

Shishutirtha

An enlightened school in the outlying place



Background

After independent of Bangladesh, the development of education sector becomes very significant. Nowadays, almost 100% of the eligible children for primary level are getting admission in the school. The high rate of admission in primary level becomes envious for the other South Asian countries except Sri Lanka.

However there are some illustrations of disappointment too. The quality of primary education is quite low in this country. The government's effort is not fairly apparent for developing this situation. On the other hand, dropout rate is also high in primary school.

Poor, untouchable and less meritorious students become the victims of discrimination in schools. Moreover, there are many schools with the shortages of classrooms. Considering the above mentioned issues, Uttaran (non-government organisation) established a school named 'Shishutirtha' with the aim to ensure the quality of primary education. Uttaran is facilitating non-formal primary education program for a long time and has strong experience in this sector. Uttaran is practicing that experience in 'Shishutirtha'.

The dropout rate is zero, as because of high quality of education in *Shishutirtha*. Each year 20-25% of the students getting government scholarship. At the same time, the authority is careful about the students not to become the subject of any kind of discriminations in terms of gender, race, colour, class and caste. Almost schools in Tala are following the teaching methods of 'Shishutirtha' because of low dropout rate, high schooling time and brilliant result in examination.



Environment and socio-economic condition: Sathkhira District

Sathkhira is one of the underdeveloped districts of Bangladesh. About 60.33% family of this district do not have any agriculture land. The rate of education is only 45.5%. (According to the 2011 Census of population).

Nearly 57% people of the district living under the poverty line (unable to take 2112 per capita calorie). In Tala, around 20,000 people (essentially poor) are waterlogged between 4 to 6 months every year. Salinity is damaging the livelihoods and bio-diversity of the region, increasing serious crisis of fresh water of drinking and cooking. Almost 28.95% people are untouchable caste. The literacy rate is only 30% and almost all of them living under the poverty line amongst untouchable communities.



Shishutirtha facilitates activities as an institution on the context of the aforementioned background, environment and socio-economic conditions. *Shishutirtha's* educational activities can be divided into four parts are as follows;

- a) Academic
- b) Extra-curriculum
- c) Institutional activities
- d) Other activities

A. Academic :

Shishutirtha follows government's curriculum and method. Different academic programs of the year 2013 are presented below:

1. Students :

A total 253 students are studying in playgroup to class V. Amongst 133 are boys and 120 are girls. Most of the students come from poor, extremely poor and depressed households level. A total 68% students of *Shishutirtha* are children of economic poor households including nearly 20% *dalit*, extreme poor and untouchable communities.

Since 2013 'Uttaran' is giving full scholarship to 80 children and half benefits to another 80 children who are from *dalit*, extreme poor and untouchable communities. School authority regularly monitors and take initiatives to make sure that all students are coming to school regularly and attending all classes. In *Shishutirtha* students' average attendance rate is almost 98% which is highest in surrounding schools.

2. Teaching, attendance, drop-outs and repetition:

The quality of education largely depends on the teaching time schedule. *Shishutirtha* is always careful about the time schedule. For example, school authority consulted with parents and completed 266 working days with average 1130 hours classes in the year of 2013 which was significant higher than the government schools. The rate of dropout was zero. A total 7 students had taken transfer certificate in order to get admission elsewhere with a hope of getting general scholarship on Union Quota.





3. Student-teacher relationships, teaching methods and the ratio:

In our country, the primary schools teaching system is teacher-oriented, one-way and lecture base. There is no scope of participation for students. There is also limited opportunity for asking questions to the teacher. In this one way education system, teachers torture the students mentally and physically in the name of teaching. The current teaching methods obstructs the relationship between teachers and students, rather close relationship.

The teaching methods of *Shishutirtha* is quite different, classes are participatory, inactive and question-answerable. As a result, classes become enjoyable to students, get chance to complete their everyday lessons in the school. Moreover, the school authority is very concerned about the ratio of the teacher and students. The ratio is 1:32, which is key tool in order to ensure *Shishutirtha* quality.

