

# Applied Psychology in Bangladesh: Progress and Prospect

\*Asoke Kumar Saha

Received: 28 May 2022

Revision Received 13 June 2022

Accepted :15 June 2022

DOI:10.56011/mind-mri-112-202212

---

## Abstract

*Psychology classes were first taught at Rajshahi University in 1956. In 1965, the University of Dhaka established the Department of Psychology. The Department of Psychology at Jagannath University offered an MSc programme in Psychology within the Faculty of Science in 1986. Chittagong University's Department of Psychology was founded in 2005 as part of the Biological Sciences Faculty. During the 1993–94 academic years, the University of Dhaka began a postgraduate professional training program in conjunction with the University of London as part of the link initiative. In 1995, the MS in Clinical Psychology program began. Since 1997, Dhaka University has had a separate Department of Clinical Psychology within the Faculty of Biological Sciences, which offers clinical psychology masters and training program as well as produces professional clinical psychologists. In 2012, the Department of Psychology at Jagannath University introduced one-year master's degrees in psychology in three areas: clinical and counseling psychology; industrial and organizational psychology; and educational and developmental psychology. In 2015, Rajshahi University created a new Clinical Psychology Department inside the Faculty of Life and Earth Science. The Department of Clinical Psychology provides a four-year BSc Honors degree in Clinical Psychology and a one-year Master's program in Clinical Psychology. The availability of applied psychologist placement chances in Bangladesh is still limited, indicating that there is a great need for and numerous opportunities to work as a professional psychologist in various fields in Bangladesh.*

**Keywords:** Applied Psychology, Clinical, Educational, Counseling, and Organizational Psychology

---

## Introduction

The Department of Psychology at Rajshahi University was established in 1956, marking the beginning of university-level psychology instruction and research in Bangladesh. All fields of psychology, including practical courses, are taught as part of an integrated curriculum at Rajshahi University. In 1965, the University of Dhaka established the Department of Psychology. Then, in 1967, a three-year BSc. (Honors) program was established at Rajshahi University, which offered a one-year Master's Degree in Psychology. Since 1966, Jagannath University College (Former Jagannath College) has offered a two-year BSc in Psychology Pass Course through an independent psychology department. The Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Psychology was established in the

year 2000. The Department of Psychology, which is part of the Faculty of Science, began offering a master's degree in psychology in 1986.

In 2004, Jagannath University launched a four-year (8 semesters) Bachelor of Science (BSc) program, which was followed by a one-year Master of Science program in 2005-06. Chittagong University's Biological Sciences Faculty founded the Department of Psychology in 2005. Chittagong University's Department of Psychology offers a four-year BSc Honors program in psychology, as well as a one-year MSc, MPhil, and PhD program.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, when Bangladesh was a part of India under British administration, psychology as an academic study began in the region of Bangladesh. Professor G. H. Langley

---

\*<sup>1</sup>Professor & Ex-Chairman, Department of Psychology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100, Bangladesh.

## 110/ Applied Psychology in Bangladesh: Progress and Prospect

of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Dhaka founded a psychology laboratory in 1921. In reality, it was Bangladesh's first psychology lab and India's second. The University of Dhaka's psychology laboratory has a reputation for being one of the region's oldest and best organized. The University of Dhaka established the Department of Psychology in 1965 with a one-year Master's degree program.

A three-year B.Sc. (Honors) degree was introduced two years later, in 1967. Later, in 1995, Psychology added a master's degree in clinical psychology, and in 2011, it added a master's degree in educational and counseling psychology. From the 2015-2016 academic years, the Department of Psychology is offering two master's programs: Master of Science in School Psychology and Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Since its foundation, the Department has also offered a two-year MPhil and a three-year PhD program.

