*Original Research*

**Student Cabinet and Curricular Activities: A Case Study of a Secondary School in Bangladesh**

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## Abstract

Student leadership is well-known for enhancing student engagement in extra-curricular activities of the schools. But very little research has been pursued-particularly in Bangladesh on how the student leadership contributes to curricular activities and improves better learning experiences of students in secondary schools. In 2015, the Government of Bangladesh introduced Student Cabinet in the secondary schools with a view to inculcate democratic values among the pupils and to foster learning environment in schools. And, in this study, I examine how the Student Cabinet as a leadership tool influences academic activities: classroom and non-classroom activities and supports for an effective learning atmosphere in the school. To that purpose, I follow the qualitative methodology of in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and observation of the student cabinet's actions in a selected school in Dhaka city. After an examination of its activities, the study reveals that it promotes many curricular activities of the school and minimizes the gaps of learning experiences at least a bit; however, their several activities are likely to link to traditional student politics in Bangladesh in future.

**Keywords**: *discipline, proactive classroom, co-instruction, active learning, leadership*

## Introduction

Students are the future of a nation. They acquire traits of leadership and formal learning from primary to tertiary level of education. Their active participation in academia is a predictor of student achievement, and an important medium of their learning for lifelong knowledge (Lee et al., 1993; O'Brien & Rollefson, 1995). Considering this importance, the government, as well as school administrators creates different opportunities for the student to stimulate their learning experience not only for the better outcome of the student but also for the smooth functioning of academic activities in the schools. The available platform or student body in school is called Student Council, Student Forum, Student Association, Student Government, Student Cabinet, etc. In most cases, student council or student forum which is elected by direct votes of the student, used to plan, coordinate and carry out many school activities along with the academic and administrative staff of the school (Oakley, 1977). Miklos and Miklos (1970) referring to student council as an elected student body in high school, identified it as an integral part of learning and school's educational program. And, the student leaders obtain many skills from these wings and can apply them in the real world (Dickerson, 1999).

Bangladesh has a glorious history of student leadership and politics, and that contributed a lot to the independence of the country in 1971. Since then, student politics is permitted and widely practiced in the higher educational institutions in Bangladesh (Alam et al., 2011). Contrarily, now it is difficult to differentiate existing student leadership from national politics in Bangladesh. They are directly backed up by the central political parties (Shahjamal, 2007). They do not need any kind of approval from university or college authority rather they exert power over other students or student organizations (Hossain et al., 2014). These wings can hardly contribute to academic activities but hamper the natural spirit of student leadership as well as learning environment of the institution (Quader, 2017). However, several student associations such as Scouts, Bangladesh National Cadet Corp have been showing some good signs in mobilizing the students in learning and observing social responsibilities even such environment. In this backdrop, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has ordered the secondary schools (grade VI to X) in 2015 to establish 'Student Cabinet (SC)' throughout the country (The Independent, 2015). To create a backward linkage of student leadership and make a balanced learning climate, the Ministry of Education,

Bangladesh (2015) introduced SC in the secondary schools in Bangladesh. It entails eight roles and responsibilities. According to the Student Cabinet Manual of the Ministry (2015), by pursuing the designated responsibilities, student leaders will be able to- (1) practice and be respectful to democracy since the childhood (2) be liberal and respectful to others opinion (3) support the teacher in teaching-learning in the school (4) assist in ensuring 100% student admission and prevention of drop out (5) engage guardian by the student in teaching-learning (6) ensure the participation of the student in improving the environment of the school (7) confirm the participation of the student in sports, cultural and co-curricular activities. Putting differently, SC has the scope to contribute to improve student leadership and learning in secondary schools. But there is no study to comprehend so far whether it can work and tune its role according to the set goals and objectives or even if we need such a student body or any alternative.