4. Examine school tests and tutorials:

Usually the government schools' result is determined by the annual exam. *Shishutirtha* result is determined by three terms examinations i.e. first term, second term and annual. The students must attend first and second periodic exam along with final one. Moreover, lesson based tutorials and monthly exams are also arranged.



5. Primary school certificate examination results :

The student of *Shishutirtha* are participating Primary School Certificate Examinations since 2010. A total of 5,188 students of 262 schools of Tala upazila participated in the examination and nearly 98% students passed in the year of 2013. On the contrary, a total of 26 students of *Shishutirtha* participated in the examination and passed. Amongst 16 students passed with GPA-5 and other 10 with 'A' grade. Comparing with the government schools of that area *Shishutirtha's* result is the best.

6. Scholarship of class V :

Every year, the government arranges examination for the students who pass from class V to class VI for awarding scholarship. According to the result of this exam, every Upazilla primary education department gives two types of scholarship. One of these is known as talent pool and another is common grade. A total 307 students of *Shishutirtha* had taken part in competitive examination and amongst 76 students received scholarship where 58 students in talent pool and 18 in general grade. The rate of getting scholarship from *Shishutirtha* is 23.45%, that is really a competitive result comparing any school in Bangladesh.

B. Extra curriculum :

1. Parent meeting :

School authorities regularly arrange class based meeting with the parents. The aims of this meeting are as follows;

- a) to protect the dropout,
- b) encourage students to come to school regularly,
- c) support students in homework,
- d) make student attentive about their studies,
- e) associate the parents in other programs of the school.

The rate of parent participation in meeting is 86%.



2. Observance of national and international days :

International Mother Language Day, Independent Day, Victory Day and Bengali new year are observed in the school. In addition, school facilitates the observation of days e.g. birthdays of Rabindranath Tagore, Rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, International racial discrimination avoidance Day, Women's Day, May Day and Environment Day is observed.

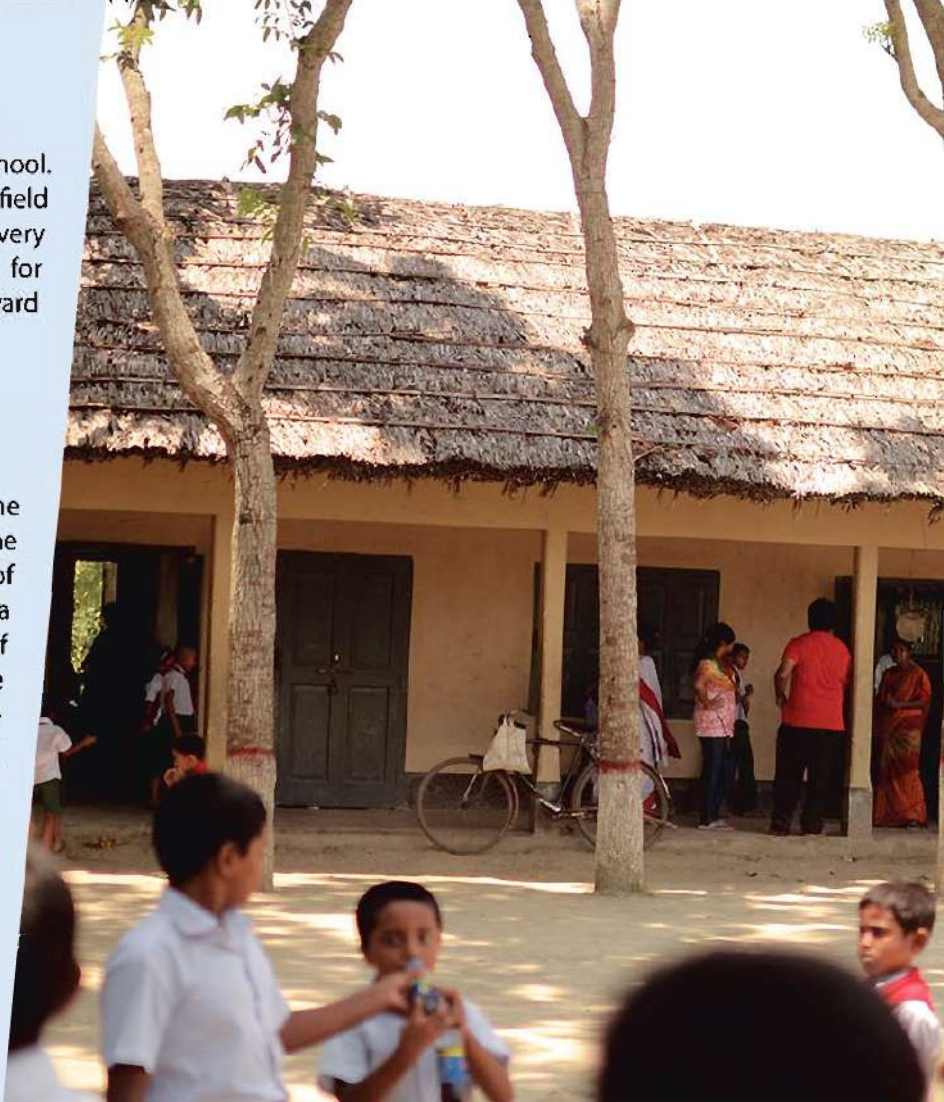
3. Education tour, sport and cultural events :