### **Clinical Psychology in Bangladesh**

During the 1993-94 academic year, the University of Dhaka began a postgraduate professional training program in conjunction with the University of London as part of the link initiative. In 1995, the MS in Clinical Psychology program began. Since 1997, Dhaka University has had a separate Department of Clinical Psychology within the Faculty of Biological Sciences, which offers international-standard master's and training program in clinical psychology and produces professional clinical psychologists. As a qualifying degree in Clinical Psychology, the Department provides a three-and-a-half-year integrated study (via two degrees: MS and MPhil). Students are involved in rigorous clinical work throughout the year and receive supervised instruction in their work with patients.

A PhD in Clinical Psychology is also available through the department. Since 2012, Jagannath University's Department of Psychology has offered one-year master's degrees in psychology in three different fields, including an MSc in Clinical and Counseling Psychology. The Faculty of Life and Earth Science of Rajshahi University created a new Department of Clinical Psychology in 2015. The Department of Clinical Psychology offers a four-year BSc honors program in Clinical Psychology and a one-year Master's program in Clinical Psychology.

### **Educational and Counseling Psychology's Advancement**

The Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology (DECP) was established in 2006 within

the Faculty of Biological Sciences' Department of Psychology. Bangladesh created an autonomous department in 2011 with the purpose of training educational and counselling psychologists. Through advanced knowledge and intensive skill training in applied psychological domains, as well as institutional orientation through DECP, prospective graduates can develop expertise in the disciplines of educational psychology and counseling psychology. The Department of Psychology at Jagannath University began an MSc in Educational and Developmental Psychology programme in 2012. Since 2015, the Department of Psychology at Dhaka University has offered a Masters in School Psychology degree.

### **Centre for Rehabilitation and Paralysis (CRP)**

CRP focuses on the physical, emotional, social, psychological, and economic elements of medical treatment, rehabilitation, and support services. It encourages the country's development of trained professionals in health care and rehabilitation. In conjunction with other organizations, CRP has established centres in various parts of the country to expand services for disabled people. It promotes handicapped people's empowerment through community-assisted services, advocacy, and networking on disability problems, as well as disabled girls' and women's empowerment. CRP also fosters disability awareness on a national, regional, and international level.

### **The Development of Industrial and Organizational Psychology**

The Department of Psychology, Jagannath University, started an MSc in Industrial and Organizational Psychology in 2012. Recently, in session 2015-2016, the Department of Psychology at Dhaka University also started offering a Master of Science in Industrial-Organizational Psychology. Since its inception, the Department has also offered a two-year M. Phil and a three-year PhD program. The Department of Psychology also has M. Phil and PhD program in all areas of psychology. Now, the Department of Psychology at Jagannath University is playing a leading role in developing the application of applied psychology, i.e., clinical, counseling, and educational psychology, in Bangladesh in collaboration with different universities and organizations. The development of industrial and organizational psychology is new in Bangladesh. But the government of Bangladesh has recently taken the initiative of appointing industrial psychologists in the garment

industries. Bangladesh Industrial and Organizational Psychology Society (BIOPS) was established in 2018 to address employee behavioral issues in organizational settings.

### **Criminology**

The University of Dhaka's Department of Criminology is a research and teaching unit was founded in 2013 to research crime and security from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints and theoretical approaches. The department is actively engaged in national and international criminology research, with backgrounds in sociology, history, law, psychology, philosophy, and political science. The Department of Criminology studies the causes, manifestations, and consequences of criminal activity, as well as criminal behavior control techniques and the connections and interactions between law, social structure, and cultural practices.

Overviews of sociology and law concepts, forms of criminal behavior, legal and criminal theory, victimology, and regulatory issues are among the topics covered in the courses. Criminology is also taught at all public and private colleges' social work departments, as well as at the Bangladesh Police Training Academy. The University of Dhaka's Department of Criminology is regarded as one of the best criminology and criminal justice programmes in the country. The Department's mission is to train undergraduate and graduate students for careers in criminal justice and related fields. Our students are also well prepared to pursue higher professional degrees after completing our programs. The Department offers highly selective PhD and MPhil programs in criminology and social-legal studies, with the goal of training the next generation of criminologists and social-legal scholars. Apart from these degrees, a few government and non-government organisations provide diplomas in special education, diplomas in sports science, and diplomas in rehabilitation courses.