In this study, I explore the curricular activities of SC and argue that newly introduced student cabinet influences curricular activities in accelerating learning experiences of students within the existing facilities of the school. Due to lack of time and resources, this study has only focused on the academic role of SC in the selected school- the classroom activities and other non-classroom activities relevant to academic activities, of the school. And, researching on such an issue can contribute to disseminate the potential benefits of SC as a learning tool for student-cantered learning and add something to the body of knowledge on student leadership in curricular activities in secondary schools in developing countries. The study moves forward into six sections. After this introductory part, the next section looks into the relevant literature on activities of student council or student bodies in secondary schools both in the global and Bangladesh perspective. The third section clarifies the procedure of the study and justifies the application of the `Constructivist theory of learning' in analysing the findings. The fourth and fifth parts of the study respectively present and analyse the findings thematically and theoretically while the final part sums up the study with several recommendations or options for future research.

## Literature Review

School leadership in many cases not only fails to create a better learning environment but also to achieve significant student outcomes in secondary schools

(Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2007). Proponents of student leadership thus suggest for different types of student platforms to ensure the students' voice in teaching-learning of the school, school climate, and academic performances (Ganyaupfu, 2013; Hough & Schmitt, 2011). In most of the cases, the platform is named as Student Council. The student body may vary in size, mode of formation, tenure, gender balances, activities, and so on from country to country. At the same time, it has some specific targets and objectives in the school apparatus. On average, the student council or these types of bodies consist of 10-12 members from different classes and tend to maintain gender balance. In England and Wales, 95% of schools have elected student council (Whitty & Wisby, 2007). Similarly, student unions and councils exist in many European schools too. It is a student's rights in Finland to participate in student unions (Shatilova, 2014).

In a comprehensive study on student council in the USA, Ringdahl (1928) demonstrated that 69% of high schools had student councils. The study pointed out nature, scope, functions, funding, and achievement of the council in general in the USA. Armstrong (1970) and Bratton et al. (1956) quite similarly revealed the structure, different approaches, and challenges of student leadership in the high schools, however, none of their study highlight its impact on academic activities and learning experiences of student officers and non-leader students. It is evident that student council or student body have significant learning scope from curricular, extra-curricular activities to community engagement, but the indicative study by Harris (1967) lacks of intensive focus on any one of that particular activities and roles to that end. Sterner (1955) noted that student council improves the ability of a student's speaking, thinking, and planning school activities. The study, however, illustrated some generic values of student leadership in the school; there is nothing about specific outcomes. Mnubi (2017) although advocated student council to increase accountability of teachers and reduce absenteeism in the schools, the study did not discuss about council's participation in pedagogical and wider learning activities for the students through curricular and extracurricular activities. Likewise, the study by Lamy (2019) strongly claims for student voice in managing school as well as the classroom in which she found student council as a natural part of a school. It not only talked about academic activities of the student council but also shed light on managerial issues. A group of scholars such as DeFur and Korinek (2010) advocated for student voice as a whole, not from a particular body of the student on the school climate, teaching and nature of school leadership in

enhancing the learning capacity of the student, however, there remained a gap about who to raise the voice and how that happened without a student body. But, student leadership can change the school climate and learning outcomes of students particularly with community engagement (McGregor, 2007). Moreover, participation in student leadership programs or council helps the student to develop attributes that directly impact his/her lifelong achievement such as vocational skills (Thomson, 2012). Putting differently, very few studies have focused on the role of student platforms deeply in academic activities to improve the learning experiences of students in secondary schools.

Student body in academic activities in Bangladesh is under-researched while the case of SC is new and conducted no study so far in this regard. But, Bangladesh is familiar for its political student wings in higher educational institutions (Patwary, 2011). Universities have a central student union though most of them are not functional (Chandan, 2019), and there were no uniform student platforms in secondary schools before 2015. Despite that, some of the existing literature shows positive outcomes of different student organizations in the schools in Bangladesh. For instance, Zaman (2016) in his study explained how participation in clubs and volunteer squads for diversified extra-curricular activities in the high schools throughout the country may possibly improve the academic performances of the students in schools. The study by Hossain and Tarmizi (2011), and Salauddin and Greenwood (2017) demonstrated about 'group learning' and 'cluster leaders' respectively in achieving the academic performances and improvement of the overall learning experiences of the student in the secondary schools in Bangladesh, although, in both of the studies, students had very limited agencies to perform their activities under the direct guidance of the teacher. However, some researches only discuss about the teachers' part. For example, Jony (2016) in an empirical study focused on the role of teachers in student friendly instruction for effective learning of the student in which there was no scope of identifying the role and position of students or student representatives in that study. Comparison to scenario, SC has a comprehensive and national impression in its goals and objectives, thus it has a wider scope for both curricular and extracurricular activities in the school and community alike. Therefore, the study unveiled what are the classroom and non-classroom academic activities they undertake and how those activities enhance their learning capacities of students in the school in Bangladesh.

