



# JAPANESE STUDIES: EVOLUTION AND WAY FORWARD



# **Japanese Studies: Evolution and Way Forward**

*Edited by*  
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Dedicated to  
All Japan Lovers

## Editorial Note

It is an immense pleasure to announce that the Department of Japanese Studies (DJS), University of Dhaka, is publishing its maiden collaborative book '*Japanese Studies: Evolution and Way Forward*' under the Centennial Book Series Project of the university. As the very first and only area studies department of Bangladesh, the DJS takes this privilege to apprise that this book contains not merely the past and present of the department, but also encompasses a wide range of areas and the future direction of the department with a viable action plan for turning it into a center of excellence through duly pursuing all academic courses and discourses.

I express my humble gratitude to the authority of the University of Dhaka for giving the DJS a chance of rigorous academic exercise. In this connection, the Centennial Book Series Project marking the centenary of this premier institute has allowed our department to publish a seminal book by providing research and publication funding. Without this generous support, the publication of this book would not be possible.

I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues for a great deal of support in this great endeavor of publishing this book. My sincere gratitude to the reviewers—Dr. P. A. George, Chairman, Center for Japanese Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, and Dr. S. M. Ali Reza, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, for their great support. Special thanks are due to Dr. Keiichi Ogawa, Professor, Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, Japan, and also to all my colleagues on the editorial board. Dr. Md. Jahangir Alam deserves a special mention here for his continuous support. I acknowledge the relentless support from my colleague Mr. Shiblee Noman, the editorial associate of the book. A vote of thanks to M Aminul Islam, senior news consultant at The Financial Express, for proofreading and fine-tuning the write-ups of this volume.

This book is a compilation of eight chapters encompassing the history and progress of the department; its scope, mission, vision, current debate and future direction; the development of Japanese Studies worldwide and its course towards excellence; the significance of Japanese Studies in achieving national development goals; practices of teaching pedagogy and research methodology in Japanese Studies across the world; the

comparative review of Japanese Studies' curricula with international universities and research organizations; the collaboration for improved teaching, research and skills development; and how education policy and practice for sustainable development in Japan can be incorporated in Bangladesh.

The first chapter outlines the history and progress of the Department of Japanese Studies. This chapter has categorically entailed the long journey of the Japan Study Circle to the Japan Study Center which turned into a full-fledged department in 2017. Within a short span of time, how the DJS turned into a hub of all Japanese stakeholders in the country and a network hub of academia in the region and beyond has been elaborated.

The second chapter elaborates how Japanese Studies as a discipline developed worldwide with a special focus on Bangladesh. The core ambition of this chapter is to highlight the development of Japanese Studies as an academic discipline with a particular reference to Bangladesh. In this chapter, expansion and sustainability of 'Japanese Studies' as a subject has been discussed in detail by separating it in two broad aspects—as a multidisciplinary knowledge area and as a special focus on language learning.

The third chapter of the book outlines the worldwide practice of teaching pedagogy and research methodology in Japanese Studies. The philosophical paradigms, teaching strategy, approaches of research, conceptual frameworks, checking the validity and reliability of research works on Japanese Studies are discussed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter compares the curriculum of the DJS with that of international universities and research organizations. The determination of gaps was the primary objective of this analysis. A set of recommendations has been made to address the gaps in order to keep the Japanese Studies curriculum of the University of Dhaka in sync with that of the universities abroad.

The fifth chapter hammers home the importance of local and international collaborations with Japanese academic and professional organizations and outlines the need for a concerted effort to improve teaching, research and skills development at the Department of Japanese Studies. It addresses the course of action taken by the department so far, underscoring further directives on the basis of the lessons learnt from across the world.

The sixth chapter portrays the importance and significance of Japanese



Studies in Bangladesh. Over the decades, Japan has evolved from a major donor to a key development partner of Bangladesh, making Japanese Studies crucial (as an area study) for further strengthening the bilateral ties. Besides, Japan constantly supports Bangladesh in implementing sustainable development goals (SDGs) through multiple development programs. This chapter also attempts to identify and show the pathways for Bangladesh, resulting in not to be indulged in a ‘debt trap’ but eluding all drawbacks would ensure the transfer of skills and technology to Bangladesh. Finally, this chapter theorizes a new model for the socio-economic development of Bangladesh and makes policy recommendations on the basis of the Japanese experience.