### **Professional Organizations & Practice of Applied Psychology**

#### **Bangladesh Psychological Association (BPA)**

The Bangladesh Psychological Association (BPA) is the country's highest professional association for psychologists. Working towards the advancement of psychological applications in society in coordination with government policy makers is very essential. Different professional organisations function under the auspices of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Those are as follows:

- Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS)

- Bangladesh Industrial Organizational Psychology Society (BIOPSY)

- Bangladesh School Psychology Society (BSPS)

- Bangladesh Educational and Counseling Psychology Society (BECPS)

- Bangladesh Applied Child Psychology Society (BACPS)

The BPA is now more active than before, maintaining coordination with professional bodies, the government, non-governmental organizations, the American Psychological Association, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and other international bodies, as well as various stakeholders in Bangladesh and abroad, and working to advance the field of applied psychology in Bangladesh.

### **Clinical Psychology Service and Practice**

Clinical Psychology for Quality Life is the vision statement of the Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS). It was founded in 1999 to promote the professional interests of clinical psychologists and to ensure the quality of their training and services. Through research, teaching, and professional training, the Society promotes and ensures the highest levels of effective, efficient, and ethical practice among its members. BCPS is socially responsible for ensuring that policymakers incorporate psychological factors into various national emergent challenges. The Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Association (BCPA) was founded on October 26, 1999, to promote the professional interests of clinical psychologists and to ensure the quality of life and their training services.

In addition to the five public universities in Bangladesh, all medical colleges and hospitals provide programmes relating to child development, including the ability to assess and treat children with specific needs such as autism. Clinical psychologists are employed at every medical school and hospital, as well as in Central Prisons. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is a reputable mental health organization. The British established Pabna Mental Hospital in 1946. In Bangladesh, there are approximately 100 private counselling centers, 50 of which are located in Dhaka City and provide individual, group, and drug addiction counseling. In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Child and Mother Welfare of the Government of Bangladesh provides psychological services to children and mothers.

### **Educational Measurement and Psychological Services**

## 112/ Applied Psychology in Bangladesh: Progress and Prospect

Educational Psychology and Psychometrics are used by the Bangladesh National Curriculum and Text Book (NCTB) Board, Bangladesh Inter Service Selection Board (Army/ISSB), Bangladesh Naval Service, Bangladesh Police, Primary Teachers' Training Institute (PTI), Bachelor of Education (BEd), Master of Education (MEd), Teachers' Training Colleges, and Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) for teacher training and civil servant selection and training. Bangladesh's government has announced that a psychologist will be appointed to every high school in the country.

### **Sports Psychology**

BKSP is a one-of-a-kind institute in Southeast Asia that teaches both sports and education at the same time. BKSP is dedicated to developing each trainee into a modern and talented sports performer. This is accomplished through a well-structured and organised academic activity.

The challenge of the sporting arena can be met by an educated sportsperson who is grounded in his or her own tradition and culture. As a result, BKSP places equal emphasis on general education in order to develop the ability to provide honest and competent leadership. BKSP has a one-year diploma in sports psychology and will begin an MSc in sports psychology at National University in the near future.

### **School Psychology**

The School Psychology Unit at Dhaka University has recognised obstacles and challenges faced by children and adolescents, including academic (for example, learning disabilities), and adaptive (g., grooming, dressing, safety, food handling, cleaning, making friends, social skills, and the personal responsibility expected of their age and social group). Behavioral analysis (e.g., bullying, school-nonattendance, truancy, disruptive behaviour, juvenile delinquency), Think about it (e.g., difficulty in remembering, problems in abstract reasoning, problems in decision making, problems in logical thinking, low IQ), inventiveness (e.g., lack of creativity), Growth and development (e.g., motor delay, muscle weakness, sensory deprivation in play, art, music, peer interaction, and apathy to eating and drinking), Affective (e.g., adjustment problems, mood swings, anxiety, depression, loneliness, inferiority complex, low self-esteem, narcissism), Message (for example, lying, cheating, stealing, disobedience, disrespect), shyness, shame, guilt, self-blaming, eve teasing, and so on. Parental alienation, communication difficulties, peer pressure,