## Methodology

The study adopted a case study method. Since the SC has been practicing in the same structure and with the same objectives in all the schools of the country, the research intended for 'sophisticate beholding' of SC's particular activities from case study (Stake, 1995). Accordingly, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) and observation have been carried out to achieve the objectives of the study. To collect primary data, in-depth interviews of key informants were conducted according to two different semi-structured interview sets for students and teachers. Interview tools consist of twenty and ten questions respectively for students and teachers, and the average length of each interview was eighteen minutes and ten minutes for cabinet members and teachers correspondingly. Student Cabinet Manual, Bangladesh (2015) was the basis of the interview protocol, however, the studies by Ringdahl (1928), Coffey and Lavery (2018), Sterner (1955), Milkos and Milkos (1970), Wallin (2003) inspired to develop research instruments of this study. Besides, SC activities and interactions between SC and teachers were observed during the two classes and three visits to the school. Purposively, the classroom activities in which the SC members belonged to were observed and nearly forty minutes were spent for each observation that started at the second half of a class until the first half of the second class, thus that offered the scope to understand the students' activities between the short intervals of two classes as well. The only FGD with teachers were effective to cross-check and enrich the data collected from interviews and observations.

The data was sorted out through rigorous transcription and translation from the native language, and language adjustment. The nature of the study required multi-step coding and analysis of the data in which in-field analysis helped to coding the schemes for grasping the emerging themes (Hopwood, 2004). After refining the important schemes, they have been compared with the objectives of the study. Since it had intervals within the three visits, there were wider scopes to verify and check the reliability of the gathered data from the field and finally, the findings were drawn through a triangulation of in-depth interviews, FGD, and observation. As a student learning related case study on SC, the study analysed the findings based on the Constructivist theory of learning which is well-befitting in such a framework of case study research (Creswell, 2012). It assumed the basic premises during interpretation that learning is an active process, exercised reflective activities and understood through

experiences in a structure or learning machine (Dewey, 1986; Vygotsky, 1980). The study had a demand for secondary data too. Secondary data, particularly on student bodies' academic activities from different corners of the globe has supported a lot to substantiate the findings from primary data. Thus, the study turned into a synthesis of primary and secondary data in qualitative settings.

In terms of sampling, I purposively determined two criteria in selecting the school: full-fledged SC and functional since 2016. I was looking for a school in a short radius of my residence. And, I visited several schools in the locality. But this 'M' Model High School complied with set criteria. The targeted 'M' high school in Dhaka operates in two different shifts as morning and day shift respectively for girls and boys. The total number of students is 11000, in the five grades from six to ten, having at least fifty students in each section of a level. They are taught by forty-six teachers: thirteen male and thirty-three female teachers. The school has one male and one female assistant headmaster, headed by a headmaster for both shifts. Although the SC consists of eight members from both of the two shifts, I purposively selected five members from the cabinet who hold the portfolio related to teaching-learning of the school.

Table 1

*Teacher Sample*

| Respondents | Sex | Qualification | Experience (in year) | Teaching |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Headmaster (T1) | Male | Masters | 10 | Math |
| Assistant headmaster (T2) | Male | Masters | 21 | General |
| Assistant headmaster (T3) | Female | Masters | 14 | Bengali |
| Teacher four (T4) | Male | Masters | 30 | Bengali |
| Teacher five (T5) | Male | Masters | 26 | Economics |

(Source: Field Study, 2020)

