing the dilemma of parentocracy vs meritocracy issues to be more prevalent than Japan's single-styled curriculum, which undoubtedly ensures access for all in basic education more stable. The distribution of a wide range of education 'goods' and 'bad' and students' assessment of their experience with equity in elementary schools is a highly fruitful and informative platform for future social justice conversations. In education, the vital importance of a fair and equitable school is primarily threefold. The guarantee of fairness or equity at schools in both structures and everyday activities is worthwhile, for it is necessary to try to restore justice when it is breached and things that need to be considered. As a result, the parentocratic role in Bangladesh makes the hurdles among the children to access basic education due to curriculum issues.

## 7.3 Length of compulsory and Basic Education

The length of basic schooling in Bangladesh needs to be extended, significantly preventing dropouts in the school system. Extending the length of schooling increases the educational expenses of low-income parents but encourages students to progress to the next level of education. As students join employment quickly as per their qualifications, the per capita income of each household improves, which will generate a highly qualified workforce, and their incomes grow due to better quality acquired that redefines long-term social justice on a cyclical basis. Extended compulsory basic education matters for the children to avail a decent job; however, considering the Japanese cases, many children in Bangladesh do not get any decent job based on their basic educational qualifications. As a result, the rate of child labour increases. Finally, many parents reported that they do not find any significance in studying more years of schooling as many parents reported that the basic schooling system should be result-oriented.

Further, some parents mentioned that one year more schooling does not impact their future careers. The government could not ensure any job opportunities except the number of graduates increasing, ultimately impacting the unemployment rate. However, most children participate in compulsory basic education in Japan and get employment opportunities. On the other hand, parental

socio-economic status ensures their child's schooling in Bangladesh, and justice in education is absent. The parentocratic role plays a vital role in child schooling. As a result, the length of basic schooling does not ensure justice in education where due to government limitations, it enlarges the inequality among the society.

#### **7.4 Capability approach and shifting paradigm**

Parental capabilities generate inverse associations and boost the gross enrolment rate concurrently. Socio-economic income disparity influences the outcome of children's schooling; parents who earn more spend more on schooling for their child's extra-curricular activities, acquiring more quality and skill development. On the other hand, families with limited resources avail themselves of schooling opportunities as per government facilities at a lower cost. Parentocracy leads to social disparities that are one of the impacts of lengthy schooling. In Bangladesh, parental capabilities matter in ensuring their children's schooling due to diverse income groups among society. To ensure social justice, the government must initiate providing a better school environment and learning opportunities for all, which most of the parents reported for the case of Japanese experiences. However, in the case of Bangladesh, parents are the ultimate source of their child's schooling. Parental aspirations matter for their child's schooling in Bangladesh, leading to the shifting paradigm from meritocracy to parentocracy. However, in the case of Japan, parents are more dependent on government schooling services, and as a result, meritocracy is more critical for child schooling. The Shifting paradigm of basic education in Bangladesh, remarkably from meritocracy to parentocracy due to government budgetary limitations and increasing disparities among the children.

#### **7.5 Equity and justice in Basic Education**

In Bangladesh, the shifting paradigm increases disparities among children learning outcomes. Equity and equality need to be achieved by enhancing the quality of government schools to minimise this socio-economic gap and disparities. A quality school environment provides students from all socio-economic backgrounds with numerous opportunities and priorities to complete their meritocratic education to give an excellent impetus to upward social mobility. Many parents are subjectively mentioned that the government must ensure and allocate financial assistance on a need-based assessment for broader participation in basic education irrespective of school's type. Region-based allocations must be made separately, considering the financial disparities between

individuals among all regions. The social justice system in Japan advocates the basic education opportunity equally for all children, focusing on social disparities or income groups. It might be a daunting process for the government of Bangladesh to ensure equal rights among unequal people in ensuring equity. Due to government initiatives, parental income does not impact children's participation in basic education in Japan. However, equity is difficult to ensure as per the heterogeneity of class structures among the society in Bangladesh.