The seventh chapter presents current Japanese socio-economic and human resources development issues and explores the government’s current education policy and best practices to promote manpower development for sustainable economic growth. It analyzes the present education policy and practices of the government to encourage human capital development for sustainable economic growth. It also discusses the lessons Bangladesh can take from these newly developed policies to improve its society and education system as well.

The eighth chapter of the book examines evaluation of Japanese Studies in different regions of the world, current debate and future challenges allied to Japanese Studies. It also elaborates how Japanese Studies as a discipline and a department in Bangladesh is marching towards excellence. The chapter also includes an action plan to be executed in phases to reach the desired level of excellence approved by the academic committee of the department.

I strongly believe this book will be a bank of knowledge and a treasure trove for students and readers who have growing interest in Japan.

Abdullah-Al-Mamun, PhD  
*October 2022*

# Contents

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <i>Profile of Contributors</i>   | i          |
| <b>Chapter 1</b>   | <b>01</b>  |
| History and Progress of the Department of Japanese Studies<br><b>Shiblee Noman</b>   |            |
| <b>Chapter 2</b>   | <b>25</b>  |
| Development of Japanese Studies Worldwide with Special<br>Reference to Bangladesh<br><b>Dilruba Sharmin</b>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 3</b>   | <b>53</b>  |
| Worldwide Practice of Teaching Pedagogy in Japanese Studies<br><b>Lopamudra Malek</b>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 4</b>   | <b>75</b>  |
| Comparison of DJS Curriculum with International<br>Universities and Organizations<br><b>Nashia Zaman</b>   |            |
| <b>Chapter 5</b>   | <b>99</b>  |
| Collaboration for Improved Teaching, Research and<br>Skills Development<br><b>Md. Saifullah Akon</b>   |            |
| <b>Chapter 6</b>   | <b>121</b> |
| Significance of Japanese Studies to Achieve Sustainable<br>Development Goals in Bangladesh<br><b>Md Jahangir Alam</b>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 7</b>   | <b>149</b> |
| Japanese Education Policy and Practice for Sustainable Socio-<br>economic Development: Lessons for Japanologists in Bangladesh<br><b>Keiichi Ogawa and Kohei Uno</b> |            |
| <b>Chapter 8</b>   | <b>177</b> |
| Japanese Studies towards Excellence<br><b>Abdullah-Al-Mamun</b>  |            |
| <b>INDEX</b>   | <b>209</b> |

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tourism sector of Bangladesh. Her research works have been published in numerous national and international journals. She also published two books on ‘Japanese architecture’ and ‘Bangladesh archaeology.’ Dr. Sharmin also attended many national and international conferences and workshops and presented her research work in the global forum.

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# 1 History and Progress of the Department of Japanese Studies

**Shiblee Noman**

**Summary:** This chapter attempts to reveal the history of the Department of Japanese Studies at Dhaka University. This is a primary research work based on the interviews of the key informants and document analysis. Japan Study Circle, established in 1994, was turned into Japan Study Centre in 2002. It has since started offering different courses and programs. The momentum came in 2012 when Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat became its director. His visionary leadership turned the centre into a full-fledged department in 2017. Since then, it offers Bachelor and Master's in Japanese Studies. The department gathered pace when Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun became its chairman in 2020. His dynamic leadership has turned the department into a hub of Japanese Studies in the region, and it has recently received the prestigious Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation 2022 for promoting Japanese Studies in Bangladesh and beyond. The implication of area studies in academia is now better understood, and the department is on the right track to make significant academic and policy contribution.

## 1.1 Introduction

The Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Dhaka is this hundred-year-old institution's first-ever area studies department. Unlike language and literature, the department aims at studying Japan from a broader spectrum. It is a department under the Faculty of Social Sciences at the university which covers many aspects of Japan. Hence, it encompasses a variety of disciplines such as politics, economy, society, trade and business, international relations, business management, media, language and literature, philosophy, religion, archeology, history and civilization and many more. Thus, it has developed as a multidisciplinary department thriving to become the center of excellence. Because of Japan's miraculous economic success, technological advancement, long-standing history and heritage, uniquely unique culture and 'Cool Japan' image, Japanese Studies or 'Japanology' has become a popular subject

