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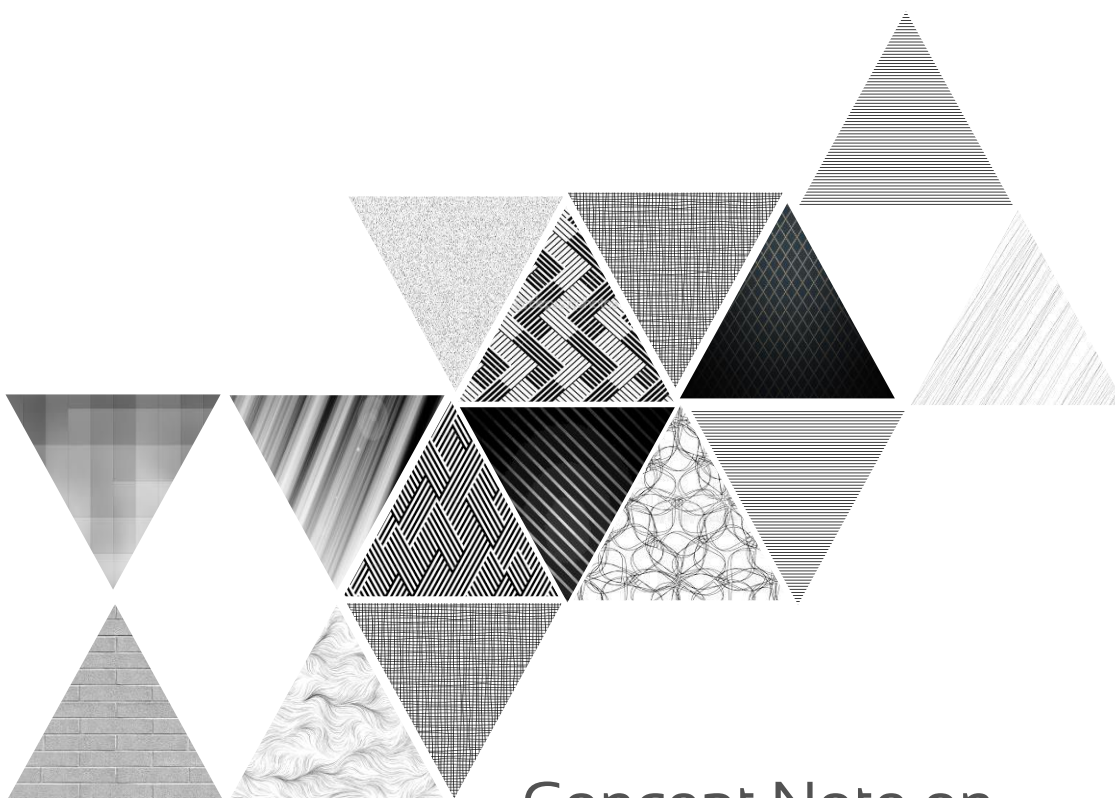


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জনগণের দোরপোড়ায় সেবা
Service @ Doorsteps

Access to Information Programme Prime Minister's Office



Concept Note on "Students Portal"

“Students’ portal for outfitting learners with 21st century skills (critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity) and engaging them in social awareness and problem solving’

1. Background

Two things have significantly paved the future track of emergent Bangladesh-one is the large population size with one of the world’s highest demographic dividend with moderate fertility rate and another is the visionary political leadership¹ focusing on the technology driven sustainable growth. Proper education, skills development and employment of this large youth population through judicious application of ICT is considered to be the fuel necessary to run on this fast track to development. Educational reform is already visible, for instance introduction of creative questions in curriculum, establishment of multimedia classrooms, content development training for teachers, online/sms based admission in universities, online monitoring of schools etc. Still, there are areas for improvement. A study showed that around 92% of sixth graders don’t have the required competencies in English and 82% don’t have in Mathematics.² 89% of students also lack proficiency in Bangla. Global ranking of Bangladesh in Education Index (2013) is 142, whereas India ranked 135 and Vietnam ranked 121 out of 187 countries.³ Evidence shows that globally traditional learning approaches are insufficient to build a qualitative and competitive human resource.

Today, over 130 million people use mobile phones in Bangladesh while around 50 million access internet. Every day the number is increasing and most of the users are youths. This mighty youth population aged from 13 and above is spending their free time in the cyber world. The absence of formal linkage between classrooms and the virtual world where learners can access quality contents, exchange thoughts and ideas, enjoy edutainment or be recognized among peers leads to unhealthy abuse of social media and technology by the youth. This problem has been exacerbated due to the lack of available localized and contextualized educational multimedia-based contents.

Meanwhile, our institutionalized education offers very limited scope to nourish learners’ inner potential. Today, global leaders are adopting 21st century skills where critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity are emphasized. Unfortunately, our formal paper and pencil based assessment and teaching-learning method has proven to be mostly unsuccessful in developing and assessing any of these skills. We do not have any such mechanism where learners

¹ Visionary political leadership: Considering the Vision 2021- Digital Bangladesh and recent achievements of- UN award in reducing child mortality rate, south-south award on poverty reduction as well as ensuring food security, top UN’s environmental prize for policy leadership, championship award in UNESCO international literacy prizes and prestigious ITU award two times for ICT use in improving people’s lives

² Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Wing of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) conducted the survey with financial assistance from the DSHE’s Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (SEQAEP). <http://www.thedailystar.net/poor-show-in-education-49160>

³ Human Development Reports, UNDP, November, 2013 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/education-index>

can collaborate with each other, learn from peers, solve a critical problem or connect with global leaders. Thus, the huge potentiality of ICT in this sector is still unutilized.