Table 2

*Sample From Student Cabinet Members*

| Respondents | Sex | Qualification | Frequency of term | Portfolio/Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student one (S1) | Male | Class Ten | 2 | (1) Environment (2) Water resources |

| Student two (S2) | Female | Class Eight | 2 | (1) Environment (2) Books, Learning materials |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student three (S3) | Female | Class Seven | 1 | Tree plantation |
| Student four (S4) | Male | Class Nine | 1 | Sports, Cultural & Co-curricular |
| Student five (S5) | Male | Class Eight | 1 | Overall |

(Source: Field Study, 2020)

This research involved students below the age of eighteen years. Accordingly, I was extra cautious about ethical issues. However, it did not encounter any ethical issues; I ensured written and informed consent from the respective guardians and parents to record students' interviews. The instrument did not incorporate any derogative and personal questions. To clear any ethical dilemma, the interviewer had demonstrated the objectives and purpose of the study properly to respondents for their consent. Both the adult and minor participants had the full freedom to withdraw themselves from the interview at any time of the recording. A cabinet member had availed that chance and withdrew himself from the interview. Anonymous coding, such as 'M' for school name, 'T' for teacher and 'S' for cabinet member has been used in data presentation and all sorts of data have been stored confidentially.

## Findings

The study adopted thematic analysis (Burnard et al., 2008) to present and discuss the data collected from the field. The findings have been organized into few themes based on research questions and emerged from the field: formation of student cabinet, classroom activities (presentation skills, formative assignments, group activities, class environment, reduced dropout), and non-classroom activities (demonstrating lab works, organizing seminars, book distributions).

### 'M' Model High School and Formation of Student Cabinet

The structure of the SC is simple and members are elected by the direct vote of students of the school. According to the SC Manual (2015), the school authority obliges to hold the election by January of each year. T2 shared his experience of the last cabinet election during the interview that they initially formed an election commission consists of members from the students. Election commission declared the schedule ten days before the election. Then aspirants of SC campaigned in a certain time of day as per

their manifesto and requested for votes to their schoolmates. Voting continued from 08.00 am - 2.00 pm. The school premise tuned into a festive look with the gathering of many parents, guardians, guests to observe the election. After, the voting, election officers counted the votes in the hall room in presence of the candidates. Election result was declared immediately after counting and displayed in school notice board. Eight portfolios were distributed later on according to the number of total votes of an individual candidate; the highest vote taker leads the cabinet. The newly elected members took over the charge of the cabinet from the previous committee and the new cabinet can run office until the next committee formed. SC members were called upon by the teachers to inform about their plans on curricular and extracurricular activities as well as discipline and order of the student at large. At the very first meeting with SC members, moderator and a group of teachers directed them to maintain and observe sound school climate and interactive student-teacher relationships during their tenure. In this regard, one of the mentors (T2) of SC claimed that "student cabinet is a new gateway to that venture for a stronger student-teacher relationship in school campus' (Interview with teacher, 2020).

## Student Cabinet and Classroom Activities

The study explored classroom activities of the cabinet members during the class observation and interviews with the student leaders, and found that they made several important contributions to the formal teaching-learning process of the class such as effective lesson presentation, formative assignments, class discipline and class environment, and group activities. There are eight cabinet members from five levels (VI to X) of the school that means there was at least one cabinet member in each class. Normally, moderator and teachers of the school motivate the most meritorious student of the class to vie for a position in the cabinet. As a result, after their winning in the election, they are considered as role models of their classmates. Respective cabinet members lead the class. It was noticed so during the observation that two cabinet members in a class seemed more confident of presentation and responses than other non-member students in the class. Since the students have to demonstrate their creativity during answering particular question or issue, cabinet members were found enthusiastic and rational in their replies. The class teacher also appreciated a lot to one of the members during the observation. During the interview, the same teacher (T2) mentioned that some changes were noticeable to the student leaders, they attempted to

represent their class now a day wherever possible in the school. In this regard, S3 argued as class captain and cabinet member, class teacher oftentimes asked her to present her homework in front of the class. In the words S3,

> …however, I used to begin the conversation with teacher in the class; few other students also became interested in following her participation in class activities. (Interview with SC, 2020)

