

**Transformative Training for Civil Servants: Empowering Gender and
Child Rights through Critical Pedagogy at BPATC**

Research Team

Dr. Tauhid Hossain Khan

A.M. Shahrir Alam

**Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
Savar, Dhaka**

**Transformative Training for Civil Servants: Empowering Gender and
Child Rights through Critical Pedagogy at BPATC**

Purpose of submission [intentionally blank]

Dr. Tauhid Hossain Khan

A.M. Shahrir Alam

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
Savar, Dhaka

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
Savar, Dhaka-1343, Bangladesh

June 2026

Declaration

We hereby declare that the report entitled “**Transformative Training for Civil Servants: Empowering Gender and Child Rights through Critical Pedagogy at BPATC**” has been prepared and revised by Dr. Tauhid Hossain Khan and A.M. Shahrir Alam in accordance with the rules, regulations, and policies of the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). All necessary revisions have been duly incorporated to ensure academic integrity, methodological rigor, and compliance with institutional guidelines. We respectfully submit this revised report for consideration and request the authority concerned to proceed with the subsequent formal procedures as deemed appropriate.

Abstract

Training plays a vital role in equipping civil servants with the necessary skills and competencies to fulfill their responsibilities, uphold ethical standards, and adapt to changing environments. This paper examines training programs provided by the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), with a specific focus on Module 12, which addresses child rights and gender equality. This study employed Critical Pedagogy (CP) as an innovative evaluation approach, fostering critical thinking, empowerment, and social justice in alignment with the transformative nature of the training content.

The study adopts a sequential multimethod qualitative design (Creswell, 2015): the first phase uses an inductive Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) of training documents, guided by Elo and Kyngäs (2007), to uncover core content areas and pedagogical strategies; the second phase employs a deductive approach using Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy framework as an analytical lens for thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with 16 trainees from diverse civil services. Drawing on the interpretative paradigm, the study investigates how officers internalize, interpret, and apply training in their professional and personal lives.

The findings reveal both alignment and disconnects between the course's objectives and its delivery, highlighting limited participant engagement, a top-down curriculum, and the superficial treatment of sensitive gender topics. While some officers reported meaningful change in mindset and behavior, the impact was largely individual and situational rather than systemic. The study concludes that truly transformative training must incorporate critical pedagogy principles, and recommends strengthening the academic core, enhancing instructor interactivity, broadening gender-focused components, and institutionalizing continuous learning and inclusive policies.

Acknowledgement

We express our sincere gratitude to the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) for funding this research and providing institutional support throughout the study. Without their generous assistance, this project would not have been possible.

We are deeply thankful to the civil servants who participated, many of whom took time from their busy schedules to share honest reflections and experiences. Their openness and willingness to engage added invaluable depth and authenticity to this research.

We extend our appreciation to the dedicated data collectors, whose professionalism and sensitivity ensured the fieldwork was conducted with care and ethical integrity. Our heartfelt thanks also go to the faculty members and mentors at BPATC, whose guidance shaped the research design and critical thinking behind this work.

We are grateful to the members of Dr. Khan's Social Impact Lab — Parboti, Sanjida, Shamsun Nahar, Abir, and Jakir — whose critical feedback and intellectual engagement helped us refine our ideas and strengthen the overall rigor of this study.

We also acknowledge Mr. Sharif and Mr. Ershad for their moral support and meaningful discussions throughout the process.

We wish to place on record the direct contribution of Mr. Mutasim Billah, whose active involvement in data collection, fieldwork coordination, and research assistance was indispensable to the successful completion of this study.

To all who played a role in making this research a reality — thank you!

Table of Contents

Abstract	IV
Acknowledgement	V
List of Tables.....	VIII
Abbreviations	VIII
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Critical Pedagogy as a Means for Transforming Awareness.....	3
1.3 Problem Statement	5
1.4 Research Objectives.....	6
1.5 Research Questions	6
1.6 Rationale of the Study.....	7
1.7 Scope of the Study	8
1.8 Limitation of the Study	9
1.9 Organization of the Report.....	10
Chapter Two: Literature Review	11
Chapter Three: Methodology	21
3.1 Introduction.....	21
3.2 Empirical Qualitative Study.....	23
3.3 Participants, Sampling, and Recruitment.....	24
3.4 Data Collection	26

3.5 Data Management	27
3.6 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis	27
3.7 Ethical Considerations	28
Chapter Four: Findings of the Study.....	30
4.1 Findings from the Qualitative Content Analysis.....	30
4.2 Findings from the Qualitative Empirical Study	32
Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion	48
References.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
Appendix -1: Interview Guidelines.....	63
Appendix-2: Letter of Information and Informed Consent Form.....	68
Appendix -3: Summary of the Findings of the Qualitative Content Analysis	72

List of Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants	25
Table 2: Themes of the data	28

Abbreviations

AC	Assistant Commissioner
ADC	Additional Deputy Commissioner
BPATC	Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
CCTV	Closed-circuit Television
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CP	Critical Pedagogy
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DC	Deputy Commissioner
FTC	Foundation Training Course
GBV	Gender-based Violence
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
SD	Sub-divisional Engineer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSC	Senior Staff Course
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Training is indispensable for civil servants to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, uphold ethical standards, adapt to change, and contribute to the overall excellence of public administration (Idris & Purnomo, 2021). Training programs equip them with the necessary competencies related to their roles, whether it is policy formulation, administrative procedures, or public service delivery (Acar & Özgür, 2004; Hur & Ha, 2019). Societal, economic, and technological changes constantly reshape the landscape in which civil servants operate. Training helps them stay abreast of emerging trends, tools, and best practices, enabling them to adapt to evolving environments effectively (Idris & Purnomo, 2021). Civil servants often encounter complex and sensitive situations requiring sound judgment and decision-making skills (Acar & Özgür, 2004; Al-Hawary & Al-Kumait, 2017). Training programs enhance their critical thinking abilities, analytical skills, and problem-solving techniques, empowering them to make informed decisions for the public good (Hur & Ha, 2019). In a nutshell, training for civil servants contributes to the delivery of high-quality public services. Well-trained and competent civil servants are better equipped to address citizens' needs, tackle societal challenges, and drive positive change in their communities (Al-Hawary & Al-Kumait, 2017).

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC) provides training programs to civil servants at various levels of government to enhance their skills and competencies in public administration (BPATC, 2024). It focuses on building the capacity of public officials to effectively manage public resources, implement policies, and deliver

services to citizens (BPATC, 2024). Of several training programs, the Foundation Training Course (FTC), a mandatory training for all civil service entrants in Bangladesh, is designed to enhance their competencies in public service delivery. This course has 24 modules, covering a wide range of issues aiming to “developing the trainee officers as skilled, innovative, proactive and well-groomed to be committed to the well-being and development of the people in an ever-changing national and global context” (BPATC, 2024, p.8). Our study focuses on **module # 12**, “Child rights and gender equality”, which is to raise awareness among trainee officers about the vulnerabilities faced by women and children while familiarizing them with the legal measures to safeguard their rights and promote their empowerment.

We admit that there are several popular methods or combinations of some methods (pre-and post-training assessments, performance reviews, peer reviews, and many more) that provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the training course on participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and job performance, allowing organizations to make informed decisions about the effectiveness and value of their training initiatives (Al-Hawary & Al-Kumait, 2017; Acar & Özgür, 2004; Hur & Ha, 2019). Our research relies on a more innovative and critical approach called “Critical Pedagogy” (CP) as a lens to assess the module, playing a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of training programs for civil servants by promoting critical thinking, empowerment, equity, and inclusion (Freire, 1970). Critical pedagogy is an educational approach that aims to empower students to become critical thinkers and agents of social change. By incorporating principles of critical pedagogy into training programs, governments can cultivate a more informed, responsive, and socially just civil service. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of incorporating critical pedagogy into training programs (Freire, 1970). Training through critical pedagogy is crucial and incredibly effective in their training, comprehending the marginalized communities in society, and improving their fortune (Freire, 1970). Several studies have reported that training programs may benefit from critical pedagogy to increase their effectiveness (Sensoy, 2011; Spear & Costa, 2017; Kessing-Styles, 2003). For example, Spear and Costa (2017) examined two teacher training programs regarding gender norms, and based on the findings, they strongly advocated that teacher training programs should use the CP framework to achieve

transformational learning goals necessary to change the deep-seated beliefs and patterns of behavior regarding gender norms. Among The American marginalized communities, such as black people, Packard (2013) employed CP in a classroom and found that black students (about racism) are much more likely to experience and connect to the course material than white students. In a similar vein, Kessing-Styles (2003) mentioned the inequalities and oppressive power structures that remain within the educational system, and critical pedagogy emerges as a response to such inequalities and unjust power structures. Hence, critical awareness enables learners to examine and confront injustices in families, societies, and schools. In addition, the tradition of evaluating the training course employing CP, especially BPATC courses, is hardly found in the terrain of evaluation practices. Given such context, our study may be the first in the Bangladeshi context. It will employ CP to assess the training outcomes of civil servants and how they navigate gender and child rights issues in their working environment and personal lives.

1.2 CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AS A MEANS FOR TRANSFORMING AWARENESS

While Module 12 of this training highlights the vulnerabilities of women and children, it is crucial to recognize that trainees may encounter a broad spectrum of marginalized groups throughout their careers in Bangladesh. These include but are not limited to intersex communities, veda communities, commercial sex workers, slum dwellers, inhabitants of riverine areas ('char'), hilly populations, indigenous communities, and various other disadvantaged groups. As a result, the impact of training on this module extends far beyond just these two communities, influencing the services provided by trainees throughout their professional lives. For instance, addressing deeply ingrained gender inequalities and age-related biases, such as overlooking the agency of children, necessitates a profound transformation in how individuals interact within their workplaces. This transformation applies to relationships among colleagues, subordinates, community members, service recipients, and other stakeholders. It underscores the need for a comprehensive shift in attitudes and behaviors toward gender and children within professional environments, encompassing a diverse array of interactions and engagements.

The training program aimed at promoting awareness of gender and child rights must endeavor to fundamentally alter both the conscious and unconscious ways in which civil servants interact with their colleagues, community members, service recipients, and each other, perpetuating the patriarchal structures prevalent in society. These transformative learning experiences are essential for addressing the entrenched gender norms that influence individuals' thoughts, actions, and subtle behaviors (Spear & Costa, 2017). These types of transformative learning experiences required to empower individuals and groups to become agents of change within their communities and societies can be nurtured through an educational approach rooted in process, often associated with Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Sensoy, 2011). This process-oriented approach draws upon the psychodynamic theory of individual change, which centers on reshaping individuals' fundamental perceptions and understanding of their reality (Sensoy, 2011; Spear & Costa, 2017). According to philosopher Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy facilitates removing inequalities, subordination, and oppression in the workplace (Spear & Costa, 2017). It creates an environment where a learner (e.g., trainee officer) can progress by their creativity. Learners play an active role in the learning process, while teachers (e.g., trainers) play a passive role (Freire, 1970). Teachers encourage learners to think critically to raise their voice against social oppression and domination. CP suggests that the main role of taking education is to gain knowledge and skills and apply it to change society (Spear & Costa, 2017). Critical pedagogy creates a floor where learners share their thinking and express their opinions during learning. Thus, they improve their own critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Thus, critical pedagogy empowers civil servants to critically reflect on their beliefs, practices, and the social contexts in which they work. This self-reflection can lead to more effective service (to communities) strategies and a deeper understanding of the diverse needs of service recipients or communities. CP encourages trainees to engage critically with course material, leading to deeper understanding and more meaningful learning outcomes (Freire, 1970).

Consequently, applying critical pedagogy in gender and child rights awareness training can equip entrant trainees to act through reflection and the deconstruction of gendered power dynamics. Critical pedagogy relies on several components to facilitate transformative change. Freire emphasizes the significance of critical dialogue as a process

through which all participants develop new knowledge and interpretations of reality by engaging in self-reflection, group discussions, and receptiveness to alternative approaches derived from others' experiences (Freire, 1970). Numerous studies support the efficacy of Freire's critical pedagogy framework in teacher training, as it promotes reflective progress, enabling trainees to critically examine issues and develop the awareness to address inequalities through action (Spear & Costa, 2017). By acknowledging oppression and fostering constructive dialogue, critical pedagogy can lead to empowerment and decisive action. Therefore, a critical pedagogical approach that fosters transformative learning experiences is indispensable for instigating enduring changes in the gendered behavior patterns exhibited by trainee officers in their professional environments.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Civil servants play a crucial role in implementing national and international commitments related to gender equality and child rights in Bangladesh. Through the Foundation Training Course (FTC), the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) seeks to equip entrant civil servants with the knowledge and skills required to address these issues, particularly through Module 12: Gender Equality and Child Rights. While the inclusion of this module reflects institutional recognition of gender and child rights as governance priorities, concerns remain regarding the depth, effectiveness, and transformative potential of the training. Existing evaluation practices of civil service training primarily focus on content delivery and short-term learning outcomes, offering limited insight into whether trainees develop critical awareness, challenge entrenched gender norms, or translate training into meaningful action (Oyekanmi, 2016; Rahman et al., 2025). The pedagogical structure of the FTC largely remains instructor-centered and top-down, which risks treating complex and sensitive issues, such as gender-based violence, patriarchal power relations, and child vulnerability, at a superficial level rather than fostering critical reflection and dialogue.

Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on how trainee officers internalize and apply the lessons from Module 12 in their professional responsibilities and personal lives (Rahman et al., 2025). The barriers, both structural and unconscious, that hinder the application of gender- and child-sensitive approaches within hierarchical administrative

systems remain underexplored. This gap is compounded by the absence of studies in Bangladesh that evaluate civil service training on gender and child rights through the lens of Critical Pedagogy. Against this backdrop, the central problem addressed by this study is the disconnect between the intended transformative objectives of gender and child rights training and the actual learning experiences and practices of civil servants. By applying a Critical Pedagogy framework, this study seeks to critically assess the design, delivery, and impact of Module 12, and to examine whether the training fosters critical consciousness and praxis necessary for promoting gender justice and child rights in Bangladesh's civil service.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to examine how entrant trainees of civil services reflect the lessons they were provided during their training in their professional and personal lives.

The specific objectives are to:

1. map peer-reviewed and grey literature on the training evaluation using a critical narrative analytical lens.
2. examine training materials, mode of classroom deliveries, classroom activities, and assessment strategies by employing Freirean CP framework.
3. investigate how civil service trainees apply their training lessons in both their professional and personal lives; while also exploring the barriers and challenges they encounter during this application process.
4. understand the innovative and critical strategies they used to promote gender and child rights issues.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How has existing peer-reviewed and grey literature conceptualized and evaluated civil service training programs, particularly in relation to gender and child rights?
2. In what ways do the training materials provided to entrant civil service trainees address issues of gender equality and child rights?
3. How does the mode of classroom delivery (lectures, group work, participatory activities) reflect or contradict Paulo Freire's framework of critical pedagogy?

4. To what extent do classroom activities and assessment strategies encourage critical reflection, dialogue, and praxis among civil service trainees?
5. How do civil service trainees interpret and internalize the lessons on gender and child rights during their training period?
6. In what ways do entrant trainees apply the lessons learned in their professional duties, particularly in decision-making and service delivery?
7. How do these lessons influence their personal attitudes, behaviors, and practices in everyday life beyond the workplace?
8. What innovative strategies and critical approaches do trainees develop to overcome barriers and actively promote gender and child rights in professional and personal contexts?

1.6 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The study addresses the need for a more comprehensive and critical evaluation of training programs, particularly regarding gender equality and child rights issues, by employing a framework rooted in Critical Pedagogy.

Training is crucial for civil servants to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities. However, there is a need to critically evaluate training programs to ensure their effectiveness in addressing complex issues like gender equality and child rights. Traditional evaluation methods may not capture the depth of learning and transformation necessary for meaningful change.

The study proposes to employ Critical Pedagogy (CP) as an innovative approach to evaluating the training program. CP aims to empower learners to become critical thinkers and agents of social change, which aligns with the transformative nature of the training content regarding gender and child rights issues. Furthermore, by employing CP, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how trainees apply the lessons learned in their professional and personal lives. This approach goes beyond traditional evaluation methods to delve into the deeper implications of the training content and its impact on behavior and attitudes.

The study aims to identify both conscious and unconscious barriers and challenges faced by trainees in applying the lessons learned. This insight is crucial for designing more effective training programs and support systems to address these obstacles.

Through qualitative analysis, the study seeks to explore innovative and critical strategies employed by trainees to promote gender equality and child rights issues. These insights can inform future training initiatives and policies. Ultimately, the study aims to develop practices and guidelines based on the findings to increase the effectiveness of training programs. By identifying successful strategies and addressing barriers, the study can contribute to enhancing the impact of training on civil servants' professional practice and personal lives. To sum up, by exploring the application of learned lessons, identifying barriers, and developing best practices, the study aims to contribute to the improvement of training initiatives and the promotion of gender and child rights in Bangladesh's civil service sector.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program, specifically focusing on Module 12, which addresses gender equality and child rights. It proposes to employ Critical Pedagogy (CP) as a framework for this evaluation, emphasizing transformative learning experiences, critical reflection, and empowerment.

The study acknowledges the broader spectrum of marginalized groups beyond women and children, including intersex communities, vedha communities, commercial sex workers, slum dwellers, indigenous communities, and others. It recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of these groups within the training program.

The study emphasizes the need for transformative learning experiences to address deeply ingrained gender norms and biases. It aims to facilitate a shift in attitudes and behaviors among civil servants towards gender and children, promoting inclusivity and equality in their professional interactions and engagements.

The methodology involves document analysis and qualitative data collection. Document analysis has assessed how critical pedagogy elements are embedded in the training program, while qualitative data collection through interviews with civil servants have provided insights into the application of training lessons in professional and personal lives, barriers faced, and innovative strategies employed.

The study outlines how the seven basic elements of Freire's Critical Pedagogy framework can be applied in the evaluation process. These elements include the concept of knowledge, generative themes, codification, dialogue, conscientization, "Easter experience" (transformative learning), and action/intervention. Based on the findings, the study has identified best practices in training for gender equality and child rights and develop guidelines to enhance the effectiveness of future training initiatives. These practices and guidelines have addressed the barriers and challenges identified during the evaluation process. In a nutshell, the scope of the study encompasses a comprehensive evaluation of the training program's effectiveness, identification of best practices and challenges, and the development of frameworks and guidelines to enhance future training initiatives in the context of gender equality and child rights within the civil service sector of Bangladesh.

1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Despite the valuable insights generated through this research, several limitations must be acknowledged. One of the primary limitations of this research was the recruitment of participants. Civil servants often operate within a highly structured and hierarchical system, and many were reluctant to participate in interviews. Concerns about confidentiality, institutional pressure, and potential risks to their professional standing made it difficult to access a broad sample. While we were able to conduct meaningful interviews with several participants, the final sample size was limited, which may have impacted the diversity and heterogeneity of the findings.

Another significant challenge involved the insufficient budget, which restricted the scope of data collection and limited our ability to include a more diverse range of civil servants from multiple administrative divisions. Due to financial constraints, we were unable to conduct fieldwork in remote areas or arrange extended follow-up interviews. As a result, some important perspectives, especially from underrepresented or marginalized administrative units, may not have been adequately captured in this study.

Again, the research was conducted over a one-year period, which posed considerable time constraints. Given the depth and reflective nature of qualitative research

guided by critical pedagogy, more time would have allowed for deeper engagement with participants, member checking, and possibly an iterative process of co-constructing knowledge. The limited timeline meant that certain aspects could not be pursued, potentially affecting the richness of the data and the depth of analysis.

Finally, the study relied heavily on participants' self-reported narratives, which may be influenced by personal biases, social desirability, or institutional constraints. Some civil servants hesitated to share openly due to concerns about professional repercussions.

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is organized into six chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the study's aims, processes, and outcomes. These chapters are interconnected with each other.

The chapter 1 introduces the research by presenting the background, rationale, and objectives of the study. It also outlines the research questions, significance, and scope, focusing on the relevance of gender and child rights training for Bangladeshi civil servants.

The chapter 2 present the reviews relevant national and international literature on civil service training, gender and child rights education, and pedagogical approaches. It identifies existing gaps, critiques conventional training structures, and positions the current study within the broader scholarly and policy debates.

In the chapter 3, the theoretical underpinning of the study is presented, with a particular focus on Paulo Freire's concept of critical pedagogy. It explores key concepts such as dialogue, praxis, conscientization, and transformative learning, which serve as the lens through which the training content and participant narratives are interpreted.

The chapter 4 described how the studies were conducted, including research design, sample selection, recruitment, data collection, ethical considerations, and data analysis, considering both studies - content analysis and empirical study.

This chapter 5 presents the key findings derived from the content analysis and civil servants' narratives. The data are organized into major themes that reflect their experiences

with the training, perceptions of Module 12, and the practical challenges they encounter in applying gender and child rights knowledge in the workplace.

The final chapter critically discusses the findings in relation to Freire's theoretical concepts and existing literature. It highlights both the similarities and differences between training goals and institutional realities and concludes by offering practical recommendations to enhance the relevance, depth, and transformative impact of civil service training in Bangladesh.

Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW

Training is the systematic modification of behavior through learning, education, and planned experiences (Idris & Purnomo, 2021). It refers to the ability to carry out a routine and pre-defined task in a safe and efficient manner (Govil & Usha, 2014). Training programs can be categorized into various types, including orientation, initial training, site training, and refresher training. Each type serves distinct purposes, from basic operational knowledge to specific safety practices and emergency response plans (Sutton, 2015). Primary purpose of training is to develop individual abilities and meet needs of organizational manpower (Chaneta, 2014).

Training is a complex concept with varying definitions depending on context and purposes. It can encompass learning for a current job, personal development, education aimed at enhancing marketable skills. This variability highlights the need for a flexible understanding of training for different scenarios (Kopp, 2018). It is the means to improve present or future performance, skills and abilities of employees for meaningful contributions to particular organizations and to society at large. Training can take different forms and shapes including individualized learning which is crucial for life-long-learning. Developing people through training not only enhances individual performance but also increases the opportunity for people to build their capacity for higher leadership and managerial positions (Ugoani, 2024)

Training is indispensable for civil servants to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, uphold ethical standards, adapt to change, and contribute to the overall excellence of public

administration (Idris & Purnomo, 2021). Training programs equip them with the necessary competencies related to their roles, whether it is policy formulation, administrative procedures, or public service delivery (Acar & Özgür, 2004; Hur & Ha, 2019). Societal, economic, and technological changes constantly reshape the landscape in which civil servants operate. Training helps them stay abreast of emerging trends, tools, and best practices, enabling them to adapt to evolving environments effectively (Idris & Purnomo, 2021). Civil servants often encounter complex and sensitive situations requiring sound judgment and decision-making skills (Acar & Özgür, 2004; Al-Hawary & Al-Kumait, 2017).

Training programs enhance their critical thinking abilities, analytical skills, and problem-solving techniques, empowering them to make informed decisions for the public good (Hur & Ha, 2019). In a nutshell, training for civil servants contributes to the delivery of high-quality public services. Well-trained and competent civil servants are better equipped to address citizens' needs, tackle societal challenges, and drive positive change in their communities (Al-Hawary & Al-Kumait, 2017).

Training equips employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their tasks efficiently, bridging the gap between current and required competencies. It plays a critical role in organizational development by preparing employees to meet evolving demands and challenges in the workplace (Govil & Usha, 2014). Continuous training is vital in adapting to technological advancements and changing job roles, ensuring employees remain relevant in their fields (Safitri et al., 2024). Well-structured training programs lead to increased productivity and reduced operational costs, benefiting both employees and employers (Manisha, 2015). Organizations that prioritize training often see improved employee morale and loyalty, which translates into higher engagement and performance levels (Manisha, 2015; Naji, 2020).

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC) provides training programs to civil servants at various levels of government to enhance their skills and competencies in public administration (BPATC, 2024). It focuses on building the capacity of public officials to effectively manage public resources, implement policies, and deliver services to citizens (BPATC, 2024). Of several training programs, the Foundation Training

Course (FTC), a mandatory training for all civil service entrants in Bangladesh, is designed to enhance their competencies in public service delivery. This course has 24 modules, covering a wide range of issues aiming to “developing the trainee officers as skilled, innovative, proactive and well-groomed to be committed to the well-being and development of the people in an ever-changing national and global context” (BPATC, 2024, p.8).

Foundation Training Course Aimed at young civil servants; this course significantly enhances understanding of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Participants show improved knowledge and prioritization skills post-training (Rahman, 2021). Senior Staff Course (SSC) focuses on policy-level training for senior civil servants, assessing curriculum effectiveness and training methods. Findings indicate satisfactory levels in training modules and content, suggesting room for improvement in curriculum development (Islam & Hosen, 2021).

BPATC's training programs are complemented by initiatives from other sectors, such as community health worker training, which has shown significant improvements in hypertension management through targeted education (Chowdhury et al., 2016). The integration of grassroots-level training, as seen in occupational health and safety programs, highlights the importance of practical, community-focused approaches in enhancing overall public service effectiveness (Brown, 2022).

The key components of BPATC's FTC training focus on enhancing professional skills through structured methodologies and innovative practices. This training encompasses diagnostic, educational, advisory, and correctional-developmental stages, which collectively aim to improve athletes' professional skills and personal potential, ultimately leading to better performance in competitive environments (Kharitonova, 2022). The Foundation Training Course (FTC) at the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) is designed to enhance the capacity of civil servants in Bangladesh. This training is crucial for equipping government officials with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively serve as agents of the government. The training focuses on policy-level courses, aiming to improve the curriculum and delivery methods to meet the needs of senior civil servants. The effectiveness of these training programs is evaluated through

semi-structured questionnaires, which have highlighted both strengths and areas for improvement in the training modules and methods (Islam & Hosen, 2021).

Critical pedagogy is an educational approach that aims to empower students to become critical thinkers and agents of social change (Freire, 1970). It aims to increase social justice by fostering action-oriented learning environments that challenge societal norms and power structures (Crookes, 2021). A primary goal is to enhance students' critical thinking skills, preparing them to navigate complex information landscapes and societal challenges (Mammadova, 2023).

This approach involves dialogic teaching methods that cultivate creativity, problem-solving, and sociological consciousness (Bendraou, 2024). Implementing critical pedagogy can be time-consuming and requires educators to be well-versed in its application. Despite these challenges, the benefits of promoting inclusivity and equity in education outweigh the difficulties (Bruxvoort, 2024). Critical pedagogy is inherently political, examining deep-seated values and assumptions to create empowering and socially just educational systems (Luitel et al., 2022). It is seen as a basis for renewing education and culture, emphasizing hope and future possibilities (Luitel et al., 2022). Critical Pedagogy” (CP), playing a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of training programs for civil servants by promoting critical thinking, empowerment, equity, and inclusion (Freire, 1970).

