Domain Name: recent changes in Bangladesh's education system

The challenge of education reform in BangladeshWhat Bangladesh must focus on to ensure the changes. It is generally a consensus that no one can improve student learning without improving instruction. The proposed education reform in Bangladesh introduces two major changes in student's assessment procedure: “No public examination” before grade 10 and “no final examination” up to grade three. Under this suggested proposal, two components are revised: 1. New assessment tools and 2. Massive reform of course curriculum. Bangladesh's economic strength is mostly driven by textile industries and foreign remittance of overseas Bangladeshi workers. However, those sectors are mainly dominated by cheap, less educated, and non-skilled workforce. Unfortunately, this process of economic growth is likely to be unsustainable and therefore, the current government has taken many initiatives for generating a skilled workforce by prioritizing educational reform. At present, more than 80% of children are able to complete primary school education. However, the quality of education remains questionable since the majority of them fail to enroll in high schools or colleges. What could be the strategy to make the intervention initiative successful in a short time frame?  We can learn from other countries that underwent successful education reform.    Reform must be tested first based on specific requirements Historically, education reform is a part of the global developmental process that has been taken into consideration by most countries in the world. Education reform is a never-ending process. However, most of American education reform, for example, has just been implemented in the last century. The most crucial aspects of the reform are equity, social justice, and public school support. However, suggestions to incorporate testing, accountability, and school privatization to accelerate reform created even more gaps in children's learning capacity and progress. As a result, every reform must be treated seriously and must go through many levels of assessment, including public vs private schools and rural versus urban schools, in order to identify deficiencies that may limit the success of education reform.Developing skilled teachers is a prerequisiteWhile education reform was fast pacing in many developed countries, American education reform was very slow and only saw major changes after the 1970s. Educational stagnation was conspicuous when schools ranked 20th out of 30 countries in high school graduation rates, 24th in college graduation rates, and 27th in college graduation rates of scientists and engineers. It was indeed taken very seriously to prepare students for the future competitive marketplace. The education sector is quite large, composed of many factors, and often raises issues that typically require years to address. Due to slow progress and uncertainty prevailing in many parts of the country, education reform in the US was proposed at the state level to improve the quality of teaching, leadership and governance of public schools. Before getting to student performance, reform was essentially focused on building skilled teachers upon selecting talents and quality, not just certification. This transformed the teaching quality and ultimately boosted students' performance.     Reform is still ongoing America witnessed the extreme influence of inequality, racism, and income disparity on poor education growth across the country. It became a national priority to improve American school education. The 32nd US president, Franklin D Roosevelt, said: “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” This was exactly the motivation where a number of changes were proposed in American education. Among those changes, mandatory school enrollment, charter school popularity, increased enrollment in nature preschools and forest kindergartens, and college-bound culture contributed a lot to the growth of American education. The education system in the Netherlands is among the best in the world and education reform started as early as the nineteenth century, however, reform is still going on. Reform in BangladeshEducation growth in Bangladesh is still in its infancy following important decisions on universal primary schooling. The country has been recovering from poverty but the campaign “education for all” is under many challenges, including education inequality, unemployment, childhood marriage, and shortage of education materials. The Bangladesh government took a very encouraging step by making textbooks available for students in all school grades. Meanwhile, education reform majorly focused on creative learning by understanding the topic instead of memorizing the content. Therefore, books have recently been modified to make them simple and easy for students. This is a major change in the education system together with the “no central examination.” This is a major jump in the education system that had no success record based on any pilot study conducted in any setting of Bangladeshi schools. The key factors that are crucial to this direction are: 1) Recruiting the right people for teaching or training the current teachers to meet the requirement 2) Ensuring the proposed new system delivers the best possible instructions to every child. Teachers are key The proposed curriculum ideally requires frequent class assessment tests to monitor students' progress. American school education also follows a similar approach to student assessment, but students still need to sit for central test assessment. This later process helps to find out if any school is either behind the overall growth or if a fraction of students are already at an advanced level. Education reform should not be confined only to free books -- the first and foremost component of education reform needs skilled teachers who will be available to the students regardless of the school location, cultural disparity, and students' quality. Teachers must be accountable for their duties not only during school hours but also become accessible after hours when students may feel comfortable learning in one-to-one interaction (individualized) , especially in