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## Practices and Challenges of Professional Learning Communities: A Mixed Method Study on Social Sciences Faculty of Government Colleges in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

The study is intended to investigate the nature and challenges of PLC in government colleges of Bangladesh by applying mix method approach. The investigation is conducted principally based on primary data in collaboration with some sort of secondary sources of data which make the study more consequential. Accordingly, to conclude the finding it triangulates the quantitative analysis, qualitative information and researchers' observation. Consequentially, the inference drawn from the investigation implicates that there is no programmed PLC practices exist in Bangladeshi college education as CPD activities. In addition, there is some factual and potential challenges exist to implement PLC related to institutional reality and personality trait that is motivational in nature. The motivational aspect of professional is also engendered by institutional practices. Finally, to find out the challenges the study also has drawn some recommendations for resolution of the identified challenges.

## 1. Introduction

The study intended to investigate the present forms and characteristics of Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices as well as the challenges facing in implementing it in government colleges in Bangladesh. It is observed that Bangladeshi colleges are encountering a great deal of impediments in the area of professional development (PD). It is conspicuous to all that the PLC is the inevitable part of the PD. For this reason, we are inclined to study PD in social sciences faculty in colleges, more specifically, PLC. We opted for the mix method study to bring together in-depth data and analyzing them with appropriate relevance. Professional development in education is a formal or non-formal continual endeavor to enhance educators' proficiency in the learning situation (Elton, 2016). PLC is a vital component of PD. It is mentionable that the term PLCs interchangeably used with Communities of Practice. Accordingly, the term

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PLC based on the idea of learning a social participation when people who have a common interest collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, values, beliefs, language, and ways of doing (Hudson, 2015). In addition to that it should be kept in mind that PLCs came to focus in 70s and 80s of the last century and started to flourish in 90's of that century at the scholastic field, especially in educational arena (Hudson, 2015). Draper (2014) finds there is a great deal of research which brought PLCs in the limelight in 90s of last century and first decade of 21st century for example, DuFour and DuFour (2006), Eaker, & Karhanek (2004), Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005), Reeves (2006), Schmoker (2006), Senge (1999), Wenger (1998).

Additionally, what is observed in the Bangladeshi context is that Bangladesh has a large learning population amounting 3.6 million in higher education (Ahmed, 2019) and among them 3.2 million are learning under the National University (Mannan, 2018), Bangladesh. However, one third of them that is 1.2 million remain unemployed after completion of their education, while 1.4 million foreign personnel are working in Bangladesh and remitting US\$ 2.13 billion from Bangladesh every year for the lacking of expert technical hands. It is the outcome of failure of our educational system producing world class graduates for industrial and corporate sector (Ahmed, 2019). For this reason, it is high time to think over PD, more specifically, PLC in the context of higher education.

The investigation is the limit that there is no research work found in the context of Bangladesh so far regarding PLCs. Presumably, the concept PLC is unfounded in the teaching learning situation in Bangladesh in real sense. However, an ample amount of investigations has done over the world especially, in developed countries and in the Southeast Asian region. Existing literatures suggest that the key idea of PLC is a community of professional learners who engage voluntarily in a teamwork searching for enhanced knowledge and skills in their job environment through action research for better student achievement. It is a collaborative community activity in order to serve students more effectively with higher proficiency (DuFour and DuFour, 2013). Stoll (2006) signifies PLC by observing that it is a collective practice of educators who share and interrogate their practice in a continuous, insightful, reflective, collaborative, all-encompassing and incessantly growing way for greater amount of learning and operate as group enterprise (Stoll et al., 2006). Whereas, Watson (2014) emphasis on student learning and reflective dialogue among a community of educators which leads extensive and consistent exchange of views among professionals on curriculum, classroom instruction and learners' growth. The PLC members track the answer to questions about learning goal, professional practices and entire students' attainment in learning. He pointed out some more attributes of PLC including (1) inclusive membership; (2) shared faith, respect and collaboration; (3) sincerity, network and partnership (Watson, 2014).

Literature also suggests that there are many challenges encountered professional development in the higher educational institutions in Bangladesh as well as other part of the world (Hoque et.al, 2011; Bayar, 2014; Alshehry, 2018; Al Ghatrifi, 2016). Bangladeshi college teachers have some scope for institutional training

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though there is no follow up system, CPD, PLC, mentoring and as a whole any collaborative community practice at all (Monem and Muhammad, 2010). Even though, in the most of the cases, there is no scope for reading journal regarding quality development and action research, voice exercise, collaborative practice environment and observation in the most of educational institutions (Hoque et.al, 2011). A well designed PD framework is a crucial factor for effective PD, however, except few developed countries they are found absent or poorly functioning (Al Ghatrifi, 2016).

To find out the real scenario of PLC in practice we have reviewed tow case studies: one from Australia and another from Oman. The case study completed in Australia organized by university teachers and reported by Schuck (2013) and his team (Schuck et.al, 2013). They invented a remarkable method of learning called 'Mobagogy'. They find some strength including time saving, convincing, user-friendly, flexibility, contextualizing and personalizing the learning. In contrast, they noticed some challenges including inescapable personal problem, losing enthusiasm of some members in the middle of the program, schedule problems and accommodating differences of opinion.