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of incorporating critical pedagogy into training programs (Freire, 1970). Training through critical pedagogy is crucial and incredibly effective in their training, comprehending the marginalized communities in society, and improving their fortune (Freire, 1970). Several research studies have reported that training programs may benefit from critical pedagogy to increase their effectiveness (Sensoy, 2011; Spear & Costa, 2017; Kessing-Styles, 2003).

These types of transformative learning experiences required to empower individuals and groups to become agents of change within their communities and societies can be nurtured through an educational approach rooted in process, often associated with Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Sensoy, 2011; Spear & Costa, 2017). This process-oriented approach draws upon the psychodynamic theory of individual change, which

centers on reshaping individuals' fundamental perceptions and understanding of their reality (Sensoy, 2011; Spear & Costa, 2017).

Critical pedagogy relies on several components to facilitate transformative change. Freire emphasizes the significance of critical dialogue as a process through which all participants develop new knowledge and interpretations of reality by engaging in self-reflection, group discussions, and receptiveness to alternative approaches derived from others' experiences (Freire, 1970). Critical pedagogy encourages students to critically evaluate their surroundings and societal norms, fostering a sense of agency and empowerment (Dwikamayuda et al., 2024).

By integrating critical pedagogy into teaching strategies, educators can create inclusive learning environments that promote social justice and empower students to become advocates for positive change (Dwikamayuda et al., 2024).

Critical pedagogy encourages students to recognize and question injustices, facilitating a movement towards criticality through dialogue and reflection (Ali & Talukder, 2017). The role of the teacher is complex, balancing the need for problematization without veering into indoctrination, thus promoting a fluid understanding of criticality (Ali & Talukder, 2017).

Tertiary education plays a crucial role in advancing gender equality by integrating feminine writing, which empowers female students and encourages critical thinking about societal norms (Husain et al., 2024).

A significant portion of female students engage in gender-related discussions, highlighting the need for inclusive academic frameworks that support diverse voices across disciplines (Husain et al., 2024). The traditional pedagogical framework in Bangladesh often relies on rote learning, which hinders the development of critical thinking skills necessary for effective engagement with critical pedagogy (Mannan, 2016). Cultural attitudes towards hierarchy in education can impede the transformation of teaching practices, necessitating a shift towards more participatory and student-centered approaches (Mannan, 2016). While critical pedagogy offers transformative potential in Bangladesh, challenges remain in overcoming entrenched cultural practices and ensuring that all

students can engage meaningfully with critical discourse. The integration of diverse pedagogical approaches, including green pedagogy, may further enhance critical engagement in various contexts (Papi & Haque, 2023).

By incorporating principles of critical pedagogy into training programs, governments can cultivate a more informed, responsive, and socially just civil service. According to philosopher Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy facilitates removing inequalities, subordination, and oppression in the workplace (Spear & Costa, 2017). It creates an environment where a learner (e.g., trainee officer) can progress by their creativity. Learners play an active role in the learning process, while teachers (e.g., trainers) play a passive role (Freire, 1970). Teachers encourage learners to think critically to raise their voice against social oppression and domination. CP suggests that the main role of taking education is to gain knowledge and skills and apply it to change society (Spear & Costa, 2017). Critical pedagogy creates a floor where learners share their thinking and express their opinions during learning. Thus, they improve their own critical consciousness (Freire, 1970).

Thus, critical pedagogy empowers civil servants to critically reflect on their beliefs, practices, and the social contexts in which they work (Freire, 1970). This self-reflection can lead to more effective service (to communities) strategies and a deeper understanding of the diverse needs of service recipients or communities. CP encourages trainees to engage critically with course material, leading to deeper understanding and more meaningful learning outcomes (Freire, 1970).

Numerous studies support the efficacy of Freire's critical pedagogy framework in teacher training, as it promotes reflective progress, enabling trainees to critically examine issues and develop the awareness to address inequalities through action (Spear & Costa, 2017). By acknowledging oppression and fostering constructive dialogue, critical pedagogy can lead to empowerment and decisive action (Spear & Costa, 2017). Transformative training emphasizes critical reflection, enabling civil servants to challenge existing norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality and child rights violations (Uthman, 2023). By instilling problem-solving skills and critical thinking, civil servants can identify and address social issues effectively, leading to proactive measures for change. Gender training should focus on institutional resistances, advocating for policies that

support gender equity and child rights within civil service frameworks (Ferguson, 2019). Incorporating human rights education into training programs empowers civil servants to uphold dignity and respect, fostering a culture of social justice within public service (Nazzari et al., 2005). This integration aligns with the principles of critical pedagogy, promoting active participation in societal transformation and enhancing the overall effectiveness of civil service initiatives.

Spear and Costa (2017) examined two teacher training programs regarding gender norms, and based on the findings, they strongly advocated that teacher training programs should use the CP framework to achieve transformational learning goals necessary to change the deep-seated beliefs and patterns of behavior regarding gender norms. Among American marginalized communities, such as black people, Packard (2013) employed CP in a classroom and found that black students (about racism) are much more likely to experience and connect to the course material than white students. In a similar vein, Kessing-Styles (2003) mentioned the inequalities and oppressive power structures that remain within the educational system, and critical pedagogy emerges as a response to such inequalities and unjust power structures. Hence, critical awareness enables learners to examine and confront injustices in families, societies, and schools.

The training program aimed at promoting awareness of gender and child rights must endeavor to fundamentally alter both the conscious and unconscious ways in which civil servants interact with their colleagues, community members, service recipients, and each other, perpetuating the patriarchal structures prevalent in society. These transformative learning experiences are essential for addressing the entrenched gender norms that influence individuals' thoughts, actions, and subtle behaviors (Spear & Costa, 2017). Consequently, applying critical pedagogy in gender awareness training can equip entrant trainees to act through reflection and the deconstruction of gendered power dynamics (Spear & Costa, 2017).

Therefore, a critical pedagogical approach that fosters transformative learning experiences is indispensable for instigating enduring changes in the gendered behavior patterns exhibited by trainee officers in their professional environments (Spear & Costa, 2017). In Moroccan educational settings, critical pedagogy has been shown to challenge

persistent gender norms and power dynamics, promoting gender equity in classrooms (Bendraou & Sakale, 2024). The Female Empowerment Group, a critical pedagogical intervention, successfully re-engaged at-risk female students by enhancing their self-confidence, motivation, and engagement with issues impacting their lives (MacMaoilir & McGillicuddy, 2022). Participatory action research methods, combined with critical pedagogy, empower marginalized groups by involving them directly in educational and community programs, as seen in the experiences of women migrant workers in Beirut (Keyl, 2022). Amendments to civil service regulations can create a more inclusive environment for women and children (Aragaw, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy, a transformative educational approach that emphasizes dialogue, reflection, and action in the pursuit of social justice and human liberation. Specifically, the study applies the seven foundational elements of Freirean critical pedagogy as articulated by the Freire Institute (2025, cited in Spear & Costa, 2018; Freire, 1970) to evaluate the structure, content, and pedagogical strategies of Module 12: Gender and Child Rights of the Fundamental Training Course for civil servants in Bangladesh. Drawing on these seven elements, the study seeks to critically assess how the principles of emancipatory education are reflected within the training module and to what extent they contribute to the personal and professional development of trainees, particularly in fostering gender awareness and rights-based understanding. The framework supports a deductive approach to thematic analysis, through which interview data will be interpreted, and the training content evaluated. In line with this framework, two key forms of data were analyzed: Documentary data - including training manuals, course materials, and module outlines - to identify the pedagogical intentions embedded within the design of Module 12. Secondly, Qualitative data - obtained through in-depth interviews with trainees to assess the lived experiences, perceived relevance, and real-world application of the training. Below is an elaboration on the seven elements of Freirean pedagogy that form the basis of this study's theoretical lens:

Element 1. Concept of Knowledge

Freirean pedagogy challenges the hierarchical transmission of knowledge by questioning whose knowledge is legitimized and whose voices are heard in educational settings (Freire, 1970). This concept encourages a rethinking of power dynamics in knowledge production and dissemination. In the context of civil service training, it calls for democratizing the learning process by involving trainees and relevant stakeholders in shaping the training content- rather than allowing top-down directives from ministries to dominate. This decentralization promotes inclusivity, relevance, and responsiveness (Craig, Kraft, & Du Plessis, 1998; Sibbons, 1998).

Element 2. Generative Themes and Codification

Freire emphasized the importance of generative themes- issues emerging from the lived experiences of learners and communities- as a foundation for transformative education. These themes must be collaboratively identified to reflect the socio-cultural and political realities of the learners. Codification, as Freire proposed, involves transforming these themes into concrete representations (e.g., discussions, images, or narratives) to enable critical dialogue about their deeper meanings and implications. In evaluating the training module, this study investigates whether content development involved participatory processes and if the materials adequately represent the experiences and perspectives of trainers, trainees, administrative staff, and the communities they serve (Craig et al., 1998).

Element 4 and 5. Dialogue and Conscientization

Central to Freire's pedagogy is dialogue, understood as a process of mutual learning that challenges hierarchies between teacher and learner. Dialogue fosters conscientization, a state of critical awareness where individuals come to understand the structural roots of inequality and their own roles within it. This process is especially crucial in training modules addressing gender and child rights, where participants must reflect on societal norms, biases, and practices that perpetuate injustice. Trainees are encouraged to critically examine the status of women and children, unpack root causes of gender disparities, and explore how their actions- as civil servants- can promote equity (Leu & Ginsburg, 2011; Levto, 2014; Miske, 2013).

Element 6. Easter Experience (Transformation)

Freire described transformative learning as an “Easter experience,” a metaphor for rebirth through critical reflection and collective engagement. This deep transformation is not instantaneous but requires sustained dialogue and introspection over time. Addressing entrenched gender norms and rights issues demands a process-oriented approach, wherein participants move beyond surface-level awareness toward internalizing gender-sensitive values and practices. The study, therefore, considers whether the training design fosters such long-term engagement and if mechanisms exist for follow-up, mentoring, or continued learning (Craig et al., 1998; Hoque et al., 2010).

Element 7. Action/Intervention

The final component of Freire’s pedagogy is praxis- the unity of reflection and action. It insists that education must culminate in transformative social intervention. In this context, the study examines whether trainees are equipped and motivated to apply their learning in real-world scenarios- both within their professional responsibilities and in broader societal contexts. This includes assessing how they have translated knowledge into action, whether by initiating gender-sensitive policies, advocating for child rights, or challenging discriminatory practices in their workplaces and communities (Craig et al., 1998).

Through the application of Freire’s seven elements of critical pedagogy, this study aims not only to assess the design and delivery of Module 12 but also to critically evaluate its transformative potential. This theoretical framework enables a multi-dimensional analysis that captures both the structural content of the training and the subjective experiences of learners, offering insights into the broader possibilities for rights-based, inclusive civil service training in Bangladesh

Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study critically examines Module 12 (Gender and Child Rights) of the Fundamental Training Course offered by the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), employing Freire's (1970) theoretical framework of critical pedagogy. The research adopts a multimethod qualitative approach (Creswell, 2015), integrating inductive qualitative content analysis of relevant training documents with empirical data derived from in-depth interviews conducted with selected participants (trainees) of the module. Specifically, the study employs a sequential multimethod qualitative design: the first phase adopts an inductive approach through Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) of training documents, allowing themes to emerge from the data; the second phase employs a deductive approach in the empirical study, using Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy framework as a predetermined analytical lens for thematic analysis of interview data. This methodological design aligns with the overarching research objective of exploring the extent to which the core elements of critical pedagogy are embedded within the structure and delivery of the training program.

(Document based inductive) qualitative content analysis

In alignment with the methodological guidance provided by Elo and Kyngäs (2007), an initial phase of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) was undertaken in this study. QCA is a systematic method for analyzing textual data—such as documents—through a structured process of coding and categorizing content to identify underlying themes and patterns (Elo and Kyngäs, 2007). The objective of this phase was to uncover the core content areas and pedagogical strategies embedded within the training module. This preliminary analysis was designed to inform and guide the subsequent empirical phase, which involved in-depth interviews with trainees to assess their experiential learning and application of knowledge. To conduct the content analysis effectively, we followed a series of methodological steps, which were adapted and customized to align with the specific objectives and context of the present study. These steps are outlined below.

1. Prepare the Data – we collected all of the reading and teaching materials relevant to the module 12 of FTC course to understand what the contents are included in the module or how the module was designed for training, what pedagogy included and how the pedagogy was designed. At this stage these were considered data and ensured that data is in a form ready for close reading.

2. Define the Research Question

We clarified and broken down the (if necessary) the research questions regarding what we wanted to explore or understand from the text. This guides the selection of relevant content and codes.

3. Select the Unit of Analysis

Reflecting our research question and objectives, we decide the smallest segment to be analyzed. Our target was the content or themes.

4. Develop a Coding Framework

As we adopted inductive (data-driven) approach to coding, we did not use code framework. Based on open codes, focused codes and categories emerged from the raw data.