Additionally, cabinet members in a class supported the class teacher by collecting information and providing initial feedback about their fellow mates' formative assignments. After giving any assignment before the exam, SC member consider what one sincerely and they brief and debrief the particular topic in the class. T3 argued that they, later on, were provided effective feedback according to their needs and the students also could participate and defend themselves during the feedback class. This strategy was found effective because fellow students were more comfortable sharing their problems with classmates than with the teacher. It offered double benefits for them: academic improvement and enhancement of communication skills. T3 stated in this regard

> I wish to see a proactive classroom, quality classroom with meaningful participation of the class in which SC members sometimes show the pathway to the rest of the student. (Interview with teacher, 2020)

T2 affirmed that several members of the SC assist their fellow mate in math and sciences, thus they are getting interested to group activities day by day. During an informal observation from the corridor, it was noticed that students were discussing some issues in group in the absence of their teacher of a particular class. Actually, one of the cabinet members was making up the class by leading the group activities of his fellow mates. S5 opined that he sometimes helps his classmates in preparing their class lesson, particularly about Science and English subjects. However, the class captain was responsible for such purpose, S4 urged to his class not to make a noise during the interval and tiffin time rather they were asked to discuss about next classes of the day. Thus, they also take part in the maintenance of class discipline. T4 claimed that

> …we are trying to develop this culture and if the entire cabinet member take it as their duty to help their classmates, it will definitely improve their academic outcomes and cognitive skills. (Interview with teachers, 2020)

Class lectures are the main tools for academic services which are mostly teacher-centric, but in the changing student-teacher interactions, students can discuss about teachers' teaching techniques to a certain extent. Several class teachers also changed their pedagogical strategies as per students' requirements in the class. Thus, it upgraded teachers' instructional capacity too. In addition, T5 contended that changes in their pedagogical and lesson plans also are improving the student-teacher relationship gradually in the class. Now there is stipulated time for students to participate in questions and answers session during class lectures. Moreover, S3 noticed a changing scenario of the *class environment*. She monitored the timely entrances of her classmates in the class and requested them not to skip any class.

## Student Cabinet and Non-Classroom Activities

The initiation of SC is facilitating a scope for more students to engage particularly in curricular activities. It is also appropriate for non-classroom activities, not only as extracurricular activities but also as supplementary for academic activities. From the interview and observation, it is found that SC members lead their fellow mates in laboratory works, debating clubs, group activities, and mock discussion in the school campus. T3 during the interview mentioned that they have a computer (ICT) lab of forty computers in which they need at least three volunteers to conduct the full class. Initially, SC members and other interested volunteers were taught a particular ICT lesson then they demonstrated that matter to other students of the lab like a *co-instructor*. Sometimes they followed different types of pedagogical strategies to make a better understanding of their classmates. Participants oftentimes performed their duties in a roster. Thus, the entire class had a scope to achieve their particular target earlier and effectively. S1 and S3 opined that school authority had increased the number of hours and instructors in computer lab upon their demand too. Similarly, student leaders volunteer in science lab too. Furthermore, student leaders must have to take part in *national day seminars* and discussions. S4 proudly informed his success in a competition organized by a government institution nearby.

The study contended further that SC is contributing to *reduce dropout* rates because of their regular communication with their classmates and motivation. As S2 was sharing with researcher that she along with one of her friends visited the residence of a fellow mate who was absent in the school consecutively for three days. The class

teacher noticed the issue and asked them to look into the matter. The fellow mate had some family problems. After informing the fact to headmaster, that student was not fined anything for his absence. Thus, the absentee became regular in school and comfortable again in the class. T1 claimed that now they ask every cabinet member to inform any kind of problem faced by a student while in school premises. Student leaders, however, enjoy some sort of authority in performing their duties; teachers were wondered at their approaches, presentation, and creative thinking in their activities (T4 in the FGD, 2020).