The study conducted by Yaqoob Muhammed Al Ghatrifi (2016). Though there is a little practiced CPD found in the understudy colleges, the teachers and administrative officials show the high level of enthusiasm and support for CPD process. The study also finds that the motivation and knowledge level of teachers, the curriculum and the infrastructure are not supportive for the implementation of the well articulated CPD. Considering aforementioned reality, the study will attempt to identify the current scenario of PLC in Bangladeshi colleges, precisely in the study area. Furthermore, the research will also take an effort to identify the challenges of PLC in implementing in the college level. It is expected that the research outcome will immensely facilitate policy makers, administrative officials and instructor community to further enhancement of quality education from present unsatisfactory state. The research objectives of the study were: (1) to investigate the nature of current practices of PLC at the faculty of Social Sciences of the government colleges in BD and (2) the challenges to implement PLC at the faculty of Social Sciences of the government colleges in BD.

## **2. Methodology**

The study conducted by following the convergent parallel design (Creswell, 2012) of mixed method approach. It employed both primary and secondary data. The study conducted on social sciences faculty of Bangladeshi government colleges affiliated with National University (NU), Bangladesh. Bangladesh has 598 government colleges affiliated with NU and it has 64 administrative districts. The study project has chosen one district purposively by considering convenience of data collection as it is a self-funded project by researchers. There are three government colleges which delivers tertiary education in social sciences disciplines in the district of north western region of Bangladesh. Therefore, numbers of teachers found in the faculty of social sciences in the district were 103

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and all of them considered as respondents since the survey was a population survey in nature.

We have conducted a population survey using five-point Likert scale. The scale was formed very negative to extremely positive order of magnitude. On the scale, 1 indicated 'strongly disagree', 2 indicated disagree, 3 indicated neutral, 4 indicated agree, 5 indicated strongly disagree. In the formation stage 18 items have generated and sent to two panelists of experts, then their recommendations have adopted. Subsequently, we have a CVR test. Six of the item's values found below the accepted level and then we dropped them from final list and finally we have 12 items for data collection. Subsequently, we got the Primary survey data and analyzed them.

In addition to quantitative survey data we have conducted six in-depth interviews by involving non-structured interview schedule for gathering qualitative data. The interview includes one principal, two professors, one associate professor, one assistant professor and two lecturers from different social science disciplines. Each in-depth interview takes 12 to 16 minutes. First, we have recorded their conversation in the electronic audio recorder then transcribe it for codification, and analyzed. Initially we have 42 codes, then categorized the codes and finally reached out to eight themes for analysis by using Atlasti9 software. The codes and themes presented in a concept map for greater understanding.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Survey Result

We have formed a five point's 12 items Likert scale for collecting data from a population of 103 from social sciences faculty of government college teachers. The figure presented bellow showing the discipline wise background of teacher participants in the survey.

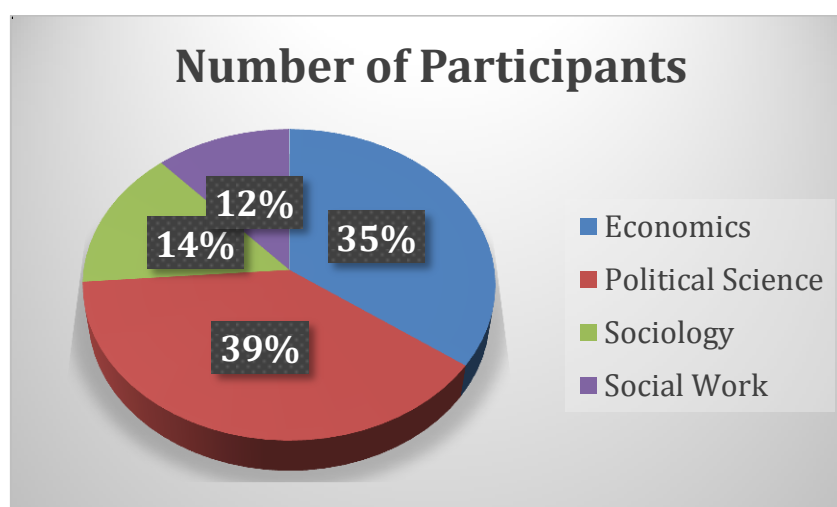


Figure 1. Number of Respondents by Disciplines

They have come out of four major disciplines: Economics, Political science, Sociology and Social Work. Among them, 40 from political science, 36 from Economics, 15 from Sociology and 12 from Social Work. Acquaintance of Respondents with PLC: At the beginning of the data collection the respondents have enquired about their acquaintance with the idea Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The maximum number of them even does not heard about the idea and the second largest number of them only have the obscured idea about the concept. Overall, 79.60 (41.7+37.9) percent educators do not have idea about PLC. Only around 11.7 (6.8+4.9) percent of respondents know the concept well and 8.7 percent of respondents do not want to give any information about it.