5. Categorize and Group Codes

We grouped similar codes into categories or themes to look for patterns, relationships, and frequencies. Thus, we found major and dominant themes, and finally the content of the training module, which are presented in the findings section

6. Ensure Trustworthiness

To enhance the credibility and dependability of the content analysis, we employed several trustworthiness strategies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The coding process was conducted independently by two members of the research team, followed by a reconciliation discussion to reach consensus on categories and themes. We also maintained an audit trail by documenting all analytical decisions, code definitions, and category revisions throughout the process. Additionally, the emerging themes were reviewed against the raw training materials to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the data.

7. Interpret the Findings and Report the Results

Based on the major themes or contents, we reported the result in the result section, consisting with components of critical reflection.

3.2 EMPIRICAL QUALITATIVE STUDY

Study design

This study explored the experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) of civil servants who participated in the Foundation Training Course (FTC), with a particular focus on Module 12: Gender and Child Rights to understand how participants experienced and interpreted the training, and how these experiences shaped their attitudes and practices within the civil service. As this study analyzed their narratives and experiences regarding self-assessment and reflections of Foundation Training Course, this study employed a qualitative approach rather than aiming to show inferences from numerical data, causal relationships, and predictions. This approach examines the processes wherein the world is understood or created by people's lives, behavior, and meaningful interactions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Thus, qualitative research arrives at findings from real-world settings that unfold naturally (Patton, 2001). Based on the interpretative paradigm, we tried to understand the subjective and socio-culturally constructed meaning of the participants' experience regarding their activities. Inspired by the interpretative perspective, this qualitative research approach involved studying meaning-making processes of social reality, aiming to recognize how individuals make sense of their training, how they navigate institutional expectations, and how their understanding of gender and child rights is shaped through professional and personal encounters. (Gibson & Brown, 2009). In other words, this approach is pragmatic, interpretative, and grounded in the living experiences of people, which helps to understand how experiences are created and given meaning (Marshall & Gretchen, 2006; Yilmaz, 2013). Moreover, their stories and experiences helped reveal the nuanced, often invisible dynamics of the interconnected professional and personal lives of civil servants. Storytelling, being a natural and accessible form of self-expression, allowed participants to build a coherent narrative out of their experiences - from recruitment to training to field application. This process helped surface untold dimensions of how and why they

internalized or resisted messages from Module 12, how they managed ethical dilemmas in the workplace, and how they reflected on the institutional mechanisms that promote or hinder gender and child rights. Thus, the narratives civil servants provided may help illuminate practical insights and structural shortcomings, offering grounded direction for designing more effective and inclusive training programs.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS, SAMPLING, AND RECRUITMENT

The participants in this study comprised civil servants from different batches who had completed the Foundation Training Course (FTC) (Table 1). They were selected using purposive sampling. The demographic profile of the participants indicates that 68.75% were male and 31.25% were female, with an average age of 34 years (ranging from 29 to 38 years).

A purposive sampling technique was selected because it enabled us to get participants who would provide sufficient data to meet our research objectives. Purposive sampling is an approach frequently used in qualitative research. It allows us to identify information-rich cases that provide in-depth insight into the central issues of the research and questions under study (Patton, 2001). In this study, we purposively sampled for

- individuals who completed Foundation Training Course and
- currently working in the civil service

A heterogeneous sample was needed because our population of civil servants perform various duties in differential sectors (Table 1). We stopped interviewing when we felt we had learned adequate information to answer our research questions in terms of heterogeneous participants; therefore, an adequate sample size was our target (Charmaz, 2006). Determining the sample size in this study was mainly guided by two principles: appropriateness and adequacy. This study fulfilled the 'appropriateness' by recruiting those participants who best represented the research topics and must be experts in the phenomena of interest. Adequacy was confirmed in terms of gaining sufficient answers to the research questions and when the depth and breadth of the information were achieved (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016; Morse, 2015; O'reilly & Parker, 2013; Sandelowski, 1995). Thus, 16 participants were interviewed in this study, which is in line with suggestions by

seasoned qualitative researchers (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Green & Thorogood, 2018). Among them, there were Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), AC land, assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, agriculture officer, family planning officer, fisheries officer, sub-divisional engineer, deputy project manager, assistant project director etc.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants

S/N	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Position
01	Saiful	38	Male	Additional Deputy Commissioner (General)
02	Faria	37	Female	Additional Deputy commissioner (Education and ICT)
03	Mahdi	30	Male	Assistant commissioner and executive magistrate
04	Rakib	32	Male	Assistant commissioner and executive magistrate
05	Raj	34	Male	Family planning officer
06	Mahfuza	34	Female	Assistant commissioner and executive magistrate
07	Sanjida	38	Female	Fisheries officer
08	Sajid	36	Male	Assistant commissioner and executive magistrate
09	Arman	29	Male	Assistant project director
10	Mahidul	32	Male	Sub-divisional engineer
11	Enamul	31	Male	Assistant project director
12	Razibur	35	Male	Assistant commissioner and executive magistrate
13	Sagar	34	Male	Agriculture officer
14	Parboti	37	Female	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
15	Nargis	30	Female	AC land
16	Azahar	31	Male	Deputy project manager

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Civil servants' experiences were collected using in-depth interview method from February to May 2025 to understand valuable insights into their training experiences, perceptions of authority and service, and the ways in which critical reflection and learning occurred within a structured bureaucratic environment. As this study involves soliciting civil servants' personal and professional experiences, the in-depth interview as a technique of data collection was selected to give participants a space to share their life stories. This technique helped us to conduct intensive individual interviews with a minimum number of participants to explore their particular ideas, co-creating meaning by reconstructing perceptions, stories, and experiences. For this study, data was collected from the DC office, the UNO office in a district, and an office of the Roads and Highways Department in Dhaka division.

The interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. There was no monetary benefit for participation, rather it was voluntary. During the interviews, we kept a notebook in order to take necessary and meaningful notes. For example, we took notes using our own reflections and insights about an interesting context and silent feelings for a particular statement, that we used during our data analysis.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed (appendix -1), which was informed by literature and discussion with the research team/committee. Generally, questions broadly look at key topics central to the research focus, while probes explore these topics in detail to understand the participant's perspectives. For instance, in the interview guideline, a question might be broadly asked, "Tell me about your experience; how you deal gender and child issues in your workplace?" while probes may be asked from the response to elicit more detail, such as "How was it challenging?" The interviews were commenced with a preamble to the research topic and central focus, reaffirming consent (appendix 2), and then moved on to an icebreaker question related to the participant's everyday activities, which set the scene for the interview, allowing participants to 'open up from the get-go and giving the interview the opportunity to adapt our approach to suit the participant (Namageyo-Funa et al., 2014; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

Given the possibility that the civil servants might not fully recall the contents of the training module, a summarized list of topics was provided to them prior to the commencement of the interview. This was intended to refresh their memory and ensure that their reflections were grounded in the specific training they had received.

3.5 DATA MANAGEMENT

All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim to separate Word documents, which were encrypted and protected with a password to ensure confidentiality in our personal devices. Then, we reread the transcripts while listening to audio recordings to recreate the interview while also providing the opportunity to add on non-verbal interview data (e.g., pauses, laughing, changes in pitch) and verify that the transcripts are as accurate as possible. The dataset was analyzed using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This study sought to understand in detail the experiences and practices of civil servants who received training on module 12 of FTC. In this context, interviews with participants were transcribed verbatim for coding. Of importance, data analysis followed a deductive coding. Based on the Freirean framework, a codebook of five codes — corresponding to Freirean Elements 1, 2, 4 & 5, 6, and 7 — was created in this context. These codes were predetermined codes mainly from the Freirean components of critical pedagogy, and previous literature, and research objectives/questions reflected issues recognized or assumed during interviews by researchers. Using NVivo, the data sets were re-arranged in terms of the codebook. These codes helped us reflect on the overall patterns of the data, including identifying common themes that yield many descriptive themes. We then (re)viewed these descriptive themes again and developed more analytical themes by grouping them together, moving back and forth between descriptive and analytical themes, using a word document. This facilitated a higher level of abstraction and theorizing the interpretation of the research findings and the function they serve. Thus, we found some analytical and abstract themes through several reviews and re-reviews of the long list of(descriptive) themes through which the major /key themes emerged. Thus, our analysis

led to the development of 14 major themes under 5 codes (table 2) based on the codes mentioned above, which are highlighted in the findings chapter of this report.

Table 2 Themes of the data

S/N	Freire's Transformational Process (codebook)	Themes
1	Element 1: Concept of Knowledge	• Poor involvement of officers • Absence of reality • Functionality of training
2	Element 2: Generative Themes & Codification	• Absence of participatory content development • Disconnect between training content and field realities
3	Element 4 & 5: Dialogue & Conscientization	• Absence of reality • Functionality of training
2	Element 4 & 5: Dialogue & Conscientization	• Ongoing critical dialogue • Participant centered focus • Diverse group of officers
4	Element 6: Easter Experience (Transformation)	• Critical Self-Reflection of Officers • Life experience rather training
5	Element 7: Praxis/Action	• Practical implications of training

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Sociology, Jagannath University. A number of factors were required to successfully implement this research, including informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and safeguards against potential risks from participating.

In the beginning, informed consent was obtained from the participants – civil servants that met eligibility and agreed to participate. Moreover, we verbally explained the ins and outs of informed consent to each participant before beginning the discussion, making sure that they understood their rights, including their right to participate and to

withdraw during an interview at any time without any penalty. In a nutshell, the participants were briefed about the research topic and informed that they would not be compelled to continue the interview or answer any questions they might feel uncomfortable with.

In terms of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, we assured them that any identifiers, including name would not be used directly. If a participant used any direct names, their pseudonyms were used during transcriptions. We also used pseudonyms for each participant. We tried to make sure to protect their anonymity so that they could feel comfortable and safe. Participants were also informed about the research's confidentiality and that the findings would be used for academic purposes only. All audio recordings and transcripts were anonymized with assigned pseudonyms and stored on a secure drive at the Dr. Khan's Social Impact Lab (SI Lab).

All ethical concerns were reiterated in the information and consent form and discussed with participants prior to the interview. Once the interview was completed, participants were given feedback to thank them for participating. It includes my contact details should they have further questions and/or concerns or would like to contact me for a copy of the research findings once completed.

Chapter Four: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the findings from two interrelated studies: a qualitative content analysis and an empirical qualitative investigation. The qualitative content analysis was conducted to examine the existing training materials and methods. Building upon the insights gained from this initial phase, the subsequent empirical study employed in-depth interviews to explore trainees' learning experiences. Specifically, it examined how trainees perceived the training content, how they acquired knowledge during the sessions, and how they applied that learning in both their professional and personal contexts.

4.1 FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This section presents the thematic findings derived from the qualitative content analysis of Module 12 in the training program. The analysis aimed to identify the key content areas and pedagogical approaches embedded in the training.

A. Key content areas: Through systematic coding and categorization of the module's contents, eight major themes emerged (appendix 3), each encompassing a cluster of related sub-topics. These themes reflect the module's comprehensive coverage of gender-related and child rights issues in leadership and development.

I. Gender and Development in Leadership for an Equal Future: This theme addresses the foundational understanding of gender in leadership contexts, emphasizing women's empowerment and the structural challenges they face. Topics include distinctions between sex and gender, the role of social norms, gender equity and equality, and gender-sensitive education. Notably, the Global Gender Gap Index (2023) served as a benchmark for discussing gender disparities across sectors like health, education, political participation, and economic inclusion.

II. Economic Issues in Gender and Development: This theme focuses on economic disparities rooted in gender inequality, highlighting issues such as wage gaps and financial marginalization. Discussions under this theme underscored the persistent undervaluation of women's work and the need for economic justice.

III. Violence and Abuse Against Women and Children: Participants explored various forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. The theme also examined social practices such as early marriage and dowry, and contemporary issues like cyber violence and its impact on mental health. The legal framework for violence prevention was also covered.

IV. Gender in the Workplace: This theme investigates gender-sensitive workplace policies and practices, including maternity/paternity leave, gender budgeting, and safe, inclusive working environments. Attention was also given to the language of inclusion and women's representation in decision-making roles.

V. Women's and Child Rights: CEDAW & CRC: A comprehensive review of legal frameworks like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was included. Sub-themes addressed children's rights in the context of Bangladesh's legal systems, vulnerability of children, and the state's role in child protection.

VI. Creating Gender-Friendly Environments Across Sectors: This theme integrates content on fostering gender-sensitive environments in both public and private spheres. Topics included unpaid and paid labor, feminization of poverty, and rural women's labor participation. The role of socialization and patriarchy was critically examined.

VII. Gender Development in Society: Participants engaged with content on the social construction of gender and its broader implications. Sub-themes included the gendered division of labor, stereotypes, transgender rights, and gender mainstreaming. The focus was on achieving social transformation through inclusive planning and policy.

VIII. Challenges Faced by Working Women in Bangladesh: The final theme highlights structural and cultural challenges affecting women's labor force participation. These included the absence of childcare facilities, underrepresentation in the formal economy, and unequal caregiving burdens in family life.

B. Pedagogical Approaches Used in Module 12: The content was delivered using a range of training methods that were categorized into three broad pedagogical groups, reflecting the ethos of adult learning principles:

I. Interactive and Participatory Methods: These methods promoted learner engagement, collaboration, and experiential skill development, such as Group work, Seminar, Workshop, Panel discussion, Individual/group exercises, Role play, Demonstration, and Weekly recap sessions (peer-led presentations).