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worldwide. the way Japan rose from the ashes after the atomic bombardment on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II has mesmerized the whole world to study Japan intensively. In addition, despite being a small country with several archipelagos, Japan is the third-largest economy in the world. Top-ranking universities across the world such as Harvard University (USA), University of California (USA), University of Delaware (USA), University of Hawaii (USA), University of San Francisco (USA), University of Wisconsin (USA), Oakland University (USA), Furman University (USA), University of Cambridge (UK), Manchester University (UK), Birmingham University (UK), University of Sheffield (UK), University of London (UK), National University of Singapore (Singapore), Monash University (Australia), University of Sydney (Australia), Auckland University of Technology (AUT) (New Zealand), Seoul National University (South Korea), Jawaharlal Nehru University (India), Delhi University (India) and Visva-Bharati University (India) are offering undergraduate and/or postgraduate degrees on Japanese Studies.

The Japanese model of economic revival is still a wonder to the academics, researchers and experts everywhere. Bangladesh, the largest official development assistance (ODA) recipient country of Japan, has added the plum to its academic venture at its top educational institution by establishing a department fully dedicated to extensive study on Japan. The term ‘Japanology’ has been coined to denote Japanese studies, and experts in this field are called ‘Japanologists’. DJS graduates are expected to be experts in various fields of Japan, encompassing politics, economy, trade and business, history, language and literature, culture, governance, international relations, religion, philosophy, society and whatnots. This chapter has covered the history and progress of the Department of Japanese Studies, its evolution and the recent development it has come across. The first part of the chapter entails the rationale of the department encompassing the grave necessity of studying Japan for the benefit of Bangladesh. The second part covers the methodology of the research. Such research work could not have been justified in this segment through historiography. The methods of data collection and processes of validation

of the data have been organized here. The third part deals with the setting off of the study circle in Japan and how it grew over time with the endeavor of the academics of the Department of Political Science at DU. The fourth part entails the development of Japan Study Centre (JSC) and how it got integrated with the university and started offering an academic degree. This part also discusses the development of the academic degrees offered by JSC and the development of a postgraduate degree. The fifth part discusses the metamorphosis of the JSC to today's DJS under the auspices of the latter's founder chairman Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat, a legendary academic who is the former chairman of the Department of Economics at DU, with the active support of Dr. Mamun. The sixth part explains how DJS has been ensuring fast and steady growth under the dynamic leadership of the current chairman, Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun. The last part of this chapter concludes with the fulfillment of lofty hopes and aspirations of the department to be fulfilled in the not so distant future.

## **1.2 Why Department of Japanese Studies: Bangladesh Perspective**

Area studies have become popular worldwide due to the grave necessity of compact knowledge in any part of the globe. It is a matter of the fact that universities of high quality offer degree in area studies in Bangladesh. In addition, Japan has been a trusted friend of Bangladesh, being its number-one bilateral development partner for quite a long time. Moreover, Japan's role during and after Bangladesh's great liberation war by raising funds for the toiling masses and giving recognition at the quickest possible time in February 1972 makes Bangladesh indebted to this friendly nation. Furthermore, the economic development of Japan made after WWII following its devastation by atomic bombardment made it a glaring example and model for developing nations. Very importantly, in recent times, the development goals Bangladesh has set forth, including achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), 8th Five-Year Plans, Perspective Plan, Vision 2041 and Delta Plan, are being substantially assisted by Japan in reaching the targets within their stipulated time. In this connection, along with ODA through JICA, a considerable amount of

FDI (foreign direct investment) is coming through the business expansion of Japanese multinational companies in Bangladesh. All those facts facilitated the creation of the rationale of an academic endeavor by Dhaka University to establish the Department of Japanese Studies. Thus, the DJS has become the first and only area studies academic venture to date in the country.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The chapter is based on the key informants' narrative interviews and examination of the available documents and the prospects has been accommodated on the basis of observation of the present-day activities and future direction of the department's activities. The discussions have been conducted while maintaining research ethics and following the guideline provided by the Centennial Book Series Project of Dhaka University. Key informants such as founder chair of the department Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat, current chair and the longest-associated person with the department and perhaps the first teacher of Japanese Studies of the country (who had been with the JSC previously) Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun, Prof. Dr. Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, ex-director-in-charge of the then JSC and Professor of the Department of Public Administration, Dr. S M Ali Reza, Professor of the Department of Political Science and a disciple of Prof Dr. Ataur Rahman, the forefather of Japan Study Circle (later, Japan Study Centre), Mr. Sheikh Sayeedur Rahman, the longest-serving administrative officer and a witness to many transformations and critical junctures, Dr. Md Jahangir Alam, Associate Professor and an alumnus of the department, and Dr. Dilruba Sharmin, Associate Professor of the same department, have been interviewed for data collection and validation. Primary documents like the letters issued by the university authorities railroaded through the Syndicate and the letters issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) while approving the JSC as a full-fledged department have been crosschecked for validation. Moreover, the proposal for the Master's in Japanese Studies program at the JSC, the curriculum, the proposal for establishing the DJS and the curriculum presented to the Academic Council have also been cross-checked for validation of the informants' data.