Every year education tour is arranged by the school. Students regularly play at the nearby playing field of the Sahid Muktiyodha College. Moreover, every year two days long celebration is arranged for annual sports event, cultural events and award giving programs.

C. Institutional activities :

1. Infrastructure of Shishutirtha :

Though its unique education method, the infrastructure of Shishutirtha is fragile. The institution is established with the help of Uttaran. An unused house of Sahid Muktiyodha College is used for this school which is half walled and the roof is made of 'Golpata'. The house is divided into 8 classrooms. The academic activities are handled with hardship within this limited facilities. Till now, *Shishutirtha* is unable to make its own building. A total 35 decimals of land is bought for this purpose but it's not enough. In the school there are three latrines and one tube-well for teacher and students.





2. School's board of directors :

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1	Mr. Sahidul Islam	President
2	Mr. M. M. Enamul Islam	Vice-president
3	Babu Shamvu Charan Chawdhury	Member
4	Mr. Abul Hossen Mahmud	Member
5	Mr. Rezaul Karim	Member
6	Babu Achintam Saha	Member
7	Ms. Sabina Yasmin	Secretary

3. List of the names of teachers :

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1	Sabina Yasmin	Headmaster
2	Masuma Margia	Assistant Teacher
3	Meherunnisa	Assistant Teacher
4	Rina Biswhas	Assistant Teacher
5	Razia Sultana	Assistant Teacher
6	Narayan Chandra Pall	Assistant Teacher
7	Momrez Ali	Assistant Teacher
8	Papia Sultana	Assistant Teacher

D. Other activities :

1. Sponsorship :

In the year 2013, *Shishutirtha* started a special sponsorship with the help of Uttaran. That covered yearlong educational expenses of 80 students. The cost of transportation, tuition fees, clothes, warm clothes, uniform, books, and notebooks etc are covered by this sponsorship. Most of the students of untouchable, extreme poor and women headed household are receiving the sponsorship.

2. Additional Classes :

In *Shishutirtha*, there is an additional classess facility for the weak students. Extra classes are arranging for students of class IV and V to develop their skills on 6 subjects. It is expected that weak student will able to achieve desired result through attending extra classes. It should be mentioned that costs of extra classes are given by the school authorities.



Future Expectations

Shishutirtha wishes to overcome all the discrimination and inequity in the society through developing enlighten future generation. School always welcomes donation, charity and well wish of individual and organisation for scale up coverage of sponsorship and scholarship for needy students as well as school infrastructure. *Shishutirtha* believes enlighten and participatory education must contribute to build the enlighten society. In future, *Shishutirtha* will act as a role model school for other educational institution in Tala.