poverty, and a low EQ), aptitude, and vocational (e.g., subject preferences, vocational preferences, aptitudes). Academic assistance, school discipline, educational counseling, special education, and school health services are all areas where school psychologists try to provide a common framework for assisting children and adolescents with the issues listed above. School psychologists also use positive psychology ideas to help students with no specific difficulties reach their full potential. As an applied field, school psychology develops and supports ideas and practises in psycho-educational services to address and solve problems that all school-aged children may face. School psychology views education as a human service with the goal of encouraging child growth through collaboration among teachers, school counselors, and parents, as well as the use of school and community resources. In terms of how to use school psychology, it gives important principles, concrete approaches, and practical tools.

In Bangladesh, school psychologists are a relatively new notion. Although we have been able to bring the topic of mental health to the forefront in recent years, putting in place arrangements for psychologists in schools is still unexplored ground for us. Given the work they undertake and the influence it has on children and youth's mental health, it's critical that we start educating ourselves, policymakers, and stakeholders about this field.

Despite the fact that the profession has yet to be mainstreamed in our region, around 100,000 school psychologists work in more than 48 countries around the world, including the United States, Spain, Canada, Japan, and Turkey. As a licenced school psychologist, my goal in writing this essay is to introduce the profession and its practitioners to the readers, explaining briefly who they are, what they do, and why it is critical that this discipline be developed as a specialised professional area in Bangladesh.

School psychology is a branch of functional psychology that focuses on the research and application of psychology to children, adolescents, families, students of all ages, and the educational process. School psychologists are experts that can assist children and adolescents in achieving academic, social, behavioral, and emotional success. They can also advocate for the rights of disabled children and youth, as well as help parents and caregivers become more informed and effective advocates for their loved ones. School psychologists help schools and other institutions achieve

their goals of improving academic achievement, promoting positive behavior and mental health, supporting diverse learners, creating safe and positive school climates, strengthening family-school partnerships, and improving school-wide assessment and accountability.

Children and teens can confront a variety of issues relating to learning, social connections, making complex decisions, regulating emotions, and so on. They may experience depression, anxiety, concern, or feelings of isolation. School psychologists can help in these situations by identifying and resolving the children's and youth's short-and long-term challenges and problems.

They're an important tool for figuring out how such challenges affect learning, behavior, well-being, and educational participation.

School psychologists, according to the American Psychological Association (APA), offer a variety of psychological diagnosis, assessment, intervention, prevention, health promotion, programme development, and evaluation services to children and youth in the context of schools, families, and other institutions. They plan, execute, and evaluate preventative interventions at the individual and system levels.

They carry out ecologically valid assessments and support pleasant learning environments for children and young people's healthy development.

The primary responsibilities of school psychologists include:

1. Undertaking comprehensive assessments to diagnose intellectual ability, learning processes, academic skills and aptitude, social skills, emotional functioning, behavioral problems, and neurological processes

2. Consulting with parents, teachers, administrators, pediatricians, psychiatrists, neurologists, and therapists

3. Developing behavioral intervention plans, individual education plans, prevention program (for instance, against violence, bullying, truancy, and dropouts), alternatives to corporal punishment

4. Advocating for the rights of children and their families,

5. Conducting training for parents, teachers, and other professionals and imparting training on social skills

6. Coordinating services that exist in the community

7. Investigation

8. Counseling

Apart from the primary responsibilities enumerated above, alternate roles of school psychologists can vary from society to society and may include administration,

curriculum development, advising on legislation and policy development, crisis intervention, and victim assistance.

School psychologists operate in a variety of settings, including public and private schools; colleges; health and mental health centers; community-based day-treatment or residential clinics; hospitals; juvenile justice centers; and private practice. Students, parents, teachers, pediatricians, neurologists, school administrators, community service providers, social workers, and therapists are all served by school psychologists.