the few locations in Bangladesh where parents are still not aware of sending their kids for learning. In addition, a large portion of parents rely on private tutoring while most parents are unable to arrange this cost. Parents are also not able to teach students at home. Therefore, to get the whole proposal seemingly working across the country, child education desperately needs a central command on developing skilled teachers, and strategies on how to deliver the lessons to all. It can be done by building a large group of well-trained teachers who may further train teaching assistants. Teaching assistants might provide additional support to students who need to catch up on lessons. This may reduce the need of hiring private tutors. Mentoring future teachers is common abroad, where a senior student teacher (not fully ready to teach independently yet) participates in co-teaching in a real classroom setting with a certified teacher. As the semester progresses, the young teacher will gradually take on more responsibilities until he/she begins a four week takeover of being the lead teacher.A similar system may work in Bangladesh where some reforms on how to empower a lead teacher are needed before relying on their skills. Current textbooks are enriched with necessary contents, but a plan on how to make teachers efficient in teaching is missing. If teachers are not up to the mark this new system may fail to work and students may turn away from school-based learning. Focus on assessmentHow to assess a student's progress when the number of final examinations is greatly reduced? Of course, testing students is an important step to validate if the proposed strategy is working or not. In any proposed reform, students need to be checked for any progress by a steady stream of homework assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and standardized tests. Testing, on the other hand, may often add pressure. We need a fine balance between testing protocol and how to tell students about their test results and what that means to them. Therefore, types of assessments will play an important role here -- not all testing introduces stress. For example, homework assignments, quizzes, and creative projects generally demand hard work, but students never associate them with  exam phobia. It is important to note that there could be lots of variations in questions and answers from school to school. Therefore, board-level examinations are needed to find the final progress of any school. However, board-level results will not help teachers learn how to help students better. Progress monitoring assessments such as home assignments, project accomplishments, and classroom quizzes are very helpful for the teacher to teach more effectively and make better decisions about the type of instruction that will work best. Interestingly, in American schools, students are advised not to share their test scores at any time. Parents are also told not to discuss students' performance outside of the family. School teachers only meet parents to provide feedback and most importantly, school teachers send a request to the parents to be more descriptive about their kids so that teachers may find it easy to handle any particular students accordingly.Technology-based help needed Early childhood education (grade 1-5) functions as a root for future higher education. Education reform must consider the development of child executive function skills that are mostly organized and processed through the brain; how to plan, focus on a specific matter, remember class instructions, and how to do multiple tasks. These skills are associated with global mental development, reflected by emotional regulation, learning ability, and academic achievement. A young brain is under developing stage compared with an adult brain that is already developed. Kids' brain development progresses through experience, thus it is important to ensure that kids enjoy the school-based instructions and never expose themselves to bad experiences. Recent technology-based learning offers more opportunities over traditional lectures; in a short time frame, students can acquire more skills through project-driven drills and practices. There are many ways technology could enhance students' ability to learn complex things faster. Students show an increasing ability to learn hardware, software, greater interest on specific topics, leading to student specialization in different aspects of technology use, and on many occasions promoting collaboration. Thus, technology support sounds very promising in a setting of low-income countries -- where only a few skilled teachers are available, students are less motivated towards education, and parents are not aware of the importance of childhood education. Education reform in Bangladesh must consider access to adequate technology for all students and teachers. Teachers often need to learn the computer-assisted projects before teaching students. Students also need to have similar access to practice and complete project work. Besides distributing free books, the distribution of computers/laptops/chromebooks and access to the internet are two major components in the face of implementing education reform in Bangladesh. Teachers must become leadersFinally, child-friendly spaces to learn and play, age-appropriate learning toys/tools, and education materials need to be ensured in school settings. Once students enjoy learning, they would be the appropriate persons to provide feedback on the teacher's teaching skills. The whole system is very comprehensive and often confronts headwinds as evidenced by the data in many countries where education reform ultimately was successful. Strong leadership skills of teachers are of utmost importance to get the reform started and maintained.Changes in the education system may need several years. Bangladesh could achieve the world-class education system by doing the following:  Develop skilled teachers Textbooks and classroom instructions must contain creative examples and problem-solving elements rather than engaging students in memorizing Ensure a safe and healthy environment where teachers and students both enjoyIndividualized learning needs to be prioritized