In order to build a just society, resilient basic educational development is crucial. Separate processes can be established to provide pupils additional time during vacation and weekend breaks and greater creativity to be exercised, not focusing only on public examination. In Bangladesh, many respondent parents reported that allocating more time for extra-curricular activities, equating rural-urban breaks, taking extraordinary steps might create a spirit of cooperation rather than competition, all of which may help ensure social justice. There has been much debate among the parents in Bangladesh on the equitable distribution of limited resources across and within institutions, including income, influence, jobs, prestige, and benefits in kind.

### **7.6 The COVID-19 pandemic and Basic Education**

Globally, many countries have decided to shut down academic institutions for the time being to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Japan shuttered educational institutions in March 2020, sparking discussions on how to manage the education system both during and after the outbreak. Japan's academic calendar typically starts in April, whereas the academic year in other countries begins in September or January each year. Japan's academic session has also been recommended to begin in September as part of the strategy to strengthen education regulation. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) generated a financial aid system for education in April 2020. This system comprises tuition fee reductions, exemptions, and scholarship distribution. Besides, students request tuition discounts from their schools, especially private institutions, since they are not using school facilities. Again, many students struggle financially due to the loss of part-time employment or a decline in family income. None of Japan's schools has reduced tuition costs to assist students; instead, some institutions have provided financial assistance via scholarships or grants. Finally, due to the acceleration of digital transformation, Japan's education system underwent significant changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in Bangladesh, the government public schools are free of cost, but the other

schools incur fees from the parents. After the COVID-19 outbreaks, all the schools were closed to ensure child safety starting a remote learning system. However, due to the parental socio-economic conditions, the modalities did not work for the case in Bangladesh. Most of the children are not engaged in learning due to socio-economic disparities.

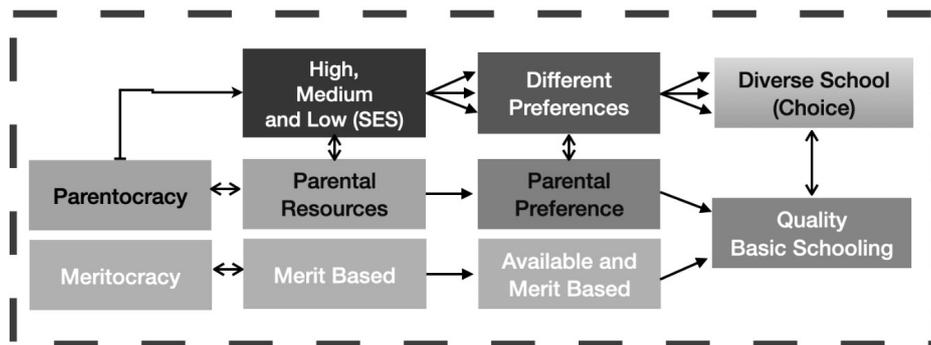
## 8. Discussions

Bangladesh's educational justice appears unattainable due to parental socio-economic conditions as a developing nation. This study appraises the theoretical predicament of both Japan's and Bangladesh's basic education system through the social justice theoretical lens, considering the parental capability approach. The capability approach, which Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen formulated, is commonly used in education policy domains. The parental capability approach is built on two fundamental concepts: functioning and capabilities. In Bangladesh, parental capability leads children's education and welfare due to patriarchal behaviour and customs that motivate children to live a life they find worthy while accepting the existence of social and structural obligations.

In reverse, capability indicates parents' ability to function within these restrictions and transform the actual possibilities into valued functioning and, eventually, children's knowledge and welfare. Meritocracy can be seen in the Japanese basic education system, where most children attend public schools. In contrast, parentocracy can be seen in the Bangladeshi primary education system, where private schools are more valued (Arrow et al., 2000). As each individual is different, Japanese basic education focuses mainly on the child's ability and provides need-based resources (Parmenter, 1999). As a result, they get the highest value from their functioning and capabilities in child learning irrespective of gender orientation (Castilla, 2008).

On the other hand, in Bangladesh, the basic education system focuses more on capabilities and uses individual wealth instead of merit to achieve that goal. So, despite having merits, children from low-income families do not get utilities or resources. As a result, the highest value from functioning and capabilities is not always achieved and negatively impacts, which extends the social inequality among children considering the parentocracy and meritocracy approach shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Theoretical Dilemma in Basic Education



Source: Prepared by the author.