Table: 1 Opinion of respondents about PLC

Answer	Item-1		Item-2		Item-3		Item-4		Item-5		Item-6		Item-7		Item-8		Item-9		Item-10		Item-11		Item-12	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	43	41.7	24	23.3	17	16.50	11	10.7	21	20.38	8	7.8	17	16.5	4	3.9	7	6.8	8	7.8	4	3.9	1	.97
2	39	37.9	36	35.0	23	22.33	42	40.8	33	32.07	9	8.7	24	23.3	20	19.4	13	12.6	9	8.7	6	5.8	2	1.94
3	9	8.7	34	33.0	29	28.16	32	31.1	19	18.44	18	17.5	27	26.2	16	15.5	39	37.9	18	17.5	11	10.7	3	2.9
4	7	6.8	7	6.8	34	33.01	16	15.5	20	19.41	38	36.9	28	27.2	42	40.8	00	00	38	36.9	50	48.5	39	37.9
5	5	4.9	2	1.9	00	00	2	1.9	10	9.7	30	29.1	7	6.8	21	20.4	44	42.7	30	29.1	32	31.1	58	56.3
Total=	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100	103	100

Information about practicing PLC in their own colleges: Previously it was inquired that whether they know about the PLC. In this point it was asked whether the PLC is being practiced in their college. 58.3 (35+23.3) percent of respondents answer negatively and 9.7 percent of them remain silent answering the question. Only 8.7 (6.8+1.9) of them give their positive opinion regarding this inquiry. Data about whether practicing PLC is possible in government Colleges: It has examined that whether practices of PLC at the government colleges in Bangladesh is possible. 19.4(6.8+12.6) percent of participants thought that it is possible in the government colleges while 37.9 percent keep abstain from giving any opinion and 42.7 percent of them thought that at this circumstance of government colleges, it is not possible.

Respondents' opinion about whether practicing environment of government colleges supportive to PLC: It has inquired them that whether PLC practicing environment in government colleges encouraging. Most of the respondents (51.5%) reported that institutional environment is supportive and only about 16% respondent opined negatively that is institutional environment is not supportive to practice PLC and around 31 percent remain neutral that is they are undecided about the environment for PLC. Attitudes of professional towards PLC: The meaning of the item statement was whether their present professional attitudes encourage PLC practice in their institution. 52.45 (20.38+32.07) percent of the respondents in the opinion that their present attitude not positively inspiring for

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practicing PLC. Around 18.44 percent remain neutral to answer the question. However, around 28.48 percent of them answer positively that is their attitude towards introducing and exercising PLC is encouraging PLC activities.

**Opinion of Respondents about Effectiveness of PLC in Professional Development:** The next inquiry of the study was whether they thought that if the PLC can be the most effective method of professional development practices in the government colleges in Bangladesh. Around 17 (7.8+8.7=16.5) percent of them responded negatively while 17.5 percent keep neutral to answer the question. On the other hand, a huge (36.9+29.1=66%) number of respondents opined that PLC can be a successful method of professional development. **Role of College Administration in implementing PLC:** It is enquired to the respondents that whether the college administrations always try to implement the program like PLC in their college. Only 34.0 (27.2+6.8) percent of respondents agreed that college administration try to implement program like the PLC in any form and 26.2 percent do not give any opinion regarding this issue. On the other hand, 39.8 (16.5+23.3) in the opinion that college administrations do not take any step to exercise program like PLC in colleges.

**Role of team spirit in implementing PLC in the colleges:** As PLC is a group work and intense gregariousness among the group member is required that is why the opinion of respondents regarding team spirit in the teaching environment is enquired. The respondents were requested to give their judgment whether the team spirit among the professional in the government college facilitate the PLC practices. 61.2 (40.8+20.4) percent is in the opinion that yes it is helpful for PLC practices while, 23.3 (3.9+19.4) percent of respondents opined that the level of team spirit among the teachers in the government colleges not conducive to execute the PLC. The rest 15.5 percent of respondents refrain from commenting on the issue. **Role of PLC Promoting PD in Government colleges:** The research enquiry was how far the PLC can promote PD in the college education. Only 6.8percent of them answered negatively and 12.6 undecided about the impact of PLC in teaching profession. Rest of the huge majority is (37.9+42.7=80.6) positive about the impact of PLC in the PD program in colleges.

**Data about PLC is the most convenient method of Professional Development in Govt. colleges in Bangladesh:** It was asked the respondent that whether they thought PLC is a most convenient PD activity to be practiced in the government colleges. 63 (36.9+29.1) percent of them agreed that they thought it can be the most convenient tools of PD and 16.5 (7.8+8.7) answered negatively and 17.5 abstained from answering. **Role of PLC in knowledge sharing:** The study searching was if they think PLC is a feasible tool of knowledge sharing in the educational situation. A meager number of respondents (3.9+5.8=9.7%) disagreed with the idea and 10.7 abstained from answering. The greater part (48.5+31.3=79.6) of the respondents thought that it can be possible PD technique sharing knowledge and experience in the college education in Bangladesh.