Another important challenge is the disparity between urban and rural education. Qualified teachers, educators, technologists or scholars are hard to find in rural areas. Due to scarcity of resources and cultural hierarchy, learners of these marginalized areas consider themselves deprived and neglected nationals. Consequently, almost half of secondary and higher secondary learners drops out of school every year. Conventional practices like face to face training, stipend or little infrastructural support can be claimed to have minimized this gap to certain extent.

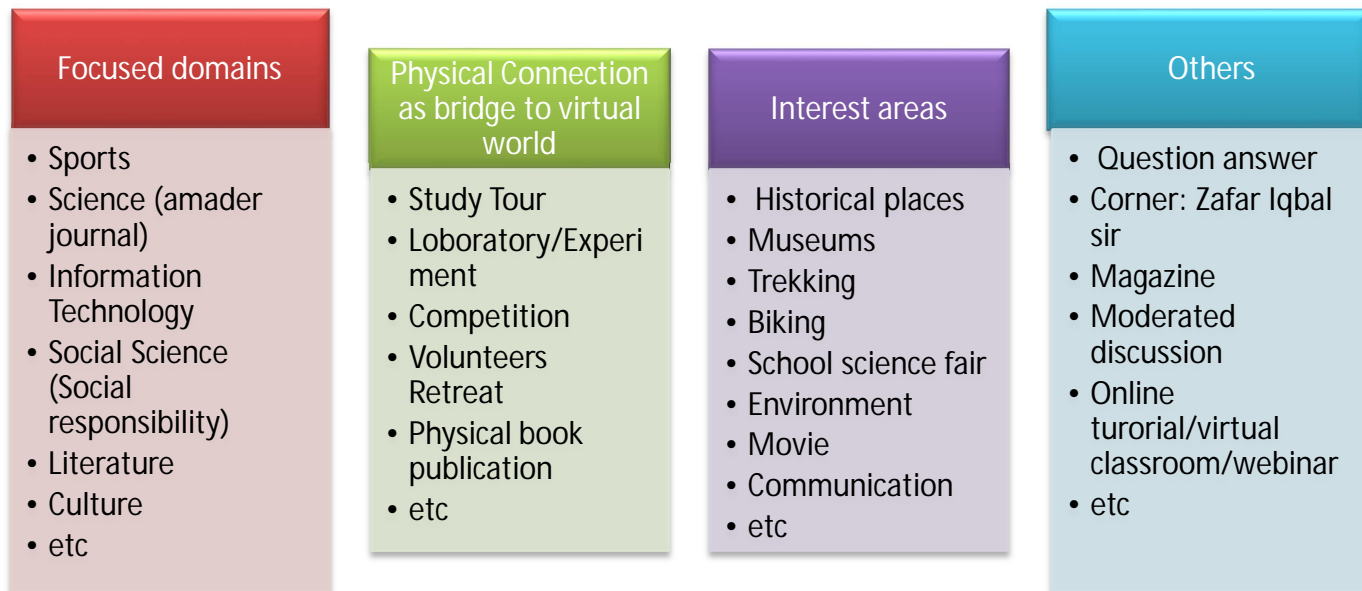
Considering the large youth group, ICT revolution and all the missing links mentioned above Access to Information (a2i) Programme of Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with Ministry of Education has designed an online platform for educators called 'Teachers Portal'. Launched in 2013, there are currently over one hundred thousand teachers on the Portal who share their views, develop multimedia-based educational content and guide each other for their professional development. Today it is counted as one of the successful digital interventions in education in the world. But this is a platform for educators are not students. The demand and choices of young learners are completely different. They like games. They prefer learning by doing. They want to be engaged. They want to be challenged. If a fun, featuring edutainment and learning platform can be officially developed for this age group focusing on 21st century skills development, then it can become the next alternate media to reshape our future.

Appreciating these opportunities, Ministry of Education, Computer Science and Engineering Department of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology and Access to Information (a2i) jointly propose a learners' platform called 'Student Portal'.

Objective of Student portal:

1. Ensure meaningful contents for young learners which will be used with smartphone, tablet pc and other ICT devices.
2. Build a national repository of learner driven content using crowdsourcing approach.
3. Engage learners individually and collectively in mass awareness and solving social problems.
4. Provide space for nurturing critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and communication skills to make our students globally competent.
5. Highlight role/action models for learners to dream innovation and change
6. Ensure qualitative and participatory learning through fun, inspiration and motivation that will be reflected in public results and other indicators.

Major features (not limited to):



Content creation			
Competition (Celebrating national days: New year, 26 March, 14 March, 21 February etc.)			Recognition of competition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall magazine • Info graphic • Animation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio • Pictures • Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writings • Sms/whats app messages • Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display/showcase • Physical publication • Collective scoring • Best educational website

Target Group: Mainly 14 – 17 aged learners are focused. But others can join too.

Contributor/user:

- Individual Student
- Paid Professionals
- Student Networks: (বিজ্ঞানের জন্য ভালবাসা, Science Arena, Math Olympiad, বন্ধুসভা, আনন্দসভা, অনুসন্ধিসু, children film festival, High-school Programming, Contest, MAYA, কাল পেতে রই, শক্তি, STC, UNV, UNICEF, UNESCO)
- Teachers Network like Teachers Portal
- Government Authority
- Development partners