II. Instructional and Cognitive Methods: These focused on structured delivery of knowledge and fostering analytical skills: Lecture and discussion, Reading assignments, Extension lectures, and Library work

III. Experiential and Contextual Learning Methods: These approaches linked training content with real-world contexts: Case studies, Film shows, Study tours, and Field visits/attachments

The qualitative content analysis of Module 12 revealed a holistic and multi-layered training design that not only addressed critical gender issues across personal, institutional, and societal levels but also integrated diverse instructional methods. This combination of rich content and varied pedagogy contributed to an immersive and empowering learning experience for participants.

4.2 FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE EMPIRICAL STUDY

As outlined in the methodology chapter, this study employed a deductive thematic analysis approach, using the seven core components of Freirean critical pedagogy as a predefined coding framework (see the chapter on theoretical framework). These components served as an analytical lens through which the interview transcripts were examined systematically. The primary aim of the analysis was to explore the learning experiences of the trainees and to assess the extent to which the pedagogical content and approaches influenced their application of knowledge in both professional and personal contexts. The findings derived from this analytical process are presented in the following sections.

1. Concept of knowledge for themes and codification

The concept of knowledge highlights whose perspectives are valued, heard, and legitimized within society or education. It stresses the need to question power dynamics in knowledge dissemination. For civil service training, this means programs should not be

dictated solely by authorities but shaped with active participation from trainees and stakeholders.

1.1 Poor involvement of officers:

In this study, it shows limited or almost no involvement of officers in the design of training courses. Most participants reported that courses were pre-designed by the institutions and offered little to no scope for participants' input during the planning stage. Officers frequently described themselves as passive recipients of training rather than active contributors. In this context, Razibur (35), Assistant Commissioner and Executive Magistrate, stated as: "[...] we were not included [in the course design]. The course was designed entirely by them [Foundation Training Course (FTC) trainers]. Everything was according to them."

Again, several participants compared the experience to being treated like first-time learners with no prior understanding of what they might need. Although officers brought diverse professional and social experiences that had the potential that can contribute to the training, these insights were not always systematically integrated into the program, limiting opportunities for deeper reflection and application. In accordance with this perspective, Parboti (37), an Upazila Nirbahi Officer, explained: "The training design is usually pre-set. But we have some freedom to change the order of some parts [Some flexibility to adjust the sequence of topics]. But we did not have that chance to involve in course design." Likewise, Mahdi (30), Assistant Commissioner and Executive Magistrate, stated as: "We trainees do not have any role in course design. As participants, we do not have any role in that."

In case of opportunities to provide feedback on course outline and teaching, it was usually limited to the end of the course. Officers were asked to fill in evaluation forms or provide remarks about instructors. However, these feedback mechanisms were widely seen as more like formality than a real way to make change. In this study, participants expressed doubt about whether their suggestions were seriously considered or applied, since feedback came at the closing stage when participants were already disengaged and preparing to leave. As Mahfuza (34), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, described that:

Evaluations were taken. On the last day, a feedback sheet is given to collect remarks. But I do not think they are applied in course outline. Because it is the last day, people are more excited about going home. They even ask others to fill out their forms. It becomes a formality rather than something meaningful.

In addition, Sajid (36), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, explained focusing on providing pre-designed course outlines from BPATC. She mentioned as: "When we participated, we were given regular courses and modules that were pre-designed. [...] we were never asked about the design of the course. We were only asked for feedback during course evaluations." These statements indicate a gap between officers' experiences and their involvement in training design, where limited participation and feedback mechanisms reduced opportunities for meaningful engagement and improvement.

1.2 Absence of Reality:

In civil service training program, reality demands inclusion of all stakeholders like community people who receive services, civil service officers, training instructors, course designers, attached department and ministry personnels etc. This process is called "generative themes" by Freire. To ensure relevance, interventions should go through preliminary research, reflect local needs and continual evaluation that assembles viewpoints of diverse stakeholders. Such training intervention should be piloted and refined before broader implementation.

In this study, according to several participants, they did not find the presence of evaluation and research in training, as they often discussed about this training with their fellow officers. In this context, Raj (34), a family planning officer, pronounced citing Foundation Training Course as isolated session and aspiring regular evaluation of the training programs to make them more effective and useful. Similarly, Arman (29), an assistant project director, indicated the rigidity of the training. By rigidity, he meant the training was being provided for long in the same way, implying that there was absence of evaluation to change for future. He shared his views as:

The training was very rigid. By rigid, I mean — this might have been going on for 25, 30, maybe even 40–50 years, I do not know exactly, but it seems like it is just continuing the same way. I cannot say for sure. But it felt like we were constantly studying law.

In addition, in this study, we did not find any response that any piloting took place prior to the implementation of the foundation training course. In line with this statement, Rakib (32), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, narrated focusing on lack of piloting before implementation of the training. But there was taken feedback from civil servants around the middle of the course. He stated as:

[...] they decided [training module and process] for us. But in FTC, I think around the middle of the class, we were asked for feedback. They asked if there were too many rigid things or if any topic should be added. We could give our comments or suggestions.

Likewise, Sagar (29), an agriculture officer, stated focusing absence of piloting and application of top-bottom-up approach in training. He narrated as: “[...] we do not have the opportunity to give suggestions on this because we received a letter like I have left in the name of the foundation training; the classes have started. The matter is like this.” This scenario points the limited compatibility of the foundation training with the principles of critical pedagogy.

1.3 Functionality of Training

The Foundation Training Course (FTC) is a superficial training in nature. It does not cover all topics thoroughly. In line with this statement, Nargis (30), an Assistant Commissioner (Land), stated as women face gender equality related issues in differential cases. She mentioned as follows.

[...] it is not sufficient. Often the training just scratches the surface. It does not go deep. And in many areas, you cannot go deep because of sensitive topics- like religion. For example, when we talk about property rights, we see that brothers often sell the property without including their sisters. When sisters ask for their rights, the brothers say, “You don’t live here,” or “You have no control over this

property- why are you bothering us?" Then religious issues come into play- when sisters ask for even half of their share, as per Islam. So, we end up talking at a surface level. In terms of workplace equality, often men earn and that earns them respect. But even when women earn, they are not taught that they also deserve that respect.

Similarly, Mahidul (32), a sub-divisional engineer, said lack of deep capturability of the training on any topics. He mentioned that,

Actually, I mean, the training was not literally focused only on gender equality and child rights. The foundation training covers a lot of different topics. Among them, this was just one part. [...] But from what I feel, personally, I would say I did not receive deep training on this specific topic.

On the contrary, Sagar (34), an agriculture officer, described that training was very much practical and it had drastic effects on civil servants' duties" "[...] The training we received was very practical and based on real-life situations. Because of that, the understanding we had before and after the training is completely different - like night and day."

2. Dialogue and conscientization

Freire's concept of conscientization refers that participants should be encouraged to consider the root causes of gender and child right issues in their administrative context and to their own roles in maintaining or challenging inequalities. According to Freire, it is crucial to implement a participative approach in training that fosters critical thinking and fruitful discussion. These reflective activities can develop an in-depth understanding of the structural and cultural issues of women and children. A diverse group must be involved in the design and delivery of such training in order to guarantee that a variety of viewpoints and real-world experiences are incorporated into the program.

2.1 Ongoing Critical Dialogue

Critical dialogue refers to foster open, reflective, and participatory conversations where learners and facilitators engage in mutual questioning and idea exchange. Rather

than simply receiving information, participants critically examine assumptions, share lived experiences, and collaboratively explore solutions - encouraging deeper understanding and social awareness (Freire, 1970). To recall about critical dialogue in Foundation training course Mahfuza (34), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, thought the training was sufficient but it was lecture based. She suggested that, "If there were more knowledge-sharing, interactive sessions, or workshops, it would be more effective. Instead of passive lecture-based classes, let the trainees participate actively and produce outcomes. That would bring life to the sessions."

In this study, many participants suggested increasing the duration of the Foundation Training Course or holding training at regular intervals because it is not possible to understand and apply everything through just one training session. In this context, Sanjida (33), a fisheries officer, said, "If it were a one-year course, it would have been even better."

Additionally, Rakib (32), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, recommended to arrange training session after a certain interval. He claimed as:

There should be several training sessions so that they can be organized at regular intervals. Because at first, when everyone is new, the capacity to understand the training is the same. Then, after working for a few years, when different experiences are created, training needs to be done again and feedback from the officers should be taken.

Also, Parboti (37), a Upazila Nirbahi Officer, shared her opinion as insufficiency of training and focused on improvement. She stated that "It was insufficient. It needs to be improved, and we need to have a clear understanding. Whenever you speak up, they will just label you a feminist." In line with the response of Parboti (37), Sajid (36), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, told that "I believe there needs to be continuous training and skill development throughout our service life. It should grow through our work, through training."

2.2 Participant centered focus

Participant-centered focus means giving priority to participants' perspectives, experiences, and voices in a study or program, ensuring their needs, context, and agency

guide the process. In this study, several participants described the training sessions as largely lecture-based and content-heavy, leaving minimal room for critical discussion. As, Faria (37), an additional deputy commissioner (Education & ICT), noted that while she could connect the content to her own professional practice, many peers could not do that. She stated as: "What the instructors said during the training, it went over the heads of many participants." Likewise, Nargis (30), an Assistant Commissioner (Land), explicitly questioned the relevance of certain modules, stating, "Some of the modules were just like bullet points. They did not cover our understanding thoroughly" These examples illustrate isolated moments of critical questioning rather than a systematic practice of dialogue.

Additionally, a few participants also emphasized that the format of training often hindered meaningful interaction. As Mafuza (34), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, suggested mentioning training could be more effective if it is redesigned to allow knowledge-sharing and interactive learning. She illustrated as:

[...] the permanent PATC staffs- the lecturers, ADs, DDs- they have the same old modules, they have memorized them. They can go through their entire career with that memorized knowledge. That needs to change. The ADs and DDs at PATC must conduct sessions-that is unavoidable. But they can change their subjects from time to time to break monotony. Just like a university teacher is not restricted to only one subject forever. Trainers at PATC could switch between different modules, which would help both them and the trainees avoid boredom. Overall, the training process should be more interactive and practical. It should allow more knowledge-sharing, reduce rigid classroom formats, and refresh teaching methods. Evaluation should be meaningful. And more alignment with real field demands would make it more impactful.]

Alongside, Saiful, an additional deputy commissioner (General) pointed out that: "The system itself is designed as the lectures were one-way with little to no interaction" Overall, the findings suggest that while individual acts of questioning occurred, the institutional framework provided little space for ongoing critical dialogue in Freirean terms.

2.3 Diverse group of officers:

According to Paulo Freire, any learning process or training becomes more meaningful and transformative when it involves a diverse group of participants. Freire emphasized dialogue, mutual exchange, and problem-posing education rather than one-way instruction. When learners come from varied professional, cultural, and social backgrounds, they bring different experiences, perspectives, and knowledge systems to the learning space. The Foundation Training Course (FTC) of BPATC engages officers from 26 different cadres of the Bangladesh Civil Service, reflecting a highly diverse group of participants with varied professional experiences, institutional roles, and socio-cultural backgrounds. This diversity creates an opportunity to embrace Paulo Freire's (1970) notions of dialogical learning, where education should move beyond a one-way transfer of knowledge and instead become a participatory process that values learners' realities.

3. Easter experience:

Easter experience stands for self-awareness and reflection after training to the process through which participants critically examine their own thoughts, values, and practices in light of the lessons and learnings they gained. It means recognizing how training has shaped not only their professional skills but also their way of thinking, decision-making, and engagement with others. Through reflection, participants become more conscious of their strengths, limitations, and biases, enabling them to connect theoretical knowledge with realities. This reflective practice fosters continuous learning, helps internalize new perspectives, and ultimately leads to personal growth and more informed professional actions.

3.1 Critical Self-Reflection of Officers

Training changes civil service officers' attitudes and beliefs about gender as they applied training in their activities. Sagar (34), an agriculture officer, stated learning about gender and child right issues from FTC. He narrated that, "We had classes on how to empower women and develop leadership among them. We learned that during the FTC, and based on that, we are working on these things in the field now."

Furthermore, another participant, Raj (34), a Family Planning Officer, told that after receiving this training, he understood the actual meaning of gender. He illustrated as:

The term gender- we were not really familiar with concepts like gender equality before. All of us come from different academic backgrounds. Because of the training, we got to learn about these. [...] the concept of gender equality itself- we learned about it through the training. I believe many of us were not aware of this issue before.

He also stated like previous response in the following manner: “[...] gender does not mean just women, it includes men’s rights too. I explain it like this: there are certain roles assigned by society like men can do some things, and women cannot. These are gender issues.” Again, Saiful (38), an additional deputy commissioner, said that “Training has changed my attitude regarding gender. I did gain some knowledge from the training- some understanding about gender and also about children.”

Again, Nargis (30), an Assistant Commissioner (Land), stated focusing on absence of reflection among some officers even after completing Foundation Training Course (FTC). She narrated as:

Sometimes I say to my colleagues, “Please help me leave, my child is home alone.” Then they say, “You talk about equal rights, so why cannot you stay when I can? Do not I have a child at home? Does not the child need a father too, not just a mother?” This is the attitude. And I feel people find talking about these issues redundant, like it has already been settled. They think women will always take advantage and get special treatment. In intellectual spaces, if a man makes a mistake, they say he is still maturing as an officer. But if a woman makes a mistake, they say, “Her thinking is like that - of course she’ll make mistakes.” They assume she cannot think beyond that level. So, while a man is teachable, a woman is considered limited.