**Participants will take initiative immediately to introduce PLC in their own college:** Finally, it is inquired whether they will introduce PLC at their colleges

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immediately. 23.3 (3.9+19.4) percent of respondents disagreed with the idea and 61.2 (40.8+20.4) agreed with the idea and rest of the 15.5 have no opinion about it. This manifests that most the respondents want to implement it in their institution.

### **3.2 Findings of In-depth Interview**

We have conducted seven in-depth interviews including one principle of a government college, two professors, one associate professor, one assistant professor and two lecturers. The conversation principally concentrated on two main topics nature and colleges of PLC practices in the social sciences faculty in the government colleges of Bangladesh. We have identified 42 codes, some categories and seven themes from the codes from the transcription. The respondents unequivocally agreed that PLC is absent in their professional practice as institutional process. They generally identified that the PLC is absent in the government colleges due to ongoing tradition however, some kind of informal practices they observed in their institution and some of them practice it unconsciously without knowing the very concept PLC. Only three of them reported that they know it well because of their training in University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus.

On the other hand, the respondents identified the challenges of two types: institutional and personal constraints. Among the institutional constraints there are intensive load in the professional situation, time constraints, lack of logistics and technical support, absence of rewards and acknowledgement of extra work, absence of financial incentives for further effort for betterment of institution as well as the profession and innovative activities in the professional settings, pressure of non-academic activities due to lack of sufficient non-academic staffs, extremely high-number of students per teaching staff. Over all the system is defective for continuous professional development through PLC.

On the personal side, there are challenges principally come from two categories: (1) motivational and (2) and personality trait. Among the motivational predicament they mentioned about absence of impulsion for searching new knowledge coming out of existing inertia in the college educational environment, lack of team spirit among a good significant number of professionals, not finding inspiration to continuous professional development due to static development potentials of promotions by judging quality service delivery. On the personality trait some are holding negative attitude towards qualitative change in the professional life, time constraint due to over engagement otherwise for seeking extra income, fear of exposing own weakness of knowledge in front colleagues in the professional situation. The result of qualitative interview in the concept map presented below.

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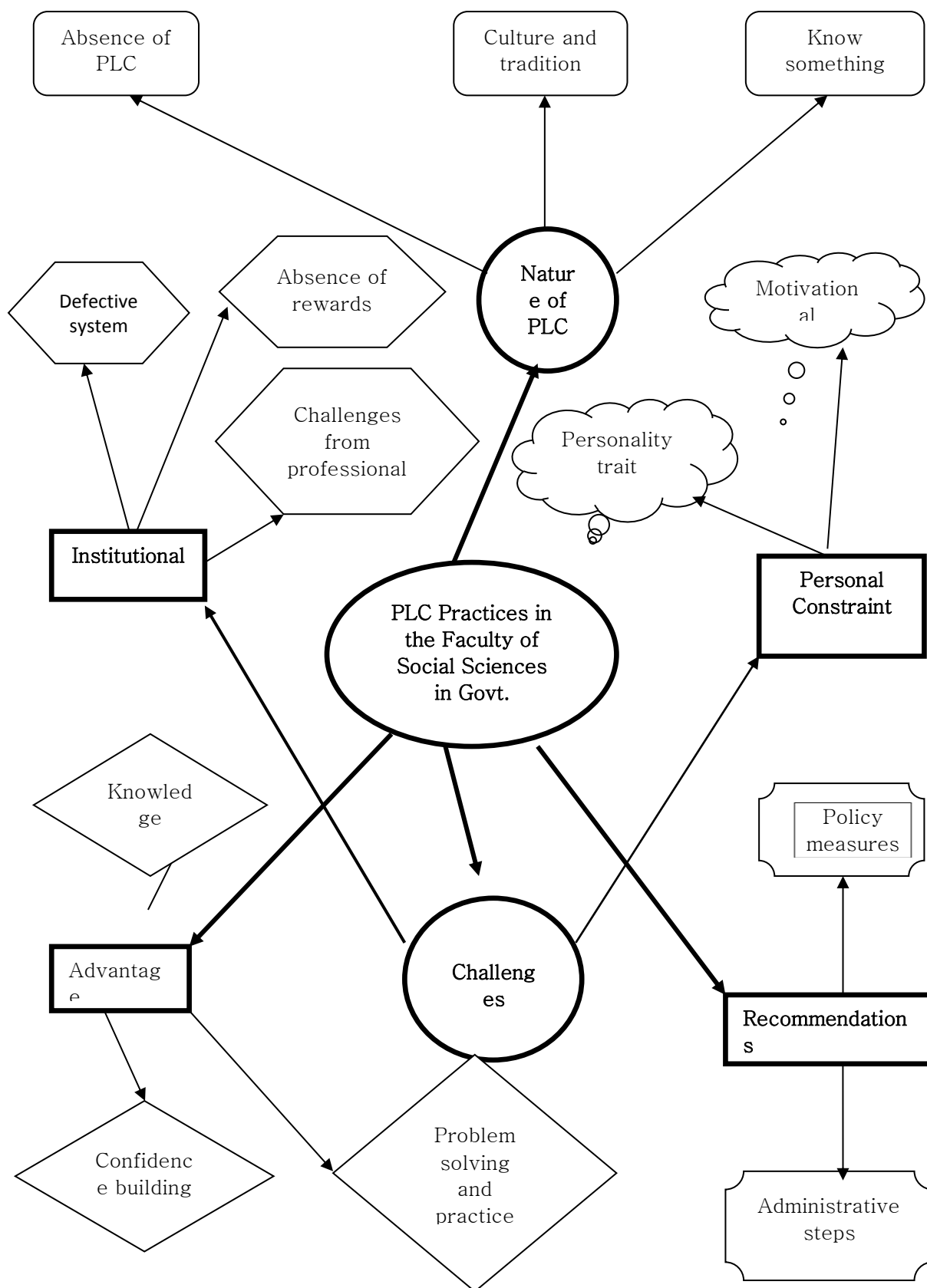