Not all parents in Bangladesh afford to send their children to excellent schools, which are private in most cases. Moreover, the expenses for education are pretty overwhelming for many parents (McCoy & Major, 2007). The education expenses create an invisible opportunity divide between the rich and the poor (Stevenson & Stigler, 1994). Thus, educational equity is impeded in Bangladesh. The scenario is quite the opposite in Japan, as all public institutions provide quality education to all children. Most parents voluntarily choose these public schools over the private ones for their children (Lu, 2018). The government also endorses expenses for basic education to a great extent, which makes it easier for Japanese parents to continue their children's education. Unlike Bangladesh, children with disabilities receive much assistance in attaining basic education in Japan, and there are many special schools for them (Kayama, 2010). As a result, children do not have to drop out of mainstream education, which is excellent for the Japanese government. Besides, children living in remote areas also receive all kinds of assistance from the higher education authority (MEXT) in Japan, making it easier to continue their education. Bangladesh has many shortcomings in this regard. Every year in Bangladesh, many students drop out of the education process due to parental socio-economic challenges ranging from poverty, direct or indirect social discrimination or injustice, parents' unawareness towards literacy, child marriage (Mujeri, 2010). Still, after all these years of independence, Bangladesh is enduring a meagre literacy rate because of all these challenges and the lack of proper policy implementation (Shohel & Howes, 2011). To overcome this situation, Bangladesh should consider Japan's experiences and implement necessary policy measures as follows:

- First, the government should provide equal facilities for all children in basic education. Japan provides all of its students the same facilities for basic education. It does not matter whether the student belongs to a particular family or cast or whether the child is meritorious enough to get those benefits. They emphasise making all the students equally skilled. Bangladesh should apply the Social Justice Theory for children's basic education to make all students equally qualified to make each of them a human resource (Cummings, 2014).
- Second, the government should ensure equal financial assistance for families. In Japan, compulsory education is twelve years, and compulsory education widely represents basic education. In Bangladesh, compulsory education is for a brief period and basic education. Bangladesh should increase the duration of compulsory education, which will give solid and durable basic educational opportunities. On the other hand, it reduces educational expenses for parents and reduces the child labour rate (Nakayasu, 2016).
- Third, the government should ensure mandatory schooling area mapping for broader access to quality education. Parentocracy is extensively perceptible for basic education in Bangladesh. Wealthy parents are sending their children to private and renowned schools. On the contrary, poor and middle-class families send their children to primary educational institutes without paying extra tuition because of financial constraints (Mijs, 2016; Alam, 2020). To terminate this social inequality, the government should emphasise the admission of all students to government primary schools. Every student from any family has to study in the nearest government school (Cameron, 2011).
- Fourth, the government should ensure in-service teacher training and a quality school environment for all schools. The Bangladesh government must endeavour to improve all schools' quality of school environmental development to achieve equity and equality in basic education and attract affluent families' attention to government schools. The teachers should be qualified and well-trained. Government schools must be equitable, highly qualified, and well-trained teachers compared to private schools to bring social justice. Issues relating to educational quality should be resolved in a revised or new act implementation (Aboud & Hossain, 2011).

## 9. Conclusion

Parentocracy is the primary influence on Bangladesh's present basic education system; regardless of public or private schools, all children must get a standard fundamental education. This study suggests that many children do not complete their basic education after a few years in primary education due to several limitations causing due to parental capabilities for quality private schooling in Bangladesh. The institutional education infrastructures are insufficient to ensure that all children receive a quality basic education. It can be claimed that all eight provisions of Bangladesh's compulsory basic education act are devoted to ensuring the enrolment of children between the ages of 6–10 years. Regrettably, the government policies could not ensure complete access and basic education quality. A key finding of this research is that significant improvements are required among the government schools to be as effective as private schools to expand the meritocratic policy in Bangladesh. A joint partnership between public and private institutions in the management and monitoring of schools and teacher skills development can be entirely considered. Although parental capabilities play a vital role in basic schooling, the meritocratic system should consider better children's outcomes to ensure justice in education. The government stakeholders could play an influential role in ensuring equal facilities for all children in basic education. This study suggests that the quality of education in public and private schools should be monitored regularly to ensure social justice for children and contribute to Bangladesh's enlightened future.

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