Additionally, self-assessment and reflective activities stand for giving individuals the chance to think about their own experiences, strengths, weaknesses, and learning progress. This helps them become more aware of what they know, what they need to improve, and

how their values or actions align with what they are learning. It is a tool for personal and professional development (Freire, 1970). In this context, Raj (34), a family planning officer, described the training was instrumental in his service providing. He illustrated as:

I have noticed changes in how I communicate with people- both service providers and service seekers. There has been a noticeable change in the way I talk and behave with them. The training has brought about changes in my interpersonal behavior.

But there are exceptions also in case of self-assessment or reflective activities of training. For example, Saiful (38), an additional deputy commissioner, prioritized role of life experience rather training to deal gender and child issues. He told as: "The impact of training is not that significant. Practically, we feel that our work involves a lot of challenges. For example, when we go on night raids, we think about the women- how much they can bear or endure." Also, Parboti (37), an Upazila Nirbahi Officer, showed reflection of her training and stated that, "As an Executive Magistrate, sometimes we face problems when parents get divorced and fight over child custody. For a small child of 2-3 years, it is difficult to decide. So, we suggest going to court."

Again, Arman (29), an assistant project director, reported that their planning of infrastructure seriously considers the gender and child issues. When they design any structure, they must bear the issues of marginalized groups like women, children, and aged in their mind. This awareness they received from the training, and partially from their family as well. He shared his thinking as:

Road design is not just about infrastructure. For example, if we build an underpass, and it does not have proper lighting, people will not want to use it after sunset - especially women. Yes, so when we create an underpass, we have to think about how to install lighting. And even lighting alone is not enough - incidents can still occur after dark. So, we are also installing CCTV cameras. These decisions are not made just from an infrastructural perspective - they are made with safety concerns in mind. So, yes, there are many such elements included in our project.

Also, Enamul (31), an assistant project director of Roads and Highways department, shared his self-reflection to work with female colleagues. He articulated that:

In my work, I have two members - one is an SD (Sub-Divisional Engineer) and the other SD is a woman. We used to go on site visits, even to remote places. Sometimes we had to stay overnight in remote areas. In such cases, [...] I would take on extra work to make her life a little easier. As a colleague, I felt I had to do that. There are a few lady officers in Roads and Highways, but since road work is physically demanding, it becomes more stressful for female officers. In our department, the government spends a lot of money, and there is a matter of exercising power. A male officer can handle that pressure better because they do not usually have as many family responsibilities. Our seniors often assign female officers to postings where the work is a bit lighter so they can spend more time with their families.

3.2 Life experience rather training

In our study, several participants emphasized on the learning from their life experiences in terms of family, religion, education, and socialization agencies in dealing with gender and child rights issues in their professional and personal lives. Arman (29), an assistant project director, acclaimed that experiences before training influenced him more. He articulated as: "The training did not particularly help to change my perception. My perception was already changed before the training."

In addition, Parboti (37), an Upazila Nirbahi Officer, said that perception changes not only through training but also through a combination of various factors during lifetime. As she commented:

As I already had courses on gender earlier and this training was for a short time, it may not have caused a drastic change. But it was a lifetime experience. Given the nature of my job and facing different situations, change happens automatically. But as I said earlier, it is not just the training. Everything combined influenced me. For example, during a school bicycle distribution program, I gave more priority to girls. Because a boy can use public transport to go to school, but girls often cannot, so I gave preference to them.

Likewise, Enamul (31), an assistant project director of Roads and Highways department, pronounced influence of religion on his perception and acknowledged influences of training silently in his thinking and activities. He revealed his views as:

I cannot say for sure. It might be that I am more influenced by religion. But yes, there is always a bit of influence. Even if there is no immediate effect from each learning experience, there is a deeper impact - something inside is always lit up in some way.

He also added in the following manner:

Those who become BCS cadre officers have already grown up mentally. Think of it this way: a small child can be shaped easily. But I am already grown up - I know a lot, I am already influenced by certain beliefs. So, the question is, how much can something new really influence me? In the beginning, as I mentioned earlier, if religion is a priority for someone, people will be on different levels of perception. The challenge is how to bring people from different levels to a common ground. Someone with a beard and cap, a religious person, may avoid even looking at women. And someone else may be unruly or very flexible. How do you bring them together on a common ground?

Again, Razibur (35), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, mentioned influences of different factors rather than just training. He said that:

Actually, the BPSC course was not anything very unique or radical. These topics - gender, child rights - are things we have already read or seen often on social media or in campaigns. So, it was not really something new for me.

Faria (37), an additional deputy commissioner, articulated prior knowledge on gender and child right issues and complexities for a few trainees. He stated that, "[...] the training made sense to me because I had a background in the topic. What they said during the training, it went over the heads of many participants."

4. Action:

4.1 Practical implications of training

It is to foster critical awareness and taking collective action to transform unjust systems. It involves both individuals and institutions engaging in reflection and action (praxis) to challenge oppression and promote meaningful social change (Freire, 1970). In relation with this Mahdi (30), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, said focusing on implementation of training to encounter child marriage. He described that: "Training was very useful. One specific area I encountered a lot in my work was child marriage." Another participant Mahfuza (34), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, resounded like Mahdi (30) on how training assisted her to deal child marriage and eve-teasing. She said that:

Child marriage prevention is under mobile court jurisdiction. If someone reports it through 999, or to the UNO, AC (Land), or DC-it is dealt with immediately via mobile court. You may have seen these in the media. Same for issues like eve-teasing."

Similarly, Parboti (37), an Upazila Nirbahi Officer, stated about taking various steps and challenges to administer her duties in the following manner:

When I was working as Assistant Commissioner, I received many complaints about child marriage. If any law was violated, we took necessary steps. We also took help from the Department of Women Affairs and gave instructions. Even after coming to Narsingdi Sadar Upazila, I stopped a few child marriages. But nowadays it is more difficult to prevent child marriage because the marriage is already done in court. It is challenging to stop such marriages. According to our laws, marriage before 18 is illegal- so we need to know how the court allows it. That is also a problem.

After completing this training, Raj (34), a family planning officer, has taken different initiatives. He arranged courtyard meetings to raise awareness among women. He mentioned as:

[...] when we sit with them [women] like yesterday, we had a courtyard meeting we discussed with the women, saying: "You are women, you have rights, and your opinions matter in the household. But instead, what you do is you feed the man first, then suffer from malnutrition yourself, and by the time you reach 40, your body starts to break down with various diseases."

Alongside, Sanjida (33), a fisheries officer, explained how the training was reflected in her life. She explained that:

I learned a lot from the training, and it certainly helped improve my communication and understanding when I go into the field. For instance, during workshops or training sessions, we actively encourage women to participate. We tell them- whether you want it or not, if you have income in hand, your decisions and knowledge will improve. So be interested in income-generating activities."

Again, Saiful (38), an additional deputy commissioner, worked with the marginalized community. He mentioned like the following manner: "I worked with the Hijra community. We worked on providing housing for them, creating employment opportunities- like giving them sewing machines, cows, various resources, financial support, and even rice." He faced challenges to maintain his duties. He stated as:

[...] in the case of child marriage, I have faced it [challenges]. Child marriage is a major challenge for us. For example, in one case, I rescued a girl- she was Hindu and had married a Muslim boy. The girl had converted to Islam. We received information that her parents were locking her inside the house, even threatening to kill her. A women's organization, which works on such issues, informed us about this situation. The girl was then rescued and placed in a safe home- a private NGO runs it. Later, arrangements were made for her education. She was still a minor, so it was said she should continue studying, and the rest will be figured out later. For now, the goal was to ensure a healthy environment for her. So yes, I have done such work.

Similar to the previous responses, Sajid (36), an assistant commissioner and executive magistrate, described about their duties to change societal problems. He detailed as follows:

Training has influenced me. [...] a few days ago, I went on a mobile court drive as an Executive Magistrate. There, around 100–200 meters away from the site, an incident had occurred. A woman had been admitted to the hospital for delivery. The machine showed the baby's weight as 1.5 kg, but actually the baby weighed more than 3 kg. Based on the machine reading, they proceeded with delivery. Because the baby's weight was higher than expected, they had to apply extra pressure to pull the baby out, and the baby died. There was a data gap. So, the hospital authority could not avoid responsibility. We brought the hospital under mobile court and fined them 75,000 Taka. The woman herself did not have any regrets – she said Allah took her child. But her relatives said they were happy to get justice. At least the hospital could not get away with it. Otherwise, such incidents would continue, and they would only do business in the name of service. So, we tried to bring that hospital under the law – the baby could not be brought back, but we did what we could.

Alongside, Sagar (34), an agriculture officer, spoke about taking various initiatives including courtyard meeting, workshop, seminar to motivate women farmers to work. He exposed his views as:

[...] we work with farmers, right? After that training, we didn't just work with male farmers- we also worked with female farmers, the women in farming. We helped them become entrepreneurs. We have some demonstration programs and field days, and in those, we gave more importance to female farmers so they could come forward. We have a project called the "PARTNER" project. Under this project, every upazila has a "Partner Field School." In each field school, there are 25 members- 10 of them are women, and 15 are men. These 10 women come regularly and learn about agriculture. This is a big step. Also, the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Partner Program Coordinator (PC Sir), and others- we have all inaugurated these Partner Field Schools, and the response from the women

farmers was very good. The fact that women are becoming entrepreneurs is a big achievement.

In a nutshell, while the module offers a rich and well-structured curriculum covering a broad range of gender-related themes, its design and delivery fall short of embodying the participatory spirit essential for transformative adult learning. The training's pedagogical diversity is commendable, yet it remains constrained by a predominantly top-down approach, limited participant involvement in design, and underutilized reflective practices. Empirical insights reveal that although many officers reported positive behavioral changes and increased awareness—such as action against child marriage or inclusive field practices—these outcomes were often shaped as much by personal life experiences as by formal training. Participants consistently called for more hands-on, field-oriented learning, longer training durations, and continuous professional development. In sum, the findings underscore the need for structural reform in civil service training, advocating for a participatory, context-sensitive, and praxis-driven approach that fosters lifelong learning and genuine transformation.

Chapter Five: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This report focused on key findings derived from two interrelated studies: a qualitative content analysis of the existing training materials and an empirical investigation through in-depth interviews with the selected civil servants who received FTC. The content analysis provided insights into the structure and delivery of the training program, which informed the design and focus of the subsequent empirical phase. The interview data offer a deeper understanding of how civil servants perceived the training content, how they engaged with the learning process, and how they applied the acquired knowledge in their professional and personal lives. This chapter interprets these findings in light of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks, highlighting their broader implications and significance. According to Freire (1970), education should not be a one-way transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, but rather a collaborative, dialogic process rooted in learners lived experiences. In such a framework, both the educator and the learner engage in mutual reflection and meaning making. However, the findings from this study reveal that the Foundation Training Course (FTC), particularly Module 12 on gender and child rights, was designed and delivered in a top-down manner. Civil servants in this study indicated that their feedback was sought only at the end of the course and was treated more as a procedural formality than a tool for meaningful curriculum reform. This lack of authentic learner involvement contradicts the core Freirean principle of co-construction of knowledge and supports Spear and Costa's (2017) critique of bureaucratic training programs that prioritize control and standardization over learner agency.

Freire also emphasized that education should emerge from "generative themes" - pressing issues that arise from learners' everyday realities (Freire, 1970). These themes act as entry points for critical discussion and reflection. However, the study found that Module 12 was developed without systematic inclusion of trainees' field experiences. Officers reported that the training felt distant from the challenges they actually faced in the field. These findings resonate with Mannan's (2016) argument that public sector training in Bangladesh often adheres to a rigid, textbook-driven pedagogical tradition, thereby failing to foster relevance or critical engagement. The absence of localized, codified generative

themes represents a missed opportunity to ground training content in real-world contexts, which is a crucial step toward critical learning.

In addition, one of the most central concepts in Freirean pedagogy is conscientization - the development of critical awareness that allows individuals to recognize and question systemic injustices. This is a state of critical awareness enables individuals to recognize the structural roots of inequality and their own roles in sustaining it. This is particularly vital in gender and child rights training, where participants are urged to reflect on societal norms and biases, examine gender disparities, and consider how their roles as civil servants can advance equity (Leu & Ginsburg, 2011; Levitov, 2014; Miske, 2013). While the FTC aimed to promote such awareness regarding gender and child rights, the findings suggest mixed outcomes. A few participants described shifts in their attitudes and workplace interactions, reflecting a degree of internalized critical reflection. These examples support what Sensoy (2011) and Spear and Costa (2017) found—that even limited or restricted institutional training can still create moments of meaningful change or transformation. However, many other officers reported that the training remained lecture-heavy, theoretical, and disengaging. It lacked space for interactive dialogue, reflection, or group problem-solving - essential elements for nurturing critical consciousness. This discrepancy between expected learning outcomes and actual delivery methods highlights a disconnect between CP ideals and training practice.

Encouragingly, some trainees described moments of meaningful application of the training, what Freire and later scholars call 'Easter Experiences' – profound changes that begin with personal reflection and are put into action through involvement in society (Leu & Ginsburg, 2011). Examples included taking proactive measures to stop child marriages, initiating community outreach programs, or revising local administrative practices to be more inclusive. Several civil servants illustrated these experiences by giving credits to the training they received from FTC. These acts demonstrate the realization of praxis - the fusion of reflection and action - and confirm Freire's argument that individuals, when meaningfully engaged, can become agents of change (Freire, 1970). They also reinforce Spear and Costa's (2017) conclusion that critical pedagogy, even when partially implemented, has the potential to drive social justice-oriented action. Yet, these

transformative moments were not universally experienced. Many officers expressed a need for more practice-based training - including simulations, real-life case studies, and structured field attachments. Participants in our study stressed that the training was too abstract to equip them with tools for navigating complex field realities. This criticism is supported by Crookes (2021) and Uthman (2023), who argue that experiential learning is essential for embedding values like empathy, critical reasoning, and equity in public service professionals. By remaining largely theoretical, the FTC limited the depth of critical engagement and the durability of any attitudinal change.