Figure 2. The qualitative interview data presents in the concept map as codes and themes



The interviewees mention some advantageous points of PLC in the conversation. They thought that PLC will help them to share knowledge and experience among juniors and seniors, creating opportunities for the development of new ideas in the professional practices, facilitate them to formulate novel techniques and tools for teaching. They also suggest that the PLC practice can create a host of personal quality of positivity, high confidence level, affirmative mentality towards group activity, team spirit, enhancing problem solving skills and improve problem solving learning spirit among the teacher learners.

In addition, they offer some recommendations for introducing and exercising PLC in the government colleges in Bangladesh. They put forward that some policy measures and administrative measures should be taken in the professional environment in college education for improvement and continuation of professional development.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The study enquired about present nature of PLC practices in government colleges in Bangladesh and present potential challenges of PLC implementations at the professional environment. The survey data and in-depth interview information manifest that most of the teaching professionals in the government colleges merely not acquainted with the idea of PLC however they are practicing some kind of professional development activities in their institutions without knowing or organizing a formal group. Nevertheless, the PLC and other type professional development activities also almost absent in the teaching learning situation in Bangladeshi colleges.

In addition, the whole professional development process not appropriately emphasized at the college education. A retirement going principal observed, 'when I join this profession as a teacher, I entered the classroom without any idea about profession, teaching environment, relevant rules and regulations, existing norms and values. Years after years I continued my profession based on my experience which obtained in my student life, it might have from primary school, high school, college or university'. She also mentioned that PD activities are almost a non-entity in Bangladeshi college education whatever it is within the country or outside the country. Her observation substantiated with the survey data which showed that around eighty percent of teachers in higher education know almost nothing about PLC which is highly trendy and considered an effective CPD process in the educational environment in the developed society.

Accordingly, the finding suggests that there is no existing tradition of CPD process established in the teaching learning environment for acquiring new knowledge and ideas, sharing experiences, improving instructional method and constant improvement of efficiency and skills of teaching professionals in colleges. Therefore, the researchers' conviction is that the novel movement for enhancement of professional qualities should be commenced with no delay in college education in Bangladesh.

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The study identified that the existing situation is also not conducive to practice PD like PLC in colleges. A significant number of survey respondents thought that practicing PLC is not possible and further one third of respondent undecided whether it is possible or not. This indicates that the whole physical and cultural environment is not supportive to such an effective method of PD. An interviewee, a professor of social work, identified, 'Even the classroom educators and education administrators do not realize that they should develop their method of teaching within their day to day work environment by exchanging experience and gathered knowledge'. The investigators identified that generally instructors, administrators and policy makers in education of Bangladeshi college education do not apprehend that teaching is a matter of uninterrupted improvement as a profession, let alone the PLC and CPD. Some important ideas are discussed below which are the outcome of the study.

**Challenges:** The challenges have two categories: institutional and personal. The institutional challenges also have some sub-categories. **Institutional Challenges:** One of the study enquiries related this gloomy nature of PD exercise in teaching situation was what the challenges are of prevailing condition in government colleges. The survey result and in-depth interview findings suggested that some institutional, cultural and personality trait are accountable for the dismal condition of PD exercise. Some respondents identified flawed system is the key to the such a depressing reality of PD in the government colleges as the administration specially principals took little measure to improve teaching quality in the learning situation as well as most of them know a little about rapidly changing teaching learning methods. Quality interview respondents informed that administration do not take any initiative to implement any kind of PD activities either in the PLC form or any other kind of PD program. Along with the interview findings the survey data corroborate the observation also. One of the interviewees, a senior professor in the profession, supported the finding by observing, 'administration in the colleges careless about professional development of the educators as well as administrators do not let them space for professional practices to develop themselves'. These remarks support the significance of PLC in the educational institutions. The interviewees also indicate that the policy also imperfect which is not usher various types of CPD activities in the professional environment with their day to day activities. One of the interviewees resonate the above remark by remarking, 'Our education policy, work guide lines, and institutional regulations have not enough directives to implement such professional activities like PLC in the work place'.