### **Attributes and Qualifications Required for a School Psychologist**

Knowledge of psychology and education, which is usually satisfied by relevant postgraduate courses, is one of the most important qualities required of a school psychologist.

They should be aware of and respectful of human diversity.

They should be able to provide a wide range of measurable direct services to children, families, and educational institutions. Appropriate training is also required due to the intricacy of their tasks and the special sensitivities associated with the mental health sector. Although precise areas of training for school psychologists differ by country, we can look at the knowledge and abilities necessary for such professionals in the United States as mandated by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP): data collection and analysis; assessment; school-wide learning practices; resilience and risk factors; consultation and collaboration; interventions; instructional support; crisis preparedness, response, and recovery; collaboration between families, schools, and communities; diversity in development and learning; research and programme evaluation; professional ethics, applicable laws, and systems.

As previously said, school psychologists can play a critical role in assisting children and adolescents in learning and succeeding academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They contribute to the creation of safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments through collaboration with families, teachers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders. As a result, it goes without saying that the inclusion of school psychologists in Bangladesh's schools and educational institutions would be a very positive step toward our children's and youth's healthy mental development.

## 114/ Applied Psychology in Bangladesh: Progress and Prospect

### Placement Opportunities for Applied Psychologists in Bangladesh

Placement opportunities for applied psychologists in Bangladesh are still limited and now it shows that there is a tremendous need and opportunities to work as a professional psychologist in different fields in Bangladesh, such as: public and private universities, teaching psychology at colleges including Engineering, Fashion Technology, Management Institute, Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh

Naval Force, Bangladesh Civil Service, Bangladesh Sports Authority, Bangladesh Sports Council, Bangladesh Cricket Control Board, Child and Development Centre of all Medical Colleges, National Institute of Mental Health, Pabna Mental Hospital, Teachers Training Colleges/Institutes, Rehabilitation Centres, Environmental psychologists, Drug Addictions, School Psychology, Counselling psychologists, advertisement industry, as trainers and consultants, Behavioural Finance in share market industry, and community psychology, etc.

---

### References

[https://www.jnu.ac.bd/dept/portal/web/psychology/message\\_from\\_chairman.html](https://www.jnu.ac.bd/dept/portal/web/psychology/message_from_chairman.html)

[http://bcps.org.bd/?page\\_id=268](http://bcps.org.bd/?page_id=268)

<https://nimhbd.com/>

<http://www.nins.gov.bd/nins>

[http://www.du.ac.bd/academic/department\\_item/PSY](http://www.du.ac.bd/academic/department_item/PSY)

<http://dept.ru.ac.bd/psychology/myweb3/index.htm>

<https://www.psyqu.net/>

<https://psychology-resources.org/explore-psychology/association-organisation-information/country-information/bangladesh/bangladesh-bangladesh-psychological-association->

<http://bcps.org.bd>

<https://www.facebook.com/WomenMentalHealthBangladesh/>

<http://www.bpa.org.bd/index.html>

<http://www.bksp-bd.org/cgi-sys/suspendedpage.cgi>

<http://www.crp-bangladesh.org/>

<http://bsps.org.bd/problem-areas/>

[https://www.du.ac.bd/academic/department\\_item/PSY](https://www.du.ac.bd/academic/department_item/PSY)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD\\_azBzPmeI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD_azBzPmeI)

<https://www.facebook.com/MonobikashFoundation>

*Saima Wazed Hossain is a licensed school psychologist, Chairperson of National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Bangladesh, and Member of the Expert Advisory Panel on Mental Health, World Health Organization.*

<https://opinion.bdnews24.com/2015/09/03/school-psychologists-and-mental-health-of-children-and-youth/SaimaWazedHossain>

### Acknowledgement

The Paper is presented at the IAAP Centennial (1920-2020) Symposium on hundred Years of Applied Psychology in South Asia: Retrospect and Prospect, Delhi University, India.