Additionally, the training's engagement with sensitive and systemic issues- such as religion, gender roles, and institutional power dynamics- was generally superficial. Officers observed that these topics were only briefly mentioned and never deeply interrogated. This aligns with Mannan's (2016) view that Bangladeshi training environments often avoid contentious themes to maintain neutrality and administrative convenience. Ferguson (2019) further argues that institutional resistance to deeply transformative content - especially regarding gender and power - often waters down the potential of even well-intentioned training. Without addressing these underlying systemic forces, the training risks reproducing the very inequalities it seeks to eliminate. Interestingly, although civil servants were provided with training on gender and child rights at the same time and in same manner, most of the participants in our study discussed very little (or not interested at all) about child rights issue. We also found relatively lesser amount of lecture and reading materials on child rights issues in our content analysis. What is clear in such context, this issue is less emphasized than gender issue. However, child rights, child protection, child worker, child participations are the pressing issues most of the civil servant deal within their everyday assignments.

One of the most significant gaps identified in our study was the disconnect between training content and real-world institutional practices. The training emphasized equity and inclusion, but participants - particularly female officers - reported persistent challenges in their workplaces. These included being held to higher performance standards, facing gendered expectations about work-life balance, and experiencing subtle but impactful forms of exclusion. Such institutional norms undermine the efficacy of training and reflect

a structural disjuncture that cannot be addressed through curriculum change alone. As Ali and Talukder (2017) argue, genuine transformation requires institutional reform that supports and reinforces the principles taught in training programs.

Finally, the findings highlighted the need for a continuous, lifelong learning model. Civil servants emphasized that a single course cannot foster enduring transformation. They advocated for periodic refresher trainings, peer-learning platforms, and follow-up mechanisms that allow for deeper engagement over time. Leu and Ginsburg (2011) and Sensoy (2011) similarly argue that critical pedagogy must be embedded in a lifelong process of reflection and practice if it is to generate lasting social impact. The one-off nature of Module 12, however well-designed in intent, limits the possibility of such sustained development.

In summary, while Module 12 of the FTC made commendable efforts to raise awareness about gender and child rights, it struggled to embody the full spirit of Critical Pedagogy. The training opened space for critical conversations and individual transformation in some cases, but its rigid format, superficial treatment of key issues, and disconnect from workplace realities significantly curtailed its transformative capacity. Embedding participatory practices, integrating experiential learning, engaging with complex social realities, and pushing for institutional change are essential if such training is to move beyond awareness and become a driver of equity and justice in public service.

In finale, the training module served as a necessary starting point in equipping civil servants with knowledge and awareness about gender and child rights. Yet to move from awareness to action, and from individual reflection to institutional change, a more holistic, context-sensitive, and continuous learning model is required. Only then can public training serve as a tool for social transformation - empowering civil servants not only to understand injustice but to challenge it within their professional spheres and beyond.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Tasks to be Performed	Role	Expected Results
1. Primary focus should be on academic activities	The Foundation Training Course covers many aspects beyond academics. Many civil servants feel that when they work outside academia, the subjects taught in modules are not covered in depth. In that case, more focus should be placed on these subjects.	Training designers, curriculum experts, and BPATC administration	Clear understanding of key academic content areas; enhanced depth of knowledge in critical modules.
2. Training is theory-heavy and needs hands-on practice	While theoretical grounding is necessary, many participants found the training overly abstract. To bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, the curriculum should include hands-on components such as simulations, case studies, mock hearings, project planning exercises, and structured field assignments. These practical engagements will help officers apply concepts in real-life	Training coordinators, module developers, and resource persons	Increased ability among trainees to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations; stronger problem-solving capacity.

	scenarios and deepen their learning.		
3. Instructors should be more interactive to enhance engagement	Trainees expressed a need for instructors who go beyond lecturing to actively involve participants in the learning process. Facilitators should be encouraged to adopt participatory teaching methods, such as group discussions, role-plays, problem-solving sessions, and reflective storytelling, to foster engagement and critical thinking. An interactive environment helps civil servants feel heard, respected, and intellectually stimulated.	Instructors, facilitators, and BPATC training evaluation teams	Higher trainee engagement. improved classroom interaction. and better retention of concepts.
4. Add more gender-focused activities to the attachment	The field attachment component should be enriched with targeted gender-focused experiences. These could include visits to women-led local government offices, NGOs working on women's empowerment, community-based child	Training designers, curriculum experts and local government partners	Greater awareness of gender issues in public service; improved ability to design inclusive policies.

	protection projects, or legal aid centers. Such exposure will allow officers to witness gender dynamics in diverse contexts and understand how public service can be made more inclusive.		
5. Conduct the training at a center	Foundation training courses are conducted in various centers outside BPATC. Many civil servants feel that the opportunities, facilities, and teachers at centers outside Dhaka are not the same. As a result, it is better to have the training at the same center.	BPATC administrative authority and government policymakers	Consistent training quality across participants; equal access to resources and qualified trainers.
6. Recap training after a certain period	Training outcomes often fade without reinforcement. Therefore, follow-up sessions or refresher courses should be built into the professional development calendar. Recap sessions can provide officers with opportunities to reflect on how they have applied their learning, shared	BPATC, Ministry of Public Administration, and training evaluation bodies	Sustained learning outcomes; stronger institutional memory; better adaptation to new challenges.

	experiences, and update their knowledge in light of evolving social and policy contexts.		
7. Engage a broader range of professionals	The training would benefit from the inclusion of experts in specific fields. Academics, social scientists, child rights activists, gender specialists, psychologists, and practitioners from grassroots organizations should be invited to share real-world insights. Their participation will broaden perspectives and strengthen the training's social relevance.	BPATC curriculum committee, external expert panels	Exposure to diverse perspectives; deeper understanding of complex socio-political issues.
8. Include Current Issues in Training	To ensure the training remains responsive and forward-looking, it should incorporate contemporary social issues. Topics like transgender rights, sex and gender diversity issues, paternity leave, mental health, digital safety, and inclusive workplace policies, etc., need to be	Curriculum designers, social policy experts, and training content reviewers	More socially responsive and inclusive civil service; better preparedness to serve a diverse population.

	addressed openly. Including such emerging issues will help civil servants become more aware, sensitive, and prepared to serve a diverse population		
9. Create Dedicated Spaces for Critical Thinking and Dialogue	The training design should include structured opportunities for critical thinking, open dialogue, and debate. Facilitated discussions, reflection sessions, and problem-posing exercises grounded in real administrative challenges can encourage officers to question assumptions, analyze power relations, and develop context-sensitive solutions in line with the principles of critical pedagogy.	Training designers, curriculum experts, and BPATC administration	Critical agency will be built among trainees.

References

- Acar, M & Özgür, H 2004, 'Training of civil servants in Turkey: Progress, problems, and prospects', *International Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 27, no. 3-4, pp. 197–218.
- Al-Hawary, SI & Al-Kumait, Z 2017, 'Training programs and their effect on the employee's performance at King Hussain Bin Talal development area at Al-Mafraq governate in Jordan', *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 258–274.
- Ali, AAT & Talukder, MS 2017, 'Problematising problematisation: Insights from critical pedagogy in a writing lesson in Bangladesh', *Cambridge Journal of Education*.
- Ayoub Mahmoudi, D, Khoshnood, A & Babaei, A 2014, 'Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and its implications in curriculum planning', *Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 5, no. 14, pp. 86–91.
- Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) 2024, *76th Foundation Training Center Course: Course Curriculum and Brochure*, BPATC, Savar.
- Bendraou, R 2024, 'Critical pedagogy and gender norms: insights from Moroccan educational settings', *Society Register*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 51–66.
- Brown, GD 2022, 'OHS Initiative for Workers and Community: Innovative Bangladesh training program shows the importance and impact of worker-focused, grassroots-level OHS projects', *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, vol. 19, pp. 123–128.
- Chaneta, I 2014, 'Training in an Organisation', *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, vol. 3, no. 2.
- Charmaz, K 2006, *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*, Sage, London.
- Craig, HJ, Kraft, RJ & Du Plessis, J 1998, *Teacher development: Making an impact*, USAID, Washington, DC.

- Creswell, JW & Creswell, JD 2017, *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Creswell, JW & Poth, CN 2016, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Crookes, GV 2021, 'Critical language pedagogy: an introduction to principles and values', *ELT Journal*, V. 75, No. 3, pp. 247-255, <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccab020>
- Dwikamayuda, DM 2024, 'Empowering education: integrating critical pedagogy into transformative teaching strategies', *Indonesian Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 230–242.
- Elo, S & Kyngas, H 2007, 'The qualitative content analysis process', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 107–115.
- Freire, P 1970, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Continuum, New York.
- Freire Institute 2024, *Concepts used by Paulo Freire*, viewed 19 June 2025, <https://freire.org/concepts-used-by-paulo-freire>.
- Ferguson, L (2019), 'Gender training: A transformative tool for gender equality', Palgrave Pivot, <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-91827-3>
- Garg, M 2015, *Employees training is crucial in present scenario – a study*, viewed 19 June 2025, <https://doi.org/10.6084/M9.FIGSHARE.1365633.V1>.
- Gibson, W & Brown, A 2009, *Working with qualitative data*, Sage, London.
- Govil, SK & Usha, K 2014, 'The importance of training in an organization', *Advances in Management*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 44–47.
- Green, J & Thorogood, N 2018, *Qualitative methods for health research*, 4th edn, Sage Publications, London.
- Hoque, KE, Alam, GM & Abdullah, AGK 2010, 'Impact of teachers' professional development on school improvement: An analysis at Bangladesh standpoint', *Asia Pacific Education Review*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 337–348.

- Hur, H & Ha, H 2019, 'The link between perceptions of fairness, job training opportunity and at-will employees' work attitudes: Lessons from US Georgia state government', *European Journal of Training and Development*, vol. 43, no. 3/4, pp. 375–397.
- Husain, T, Banik Prima, R, Rahman, N & Haque, MA 2024, 'Empowering voices: The role of tertiary education in advancing gender equality through feminine writing in Bangladesh', *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education* (online ahead of print).
- Idris, ZY, Mappatempo, A & Purnomo, J 2021, 'The impact of motivation and training on civil servants' work performance', *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 147–158.
- Islam, MZ & Hosen, S 2021, 'An effectiveness study on policy level training course: A case from Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, Bangladesh', *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 41–52.
- Kaya, Ç 2017, 'Prospective teachers' educational beliefs and their views about the principles of critical pedagogy', *Journal of Education and Learning*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 181–190.
- Keesing-Styles, L 2003, 'The relationship between critical pedagogy and assessment in teacher education'.
- Kopp, DM 2018, 'What is training', in *The Manager's Communication Toolbox*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 15–38.
- Leu, E & Ginsburg, M 2011, *Designing effective education programs for in-service teacher professional development*, American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC.
- Levtov, R 2014, *Addressing gender inequalities in curriculum and education: Review of literature and promising practices to inform education reform initiatives in Thailand*, The World Bank Group, Washington, DC.

- MacMaoilir, E & McGillicuddy, D 2023, "'I'm actually a female empowerer'": Student perspectives on a critical pedagogical approach to re/engage at-risk females in school', *Communication Education*, vol. 72, no. 4, pp. 429–450.
- Mannan, M 2016, 'Pedagogy in Bangladeshi Private Universities: Context, Culture, and Confusion,' *Sociology Study*, Vol. 6, No. 9, pp. 574-582.
- Malterud, K, Siersma, VD & Guassora, AD 2016, 'Sample size in qualitative interview studies: guided by information power', *Qualitative Health Research*, vol. 26, no. 13, pp. 1753–1760.
- Marshall, C & Rossman, GB 2006, *Designing qualitative research*, Sage Publications, London.
- Miske, S 2013, *Exploring the gendered dimensions of teaching and learning*, UNGEI Working Paper No. 6.
- Moen, T 2006, 'Reflections on the narrative research approach', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 56–69.
- Morse, JM 2015, 'Data were saturated', *Qualitative Health Research*, vol. 25, no. 5, pp. 587–588.
- Namageyo-Funa, A, Rimando, M, Brace, AM, Christiana, RW, Fowles, TL, Davis, TL, Martinez, LM & Sealy, D 2014, 'Recruitment in qualitative public health research: Lessons learned during dissertation sample recruitment', *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1282>
- Nazzari, V 2005, 'Using transformative learning as a model for human rights education', *Intercultural Education*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 171–186.
- O'Reilly, M & Parker, N 2013, 'Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 190–197.