In addition to this, respondents identified financial inadequacy and shortfall of logistics as major constraint of practicing PLC in the government colleges. They deem that compare to same level of other government cadre services, teachers are discriminated regarding financial facilities as well as promotional benefits. For instance, an administrative cadre officer gets promoted to fifth grade in 10/12 years from beginning the job while, an education cadre person got promoted to that level around 20 years of service. Furthermore, Administrative cadre officers avail government residence, distinct office room, transports provided by government, foreign training for skills development and promotion to grade-one

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posts in their respective ministry. On the contrary, teachers not avail such facilities those are the very basic in the present world. This reality entirely related to policy matter. This kind discrimination engenders disappointment and aggravation among teacher community which cause inertia and apathy in their mind and affect their service quality and achievement motivation.

Stress from non-academic involvement due to lack of supporting staffs is one of a major causes of curtailing PD activities on the job in government colleges. More than half of survey respondents acknowledged that college environment is not accommodating for PD program like PLC. An interviewee, a lecturer in sociology, echoed the reality by observing, 'Teachers in Government Colleges have not enough supporting staffs, working space and logistics. They have to work with uncountable inadequacy and challenges. Most of the clerical jobs have to do by teaching staffs. Therefore, they have a lot of work load with large amount of non-academic activities which are the big difficulties to be engaged in CPD activities like PLC'. Along with this, she mentioned inadequate number of teaching staffs which burdened them more workloads as constraint to PD exercise in the professional situation. Moreover, diverse focuses of teaching including tertiary level teaching and higher secondary instruction with exceptionally insufficiency of teaching staffs barred them to engaging PD practices in colleges. Respondents also feel that their seating arrangement is not learning friendly. Another respondent observed, 'There is no learning support in sitting place, tools and machineries available in our work place'. The study identified that all most all government colleges no sufficient books, let alone latest publications, library, journal, internet facilities, periodical and magazines are extremely poor. What they call library, do not have adequate books, reference books, latest publications, clumsy reading area, almost no support staffs and distressed condition of sitting area that is definitely not helpful for searching advance level of knowledge. Overall, professional environment in public colleges are extremely distressful for PD exercise like PLC.

More than one respondent recognized a noteworthy reason for absence of adequate PD practice is nonexistence of award for out and out performance or given extra effort in the professional practices in the college education. An interviewee observed, 'In this service, I found no official recognition for high level of performance and efficiency. Moreover, there is almost no acknowledgement in the form of appreciation, promotion, posting or financial benefit for higher level skill, classroom performance or research efficiency in this job. This reality de-motivated us to take extra-effort for achieving further career advancement'. The college principal added to this point, 'First of all, highly competent career seekers do not come to the teaching profession in the country as remuneration is not attractive, career opportunity to go up is insignificant and social status is substandard in this profession in Bangladesh. Apart from this, those who come in this service lose their professional aspiration, innovativeness and critical thinking resulted by this dismal condition of career chance'. The researchers also observed that there is a trivial practice of integral rule and practices of awarding teachers for extraordinary performance, professional excellence, instructional achievement, research distinction, administrative

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brilliance and overall, academic accomplishment in the college teaching in Bangladesh which is the major impediment for executing rigorous PD activities like PLC.

Challenges pertinent to professionals' personal life: Respondents suggest that professionals encounter some hindrances related to their personal life. They are categorized by three types: (1) socio-cultural; (2) personality trait; (3) motivational drawbacks.

Socio-cultural: They thought that time constraint, as a study found in Oman Al Ghatrifi (2016), is a notable hurdle for college teachers which prevent them to organize and participate in PLC program. Literatures suggest that existing culture is the formidable challenge to PLC success (Jones et al., 2013). Time shortage also related to their social settings and a part of cultural life. In addition to that they have a little scope in engaging PD activities due to class burden caused by inadequacy of teaching staffs. On the contrary, as they thought they are not paid satisfactorily in their service, they are to search for additional sources of earnings throughout private tuitions or other income generating activities which are also prevent them in involving hunting for new skills and knowledge. An economics professor remarked, 'Some have various kind of personal problems, for example, on account of time constraint, workloads and personal busy schedule outside campus, they could not or not willing to attend PLC'. An associate professor of economics pointed out, 'Even in spite of having positive attitude some professionals could not join PLC due to time constraint resulted by huge workload inside and outside of their work place'. It is observed that if they would not have thought about supplementary earnings, they would have enough number fellow teachers and they would have managed more time and concentration for professional development within their work environment.