SC members in 'M' school have significant contribution in collecting old books and notes from the past students. Actually, the cabinet members were advised to collect books only from the out-going student of level ten, but currently, they execute the task for every class. S1 and S2 noted that collecting and *distributing old books* is not an easy job. They collect the books, make a register, pile them up, and then carry all the books in the common room. Again they carry all the books in the distribution place on a particular day to distribute. S1 informed that however he only was assigned for that particular job, all the cabinet members helped him to accomplish the work. They were appreciated for that job, which has now been working as stimuli for them.

Headmaster (T1) delineated that since the beginning of SC, he presides over two short meetings yearly with the elected cabinet members during their one year term. In the first meeting of the cabinet, he listens to about their plans and in the second meeting at the mid of their tenure, reviews their activities and provide suggestions for the rest of the tenure. According to T3, members of the SC during meeting with teachers displayed confidence in interaction and contributed to forward the school morale in their subsequent activities (FGD with teachers, 2020).

## Discussion

Concept and experiences of student learning have been transformed a lot in last the couple of decades and will continue to change in the coming days by encompassing many more new tools and structures. The context contended that GoB has launched such a new structure in the secondary schools to upgrade their democratic values and learning experiences of the students. Though, SC's objective focuses more on the extracurricular issues, the findings revealed that it contributed to curricular activities too: a good turnout of homework, effective class presentation, group activities and

maintenance of class discipline, co-instructions, seminar etc. that have been engaging them in active learning processes to a great extent. It is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

*Student Cabinet in Academic Activities*
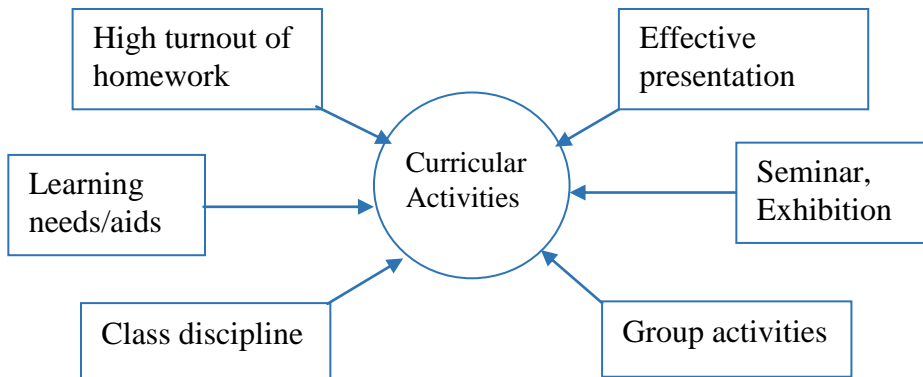


According to the 'constructivist theory of learning', learning is an active process, learners need to do something (Dewey, 1986), and in the SC, student leaders gain some sort of agency to take part or feel a responsibility to participate actively in the class and non-class activities. The student cabinet is motivating students in engaging in a hands-on experience of class presentation and group activities during class hours. Almost all of the teachers in the FGD mentioned that SC members seemed more vocal and displayed confidence in the classroom. This way assimilating a new structure has been benefiting the student learning to a certain extent. In the format of group activities, student leaders and class captain support and look after the status of formative assignments and they check their work reciprocally, thus, the system has offered an experiential world too (Von Glasersfeld, 1989) for their learning. SC members are not conducting any class or lab work but they are assisting teachers and teaching activities. They sometimes particularly in ICT labs and science labs volunteer for other students that certainly improve their understanding from hands-on experiences (Vygotsky, 1980) and minimizes staff crisis of the school. For instance, now a teacher receives more feedbacks on class lectures which enhance their quality of class delivery and feedback in assessments. Evidently, they helped to reduce many challenges of pedagogical outcomes, offer much more scope of sharing their problems and facilitate effective

teaching services. Thus, effective schooling is developing both by teacher and student interaction (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997) in that school too.

Some teachers continued to trust much on student leaders on school activities, means that they are valuing the partnership between them (Mitra, 2006). SC is supporting the maintenance of school and class discipline, prevention of drop out, assisting the fellow mates in lesson preparation, and so on. Furthermore, SC members by organizing seminars, group activities, and book distribution ceremonies as part of their curricular activities are accelerating many 'aspects of progressive education' (Dewey, 1986). It is evident from findings that almost all of the eight members remain in close connection with teachers both for curricular and extra-curricular purposes. Therefore, at least few more students are coming closer to 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1980) or better learning experiences because of this new system.