## **1.4 History of Evolution: From Japan Study Circle to Japan Study Centre (JSC)**

The Japan Study Centre was established with the effort by eminent political scientist Dr. Ataur Rahman, former Professor of the Department of Political Science, DU, in 1994. Among his colleagues, Mr. Saifullah Bhuiyan and Dr. Kamal Ahmed, professors of the same department, joined him along with some enthusiastic students of political science, sociology and public administration departments. It started functioning as a new arena of study for the Department of Political Science. Dr. Rahman had foresight of the significance of studying Japan from an economically peripheral but a potential Bangladesh for understanding the political dynamics and development models of Japan, the first economically and technologically developed country of Asia. He continued to arrange seminars, symposiums and conferences nationally and internationally as a dynamic academic. One of his affectionate disciples, Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun, now the chairman of the DJS, has spoken highly about Dr. Rahman's dynamic leadership in arranging some grand programs and far-sighted preparedness. The then Japan Study Circle was converted into Japan Study Centre at Dr. Rahman and his colleagues' initiative. The centre was integrated as a recognized part of the university in 2002 and started offering a Diploma in Japanese Studies, the first-ever academic degree by any centre at the university. This model of offering an academic degree by the centre and its conversion into a master's degree program was replicated by the Institute of Disaster Management. Thanks to Dr Rahman's international academic engagement with UN Academy of Leadership in Amman, he had to leave before the centre started to operate as an accredited body of the university. So, his colleague Mr. Saifullah Bhuiyan was appointed the first director of the JSC in 2002. On his return from international academic engagement in 2004, Dr. Rahman took over the charge as director and ran the centre in full swing until his early retirement from the university in 2008. Under his strong leadership, Japan Study Centre got the approval to offer a two-year master's program—Master's in Japanese Studies (MJS) in 2006. Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun, a sociology graduate and a diploma degree holder from the centre, joined

the JSC as a lecturer in May 2005. He got intensively engaged in preparing the MJS curriculum under the supervision of Dr. Rahman. The number of student intake for each batch was 30. It is very significant to mention that JSC had organized Japan-SAARC Cooperation Conference the same year, which was a benchmark event for the newly established centre with minimal staff and capacity. Dr. Rahman had been the pivot to have brought many international scholars in Bangladesh who presented several papers at the conference. Political scientist Prof Dr. Reza opined that the conference had been a grand success for the centre and that Dr. Mamun had been the key performer in arranging a successful conference of such magnitude. At that time, the academic and non-academic staff were not paid from the revenue budget of the university. Limited funds came from the university and the rest from its very own programs.

By the time Prof. Dr. Rahman left, VC Prof. Dr. AAMS Arefin Siddique had appointed Prof. Dr. Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah of Public Administration Department, as acting director of the centre in 2009. He was succeeded by his department colleague Prof. Dr. Mohabbat Khan. After Dr. Khan was appointed as a member of the UGC, his departure from JSC created a vacuum, recalls Dr. Mamun. Since he has been the only full-time development budget-paid faculty and all other staff were paid from the subscription of JSC, and a lump sum amount from the university, the absence of a director at JSC made it difficult to withdraw money for the payment of faculty members and staff. As Mr. Sayeed, senior administrative officer, fondly recalls, Dr. Mamun sometimes managed money of his own to pay us a subsistence allowance in order to keep the centre alive. “Just before an Eid festival, in the absence of a director, Mamun sir paid us by himself,” Mr. Sayeed remembers. The centre’s journey, ever since its birth, had not been smooth. Some untold stories—some bitter truths are better to remain unexposed for the greater good of all stakeholders. Dr. Mamun, Dr. Reza and Mr. Sayeed all agreed that the investigation committee formed in response to a group’s hostile attitude with intent to shatter the JSC down, put the highest pressure on the only full-time faculty Dr. Mamun. But with his grit and ruthless determination, Dr. Mamun successfully faced the committee with due

response so as not to stop the growth of JSC. The guest faculty members, including Dr. Reza, rendered assistance at the trying time of the centre.