Personality Trait: Respondents also identified some personality characters including negative attitude towards new thing or experimentation, low level of inquisitiveness, nervousness about exhibiting knowledge deficiency and apathy about high achievement are significantly influence PD practices in colleges however, it is not unfounded in the literature (Schuck et.al, 2013). It is appeared that some professionals have an antagonizing outlook about acquiring new idea or experimenting with new idea for making change in the work environment. One of our interviewees pointed out, 'Negative attitude towards learn new things is also a big problem in our profession, for example, some of our colleagues do not want to learn new thing or improve his professional capability as he thinks he knows enough or he has highest level of professional skills so that he need not to acquire any new professional skills'. Most of our survey respondents (52.45%) also validated the point with in-depth interviewees. A lecturer of sociology echoed with the previous interviewee by commenting, 'First of all, our negative mentality towards learning new things and improve our proficiency by cooperating with fellow colleagues is a remarkable challenge to execute PLC'. Additionally, participants found out that low level of inquisitiveness for new ways to decorate professional career is another reason for this miserable condition. It seems that absence of appropriate mental exercise at the foundation training

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in the beginning of their career mostly blamed for this demoralizing state of mind.

Along with above reality interviewees also designated that a good number of teachers feared that if they engage in any group activities for acquiring skills and efficiency their won deficiency of knowledge and skills will be exhibited in front of their fellow professionals which will undermine one status in the professional settings. The social work professor recognized, 'Some of them thought that if one asks other to help him to improve skill in any aspect of teaching then his weakness in knowledge will be exposed to other'. It is observed that the issue is rooted to existing social structure, professional culture and weakness of leadership pattern. Accordingly, apathy towards high career achievement of teachers is also a notable barrier to take arduous effort for PD as they felt that career chance in the teaching profession in government colleges is inconsequential. Consequently, they do not feel interest to take further initiative to develop them professionally through PLC.

Motivational drawbacks: All the participants utter in single voice that negative impulse of college teacher towards professional development engendered from socio-cultural reality is a large challenge to implement for any kind of self-propelled PD program like PLC. The participant principal noted down, 'Most of our educators have the lack of motivation to improve themselves by using limited sources and institutional support'. The observation has a high relevance. However, there are many shortcomings; the teachers' community is lacking will power to go ahead leaving the obstacles and limitations aside. Although it is not uncommon in other part of the world (Schuck et.al, 2013), the participating economics professor pointed out by acknowledging the reality, 'Motivation is also a big problem, for example some teachers do not want to learn new things or willing to improve his professional capability as they think they know enough or they have highest level of professional skills so that they need not feel acquiring any new professional skills from any sources or other kind of engagement'. Presumably, that sort of mental state comes out from two types of motivational circumstances: (1) complacency and (2) despondency. Some of them thought that they know everything of everything and their students are empty vessels so that what they deliver to students is more than enough. This kind of mental process is end result of lesser engagement of professional and research activities with other people in the same field and unawareness about changes happening in the field of teaching and learning theoretically and practically outside the world, particularly in the developed world.

Similarly, they do not encounter challenges of idea and knowledge from learners' community who are seemingly losing their innovative thinking and creativity due to curricula and method of teaching. An assistant professor of political science pointed out, 'Some of our fellow colleagues do not feel to learn new thing and improve professional capacity in teaching. In addition, here is a big obstacle is motivation as our teacher do not encounter challenges in the professional practices in the classroom from our learners due to their sorry background and lack of inquisitiveness. The teaching community does not face any knowledge related

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challenge from our students so that our instinct of learning new thing is in deep sleep. Thus, we do not try enhancing our professional skill in new high'. Conversely, some of them thought that what the use of knowing new thing is or given extra-effort in professional development in which profession career chance is almost bleak comparing other cadre services in Bangladesh. This sort of professional reality generates discouragement among the teaching community in colleges which poses a big threat to implementing PLC.

Absence of team spirit: Respondents of the study identified that dearth of shared aims also a key impediment for executing PLC as it is completely a voluntary collective effort to accomplish professional goals. A lecturer of sociology argued about by commenting, 'Absence of team spirit hinders working together for searching a collective goal like PLC. Congenial relationship in the work environment is also a considerable problem for achieving PLC as a success and I find it is indeed a challenge in the college education'. Most of our respondents discerned this point as a challenge for implementing PLC. Seemingly, due to cultural pattern success rate of collaborative activities in this society is not so remarkable. This observation echoed with the investigation of Watson (2014) where he gives emphasis on shared vision, mission, goals and interdependent collaborative structure. On the contrary, lack of motivation, leadership role and professional culture of the country also accountable for this miserable condition.

### ***Advantage of PLC***

Participants of the study appropriately identified some advantageous points of PLC at public colleges despite some of respondents have reservation about it. The largest number of survey respondent(36.9+29.1=66) found it as the most effective PD method in the teaching learning situation in colleges despite some of them take it negatively. Participants indicated that it is a golden opportunity for sharing knowledge and experience on the job. They remarked it as both way process for benefiting juniors and seniors. The mid-career and senior teachers have vast experience and the fresher from university have new idea and information about changes in the knowledge world in recent years. A sociology lecturer with fresh blood from her academic life pointed out, 'There are various age people working together in a particular profession. The new comer people naturally do not know the ins and outs of their profession as well as in-depth of knowledge plus technical aspects of the profession. The seniors have the advantage in the technical side, for example classroom management and students' behavior. Hence, the seniors can help juniors and share their knowledge and experience about student motivation, attitudes, and characteristics throughout the PLC engagement. They can also share with fresh blood about classroom situation, handling a special situation and overall student psychology and students' process of metacognition'.