- Oyekanmi, FAD 2016, 'Transformative empowerment in the Lagos State Civil Service: A gender policy discourse', *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 312–341.
- Packard, J 2013, 'The impact of racial diversity in the classroom: Activating the sociological imagination', *Teaching Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 144–158.
- Papi, D & Haque, MN 2023, 'Teaching second language through green pedagogy in the context of Bangladesh: A methodological approach', *Performance: Journal of English Education and Literature*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 291–302.
- Patton, MQ 2001, *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*, 3rd edn, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Rahman, MM, Ahmed, MM, Ali, MY & Adnan, S (2025), 'How does the foundation training course enhance the capacity of the young civil servants to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? A study on Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre', viewed 19 June 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3785154>.
- Reissman, CK 2008, *Narrative methods for the human sciences*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Ritchie, J, Lewis, J, Nicholls, CM & Ormston, R (Eds.) 2013, *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Safitri, NA, Ilmiawan, MF, Islami, D, Khadavi, M & Ansori, MI 2024, 'Pelatihan dan pengembangan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan karyawan era digital', viewed 19 June 2025, <https://doi.org/10.59581/jrim-widyakarya.v2i2.3288>.
- Sandelowski, M 1995, 'Sample size in qualitative research', *Research in Nursing & Health*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 179–183.
- Sensoy, Ö 2011, 'Picturing oppression: Seventh graders' photo essays on racism, classism, and sexism', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 323–342.

- Sensoy, Ö & DiAngelo, R 2011. *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. Teachers College Press. New York.
- Sibbons, M 1998, 'Approaches to gender-awareness raising: Experiences in a government education project in Nepal', *Gender & Development*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 35–43.
- Spear, AM & da Costa, RB 2018, 'Potential for transformation? Two teacher training programs examined through a critical pedagogy framework', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 69, pp. 202–209.
- Strauss, A & Corbin, J 1990, *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park.
- Sutton, I 2015, 'Training and competence', in *Process Risk and Reliability Management*, Gulf Professional Publishing, Oxford, pp. 370–389.
- Ugoani, J & Udo, GJ 2024, 'Expanded training and manpower performance in the 21st century and beyond', *Social Science Research Network*, viewed 19 June 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4804212>.
- Uthman, YOO (2023), 'How transformative education empowers social justice: Bridging the gap between knowledge and action', *COMPETITIVE: Journal of Education*, V. 2, N. 4, pp 276–283. <https://doi.org/10.58355/competitive.v2i4.81>
- Yilmaz, K 2013, 'Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions: Epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences', *European Journal of Education*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 311–325.

Appendix -1: Interview Guidelines

Socio-economic and demographic characterlike: age, gender, current position and responsibilities, previous job history, educational background

Reflection/ Knowledge and Awareness

1. **How has the training influenced your understanding of gender equality and children's rights in your workplace?**

- o What specific examples or scenarios can you recall that demonstrate this influence?
- o Can you compare your understanding before and after the training?

2. **Can you describe any specific concepts or practices from the training that you now apply in your professional role?**

- o Which concept or practice do you find most useful? Why?
- o Can you share an example of a time you applied this in your work?

3. **What aspects of the training most challenged your existing beliefs about gender equality and children's rights?**

- o Why did you find these aspects challenging?
- o How did you address or reconcile these challenges?

4. **Can you describe any shifts in your personal understanding of systemic inequality after the training?**

- o What situations in your workplace or community helped you recognize these changes?
- o How do you now view systemic inequality differently?

5. **Can you describe any changes you've noticed in your own attitudes or biases about gender and children since attending the training?**

- o Were there any specific activities or discussions during the training that triggered this change?

- o How have these changes influenced your daily interactions?

Action and Praxis

1. What specific actions/steps have you taken to promote gender equality or children's rights in your workplace?

- o Can you provide examples of initiatives you started or supported?
- o What challenges did you face when implementing these actions?

2. Can you share an example where you implemented or advocated for gender-sensitive or child-friendly policies or practices?

- o What was the outcome of your advocacy or implementation?
- o How did your colleagues or stakeholders respond?

3. How have you used the knowledge from the training to address unequal power dynamics in your workplace or community?

- o Have you noticed any changes in relationships or power dynamics as a result?
- o What specific strategies or tools did you use?

Empowerment and Agency

1. How has the training influenced your ability to advocate for others, especially marginalized groups?

- o Can you describe a situation where you advocated for someone?
- o What feedback, if any, did you receive from those you supported?

2. Can you share an instance where you felt empowered to challenge an unjust practice related to gender or children's rights?

- o What was the outcome of this challenge?
- o How did you prepare yourself to address this issue?

Engagement with Systems and Power Structures

1. **What systemic barriers have you identified in implementing gender-sensitive or child-friendly practices? How have you addressed these?**

- o Can you provide examples of specific barriers?
- o What strategies have been effective in overcoming them?

2. **What challenges have you faced when trying to integrate gender equality or children's rights into your professional responsibilities? How have you addressed them?**

- o Were these challenges related to policies, cultural norms, or other factors?
- o How have you managed to work around or resolve these challenges?

3. **How do you perceive your role in challenging structural inequities related to gender and child protection?**

- o How has this perception evolved since the training?
- o What resources or support have been most helpful in this role?

Collaboration and Collective Action

1. **Have you initiated or participated in any collaborative efforts to promote gender equality or children's rights? Please elaborate.**

- o What was your role in these efforts?
- o What were the results or impacts of these collaborations?

2. **How has the training influenced your ability to engage colleagues or community members in meaningful discussions about these issues?**

- o Can you provide examples of discussions or dialogues you initiated?

- o How were these discussions received by others?
- 3. **How has the training impacted your approach to working with colleagues or other stakeholders on issues related to gender equality and children's rights?**
- o Have you noticed any changes in your working relationships?
- o What practices or strategies from the training helped facilitate these changes?

Transformative Learning

1. **What assumptions or biases did the training help you unlearn?**
 - o Can you recall a moment during the training when you realized a bias you held?
 - o How has unlearning this bias affected your actions or decisions?
2. **Can you describe a moment where the training inspired you to view a societal issue differently or more critically?**
 - o What specific issue or concept led to this realization?
 - o How did it change your perspective or approach?
3. **What is the most significant change you have experienced as a result of the training?**
 - o Can you share how this change has influenced your personal or professional life?
 - o What feedback have you received from others about this change?
4. **Are there any specific aspects of the training that you found particularly impactful or memorable? Why?**
 - o Was it a concept, an activity, or a discussion?
 - o How did it shape your learning or actions?
5. **What assumptions or beliefs did you hold before the training that you now see differently?**
 - o Can you provide an example of how these beliefs have changed?

- o What new understanding or insight replaced these assumptions?

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Do you believe the content provided was enough to raise awareness about gender equality and children's rights? Was it relevant to your life experiences or Bangladeshi culture? Please explain.

- o Were there any gaps or topics that you think should have been included?
- o How did the cultural context influence your understanding of the training?

2. Was the instructor/resource person's delivery effective for learning and reflection?

- o If yes, what aspects of their teaching style worked well for you?
- o If no, what could have been improved, and how?

3. What additional knowledge or skills would you like to gain to further your work on gender equality and children's rights?

- o Are there specific areas or case studies you think should be included?
- o How do you see these skills helping in your professional context?

4. How could the training module be improved to better address the realities of your professional or personal context?

- o Are there specific scenarios or examples that would have been more helpful?
- o What adjustments would make the content more actionable?

5. What additional support or resources do you feel would help you further promote gender equality and children's rights in your role?

- o Would follow-up sessions or mentorship programs help?
- o What kind of materials (e.g., guides, toolkits) would you find useful?

6. How could the training module be improved to better meet the needs of civil servants like you?

- o Are there specific challenges you face as a civil servant that the training didn't address?
- o What suggestions do you have for future training sessions?

Appendix-2: Letter of information and informed consent form

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of study: Transformative Training for Civil Servants: Empowering Gender and Child Rights through Critical Pedagogy at BPATC

Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Tauhid Hossain Khan, Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100. Cell phone: +8801816-188013. E-mail: thkhan85@gmail.com

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI): Mr. A.M. Shahrior Alam, Assistant Director, BPATC

What is the study about?

We are conducting in-depth interviews on the training programs provided by the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC), with a specific focus on Module 12 of Foundation Training Course (FTC), which addresses child rights and gender equality.

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program, specifically focusing on Module 12, which addresses gender equality and child rights. This module introduced many issues related to gender equality and child rights, such as gender-based discrimination, women empowerment, violence against women, women's political participation, women development, gender role, gender budgeting, child rights, child labor, child protection, national and international commitment and treatments related to women and children, such as SDG, CEDAW, UNCRC, and many more.

This study proposes to employ Critical Pedagogy (CP) as a framework for this evaluation, emphasizing transformative learning experiences, critical reflection, and empowerment. It **aims to examine how entrant trainees of civil services reflect the lessons they were provided during their training in their professional and personal lives.** It also aims to develop a framework delineating entrants' trainees' learned lessons regarding gender and child rights issues and identifying the barriers (conscious and unconscious/structural and non-structural, and systematic) and challenges they encounter in applying their professional and personal lives.

Who will participate in this study?

In this study, an estimated **15 civil servants from all cadres** (regardless of gender, ethnicity, geo-location of working station, and religious identity) to understand how they apply the learning from the training in their professional and personal lives, exploring the barriers and challenges they faced in this regard, and innovative and critical strategies they used to promote gender and child rights issue. The study will include the civil servants who would complete the training within five years to understand how they recollect the training and relate to their present practices related to providing service to communities.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The study is expected to explore innovative and critical strategies employed by trainees to promote gender equality and child rights issues. These insights can inform future training initiatives and policies. Ultimately, the study aims to develop practices and guidelines based on the findings to increase the effectiveness of training programs. By identifying successful strategies and addressing barriers, the study can contribute to enhance the impact of training on civil servants' professional practice and personal lives. To sum up, by exploring the application of learned lessons, identifying barriers, and developing best practices, the study aims to contribute to the improvement of training initiatives and the promotion of gender and child rights in Bangladesh's civil service sector.

What are the risks associated with this study?

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to refuse to answer any questions. You may choose to withdraw

from the study at any time during the interview. You may also choose to withdraw from the study following the interview; however, once results are prepared for publication or presentations, it will not be possible to remove your data.

Will my information be kept confidential?

The session of in-depth interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription (Note: we will not record any video. Instead, we will audio-record the interview using a separate audio/tape recorder). With your permission, anonymous quotations may be used for publications or presentations. Any information that could identify you as an individual (such as your name, specific unusual details about your job) will be removed from the transcript. Transcripts and other electronic data will be stored in a secured university server for a minimum of 7 years, after which they will be destroyed according to university policy. Only the research team will have access to study data.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this study or would like more information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact.

Research Assistant: Mutasim Billah, cell: +8801518-363797; E-mail: jnumutasim@gmail.com

This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance from Research Ethics Committee of Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100. If you have questions for the committee, contact the Office of Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100 at 7176205.

Consent Form

By providing your consent, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

Title of the study: Transformative Training for Civil Servants: Empowering Gender and Child Rights through Critical Pedagogy at BPATC

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study conducted by Dr. Tauhid Hossain Khan, Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to the study and have received satisfactory answers to my questions and any additional details.

I was informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that I can withdraw this consent by informing the researcher.

This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance from Research Ethics Committee of Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100. If I have questions for the Board, I may contact the Office of Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100 at 7176205.

If you agree to participate, how you provide consent and answer demographic questions is your choice:

Either way, the consent questions are as follows:

- I am aware the in-depth interview will be audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.
- I give permission for the use of anonymous quotations in any publication or presentation that comes from this research.
- I give permission for the use of my data and anonymous quotations in any publication or presentation that comes from research of a similar subject conducted by Dr. Tauhid Hossain Khan.
- I agree of my own free will to participate in the study.

Signatures:

I,, consent to participate in the above-mentioned research.

Signature (Participant)

Date:

Signature (Researcher)

Appendix -3: Summary of the findings of the qualitative content analysis

1. Gender and development in leadership for equal future

- Women's empowerment and challenges
- Sex & Gender measurement in leadership
- Gender equality
- Gender equity.
- Gender & social norms in leadership of women
- Global gender index-2023 (Economic participation, political empowerment, health, education)
- Security and safety of women
- Women's leadership and progress.
- Decision-making.
- Women's rights and capabilities.
- Gender-sensitive education.
- Challenging discriminatory beliefs

2. Economic Issues in Gender and development

- Wage gap in gender

- Gender Stereotype in society
- Gender blind
- Gender mainstreaming
- Women's human right
- Barriers to women's success in male- dominated professions
- Gender planning for development

8. Challenging of working women in Bangladesh

- No holiday for mothers
- Exploring the underrepresentation of women in Bangladesh workforce
- Barriers to women's participation in mainstream economic activities
- The disproportionate sacrifices of women in sustaining family life
- Lack of good day care facilities

A. Training Methods used in the module 12

The Course includes different training methods such as lecture and discussion, group work, reading assignment, library work, case study, panel discussion, seminar, workshop, individual/ group exercise, film show, study tour, field visit/attachment, extension lecture, role play, demonstration etc. Based on these, we organized them into three thematic groups in terms of their pedagogical ethos:

1. Interactive and Participatory Methods: through these methods, instructor may emphasize learner engagement, collaboration, and skill development through active participation.

- Group work
- Seminar
- Workshop

- Panel discussion
- Individual group exercises
- Role play
- Demonstration
- Recap session (peer presentations)

2. Instructional and Cognitive Methods: Through these methods, instructors may focus on knowledge transfer, critical thinking, and conceptual understanding through structured input.

- Lecture and discussion
- Reading assignment
- Extension lecture
- Library work

3. Experiential and Contextual Learning Methods: These approaches provide real-life or simulated experiences to enhance practical understanding and application of knowledge.

- Case study
- Film show
- Study tour
- Field visit/attachment