Nevertheless, the crucial point is how much value it can add to the existing academic environment of the school or whether SC is the sole body to develop the student's leadership and learning capacity. Field data indicated that SC has hardly any scope to evaluate the teachers' instructional pattern, class planning and curriculum development like academic activities of the school. Most of the activities that SC conducted can be done by any student at the school. It mainly depends on the teacher who can wish the job to be done by a particular student. Moreover, the system maintains a hierarchy among the members according to total votes received in the election. Some of them (two members in the interviewee group) are not directly elected by the student; they are selected by the teachers. Meaning that, a teacher can influence the election, selection and formation of SC to a great extent (Hanrahan, 1961). And, the student leadership cannot be achieved through this type of adult notion of leadership (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007).

Besides, activities of voluntary organizations such as scouts, girls guide, debating clubs collide with the activities of the cabinet. Clusters' leaders (Salauddin & Greenwood, 2017) in several schools in Bangladesh are playing a similar role as SC to uphold the learning environment of a school. Moreover, the interview and FGD indicated that presence of SC may undermine the growing interest to the scouts and other voluntary student organizations in the school. In essence, SC receives enough leverage through an election mandate to interfere in many activities of informal

organizations. This way, SC members are transforming into elite students of the school. Most of the teachers agreed to one point that competition is increasing in the SC election noticeably. The increasing interest of the guardians and peers to SC members can link it to political connection: student leadership is ultimately the extension and connected to national politics in Bangladesh (Nasrin & Rahman, 2019). The competition in SC election is creating factionalism among the students from different classes which is also happening at tertiary level of education in Bangladesh due to student politics.

## Conclusion

At the close of the study, it can be said that SC has been transforming the students learning experiences from traditional to active participation to a certain extent in the developing country like Bangladesh, where in the remote areas of the country SC stands alone as only student platform in many schools. It was a case from Dhaka city and it highlighted the issue that what the opportunities are perceived by the SC for students' improvement of learning capacity through their active participation in curricular activities. In many instances, it was compulsory for member students to take part in specific class activities. Particularly, the respondent students in the study provided many insights about the curricular activities of SC such as assistance for fellow mates' homework, group activities, class presentation and organizing seminars on national days. Cabinet members acted as a class as well as student representatives, supported the class teacher and other learning needs in classrooms. They helped to maintain order and discipline in the class, checked absenteeism in the class, oftentimes forwarded message on behalf of the school to the absentee. Many of their achievements are immeasurable but some issues such as spirit to curricular and extracurricular activities, discipline among students, and degree of interaction with teachers were noticeable in that school. Since physical involvement is an essential condition for the learning of the children, SC offered that scope to engage both in curricular and extracurricular activities. Thus, not only the SC members but also the fellow students are inspired by SC activities and accelerated the overall learning experience of the students. It can be said that representation has been assisting student learning here too (Bruner, 1960). Resultantly, students were found very excited about this new structure and determined to elect in SC during their studentship in the school. In addition, while

the lack of outdoor facilities in most of the schools in Bangladesh indirectly confined the students only indoor, SC can be instrumental in their learning activities.

Notwithstanding these contributions, it is not possible here from this case study to generalize about SC's impacts and benefits to teaching-learning as well as the growth of pupil's leadership. But the school administrators can speed up and articulate SC's activities more for the utmost learning experiences from this new structure that does not cost anything. Concomitantly, other voluntary and informal student organizations also must have enough space for their smooth working. The issue can be investigated further in macro level with a mixture of boys and girls school both in rural and urban settings. Thus, it can unveil as well the fact that whether the 'one size of SC fit for all' school in the days to come. Until then, it is the responsibility of the teachers to keep them in track and prevent them from any political connection during their services in the Student Cabinet. Eventually, school authority bears the fundamental obligation to flourish these young pupils' diversified capacities at large (Coffey & Lavery, 2018).

## Acknowledgements

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