Some participants implicated that PLC as an effective tool for group learning and active learning in professional life which can meaningfully propelled the process of acquiring professional skill and efficiency in the educational institutions. They found it cost-effective and time-efficient as well as college administration to enhance instructors' skill and knowledge with fewer hazards as it can be practices in their own institutions without any extra burden. The principal observed,

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‘Though we have a little formal training for educators however, most of the knowledge gathered from training lost in the air without practice and follow-up in the classroom teaching. On the other hand, for shortage of classroom teachers at colleges, administrations always remain reluctant to leave teachers for training. Considering above circumstances, PLC would be a perfect solution for principals in this regard and in my opinion, PLC is a good alternative. Furthermore, as it is a voluntary group activity professional learning, most probably, gets momentum through PLCs by engaging educators meaningfully’.

Some participants find it as problem solving and lifelong learning process. When they organize a group for learning in addition to their regular instructional duties they have the scope to exchange views on what they encounter in their classroom activities and extracurricular tasks. They can seek resolution collectively and that can be the best outcome. These kinds of practice make them habituated with lifelong learning process and getting a strategy maker in their professional learning and teaching. Moreover, continuous practices generate high level of confidence and entitlement of teaching environment among them. The political science assistant professor singled out, ‘When they collectively share their adverse experience and the challenges raised there in the classroom they could figure out the paramount solution. This process also facilitates them enhancing community feeling by leaving aside diverse kind of self-reservation, negative attitudes, snobbishness and bashfulness’. Above all, they viewed the PLC as a key process of professional learning in the educational environment which can extensively lead PD and quality education in the college learning in Bangladesh.

### ***Recommendations***

The respondents are requested that what are their suggestion for how these sorts of challenges can be brought in order. They proposed that the PLC should be in the syllabus of foundation training of the teachers’ community of public colleges. There they should be trained up about how PLC could be practiced in the work place. Expectedly, by practicing PLC they will be the social capital for the nation. Along with this, principles and administrative people should monitor it in the practice and ensure reward for successful completion of each cycle. Moreover, policy makers take it into account with due emphasis and issue necessary policy direction to phase out all impediments and implement the PLC in due course. In addition, PLC should include in the job description of government college teacher as part of CPD in colleges. The college administrations should take steps first, then, departments and field level teacher will implement it. Side by side the PLC should be included in the syllabus of the Foundation course of newly recruited teachers training as well as Research and publication should include into the promotion process as criteria. We should give emphasis on academic excellence and practice based professional development. Then we will have expected level of PLC in practice at colleges. Finally, the whole system of college education brought to be in a light where focus should concentrate in a single core where only CPD enhancing by effective tools like PLC.

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## **Conclusion**

PLC is widely considered as the most effective method of professional development practice for educators over the world, especially in the developed countries. The study respondents extensively accepted the aforementioned reality nevertheless, it is found almost nonexistent in Bangladeshi government colleges. The study unearthed that some institutional impediments, personality traits and motivational aspect are the reasons for the absence of PLC and possible challenges of effective PLC practices in the social sciences faculties in government colleges of Bangladesh. The institutional hindrances are relevant to policy issues, administrative practices, and absence of awarding teachers for professional excellence, short of sufficient teaching staffs, instructional environment with lack of spaces, insufficient logistics, inadequate technical facilities and scarce support staffs. The personality trait includes negative attitude towards searching new things or ideas or experimentations, low level of inquisitiveness, nervousness about exhibiting knowledge deficiency in the moment of collective practices and apathy concerning high achievement. The study identified that the challenges related to motivational orientation are endured (1) complacency and (2) despondency in the most of the government college teachers.

In addition, the study findings endorsed some strength of PLC for PD activities for example, encouraging group learning and active learning as well as generate and nourish community feeling and belongingness in the teaching learning society. Moreover, the study found it as a perfect medium of idea, knowledge and experience sharing means among juniors and seniors. Accordingly, it also enhances positive attitudes towards achieving collective goal and ushers team spirit among teaching professionals. Especially, respondents recognized that the unconstructive trait found in the personality of professionals can be replaced by the affirmative trait by intensive engagement of collective exchange and PD activities. In this regard PLC can be an indisputable scheme for change in the college teaching and learning. Along with above findings, the study concluded with some recommendations: some policy and administrative measures should be taken for implementing PLC in Government Colleges for harnessing CPD among educators. In addition, to engender awareness among the concern professional group authority should arrange number of seminars, symposia and workshops to reach out the concept among the practitioners in education. Simultaneously PLC should be included in the foundation training syllabus of college teachers as well as ought to be included in the job description as an inevitable part of professional development for the accomplishment of quality education for the nation.

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