“It was February 2012”, recalls Dr. Mamun, “I went to Arefin sir since it was time for a new Master’s in Japanese Studies’ intake. But due to the vacuum in the position of a director, the admission test and process could not proceed. Sir asked me to perform the routine work of the centre and continue with the current batches. As I was eagerly waiting for a director to come and continue the MJS batches. Arefin sir started searching for a ‘good soul, honest and dedicated personality’ for the most-sought-after appointment. Although I was a bit sad to know that he still had not appointed anyone, he assured me of finding such a person. The moment of truth finally came. It was 21 April 2012. I went to the vice-chancellor’s office at 10:00 am to know about the person appointed as director. The then deputy registrar, who had his office just beside the VC office, Mr. Shamsuddin Ahammad, broke the news to me that Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat, an eminent economist of the country, had been appointed as the director of JSC.”

A giant leap forward had been the appointment of Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat, the then chairman of the Department of Economics at DU, by the then VC Prof. Dr. AAMS Arefin Siddiqui. There is a long tale behind the appointment of Dr. Barkat as the JSC director. The vice-chancellor requested him to take charge of directorship, but he denied. Since he had been the chairman of a department, chairman of Janata Bank, president of Bangladesh Economic Association and chief advisor of Human Development Research Centre (HDRC), Dr. Barkat argued that his engagement with another organization might not benefit that much. That was the reason behind his unwillingness. He told Arefin sir that he could not do anything half-hearted. When he takes any responsibility, he owns it and does things to the best of his capacity for the organization's well-being. The VC made repeated requests, saying, “Many senior faculty members are requesting me to appoint them, but I know you would be best to revive it.”

However, the VC issued an appointment letter to Dr. Barkat. Since the test for the intake of a new MJS batch had not been possible without the approval and signature of a director, Dr. Mamun attempted to convince Prof. Dr. Barkat to take over the charge. He sought Dr. Barkat's appointment and failed three times due to his tight schedule. Dr. Mamun then sought the help of the previous director, Dr. Kalimullah, to meet Dr. Barkat. Finally, he could meet Dr. Barkat and requested him to join as the JSC director. He also cited the difficulties he had been facing without the presence of a director. At that time, since there was no source of revenue budget, all the chairmen of the departments under Social Sciences Faculty had been the executive committee (EC) members of JSC. It was a mammoth task to get all the chairpersons at a time to pass or discuss even trivial matters. Dr. Mamun, with the aid of Dr. Kalimullah, could finally meet Dr. Barkat after repeated attempts. Finally, Dr. Barkat gave a word that he would visit the centre the next day.

### **1.5 Identifying Problems of Japan Study Centre: A Way Out**

The next day, 23 June 2012, Dr. Barkat went to JSC and found a room with broken chairs, a sofa set and a computer. He said, "Tell me what problems you have here." Dr. Mamun recalls, "Then I painted a real picture of the centre and elaborated the circumstances. After my briefing, Dr. Barkat said, "You have three types of problems here—1) crises of faculty and staff, 2) lack of academic materials and 3) absence of education-friendly environment." He also enquired how the number of faculty members could be increased and what initiatives be taken to assimilate the existing faculty and staff." Dr. Mamun then briefed about some possible measures. Dr. Barkat then asked him to make a list of study materials, including a laptop, a projector, a printer and opined that the ramshackle state of the centre does not go with its image of the university. He also asked to look for a best interior designer hinting no money worries. With his 15-20 minutes' stay, the problems he identified had not been done by anyone else earlier, remembers Dr. Mamun as he opined that that June 23 had been a turning point of Japan Study Centre. Since that particular day, Dr. Mamun along with other staff members dedicated themselves to bringing necessary changes as directed by the new director Dr. Barkat.

The first task was to renovate the centre in room 1037 of Arts Building. Abul Barkat Peace and Progress Foundation (ABPPF), established by Dr. Barkat, contributed Tk 2.5 million to JSC for its facelift and overhauling purpose. It is worth noting here the story behind it. As Dr. Barkat, at that time, was the chairman of Janata Bank, he could have easily donated the money from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund of the bank. But he didn't take that chance for his being the director of JSC. Dr. Mamun still remembers Barkat sir was saying, "I have been working at the university for quite a long time, and I have the intention to do something for the university. I think this is an opportunity." Dr. Mamun says, "I wonder how a man can donate such hard-earned money in such a volume!" The centre then started to be familiar as 'Mini Japan' because of its artistic beauty and similarity with Japanese fashion of decoration. Rooms 1035 (for staff) and 1037 (for faculty members and holding classes) were artistically designed to ensure comfort for all. On April 26, the renovated room was inaugurated by VC Prof. Dr. AAMS Arefin Siddique in the presence of the pro-VC (academic), the then Japanese ambassador in Dhaka, H. E. Shiro Sadoshimo, deans of different faculties, senior faculty members, high officials of Japan embassy, dignitaries and students of JSC. All got delighted and highly appreciated the endeavor.

### **Photo 1.1**

*Mesmerizing 'Mini Japan' before and after renovation by ABPPF*



Before renovation



After renovation

The second task was to pursue bringing all the posts of the centre under the revenue budget of the university. Despite Dr. Barkat's letter as the JSC director to the university for approving posts of faculty members and



administrative staff in August 2012, the authorities only approved a lecturer's position and an administrative position until January 2013. Dr. Mamun recalls, "It was 11 January 2013. After the admission test of the MJS 7th batch, we all, including the VC sir, were sitting at JSC. Barkat sir thanked all and informed the VC sir of the shortage of faculty members at JSC. In the meantime, I informed sir that a seven-story building is not being constructed only for not appointing three faculty members despite the centre's viability. If done, we may receive Tk 10-12 crore from the Japan Foundation to construct such a building. I then brought the building's file to Barkat sir and VC sir. The open space in front of Natmondol was allocated for that. A memorandum of understanding between Japan Foundation, Bangladesh Government and Dhaka University was also done. Later, a feasibility study team came to assess and reported that the building could not be made without the appointment of three full-time faculty members.

The Embassy of Japan has informed us that they will send the feasibility study team again after the appointment. The project has been hanging since 2007. Barkat sir then asked me to show the file with a loud voice. As requested by Barkat sir, the VC sir assured him of starting the process of approving posts of three faculty members. The next day, Barkat sir asked me to prepare a file to this end and told me that the application should be sent to the registrar through the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The then dean, Prof. Farid Uddin Ahmed, lent his support in honor of Barkat sir. In the next day's meeting of the Deans' Committee, two posts of lecturer and one post of assistant professor were approved. Following approval by the Syndicate, the file was sent to the UGC for approval. Prof. Barkat sent a letter to the then chairman of UGC, Prof. Dr. A K Azad Choudhury, elaborating the issue of own building and a pleasant environment for master's program. In March 2013, that job was also done with the UGC approval of the posts sought." Dr. Mamun gets nostalgic and emotional, remembering the formative days of the centre and the struggle it underwent.

The third task was to create a pleasant environment of academic practice.

As the Executive Committee (EC) comprises all chairpersons of the departments under Social Sciences Faculty, a challenge of coordination always hindered the growth of JSC. Then, Dr. Mamun came up with a plan for Prof. Dr. Barkat to form a smaller but effective Coordination & Development Committee (C&D) to maintain liaison with the departments under the faculty. So, a C&D was proposed to ease academic activities. The most important of them was the preparation of a curriculum for MJS Program. Searching the curricula of several global universities where any degree in Japanese Studies is offered, the MJS curriculum was prepared, fitting it into the national context of Bangladesh considering the employability of the graduates of the centre. The two-year master's program offered by a centre had materialized after a long legal battle and facing relevant committees. The prospectus and syllabus were made so outstanding that whoever came to JSC used to ask whether it had been done in Japan.

## **1.6 From Japan Study Centre to Department of Japanese Studies**

While the renovated Japan Study Centre (JSC) was inaugurated by the then VC Prof. Dr. AAMS Arefin Siddiqui, all the top brass of the university was wondering why JSC was yet to be turned into a department seeing its well-designed infrastructure. By the time, Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun and Dr. Md. Jahangir Alam (2013) had been full-time faculty members. After the appointment of Dr. Dilruba Sharmin in 2015, the academic committee dedicated itself to preparing the curriculum of regular undergraduate and master's degree programs after researching and scrutinizing the curricula of 87 top universities as part of the plan to submit a proposal for turning JSC into a department in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Dr. Barkat remembers that while he was visiting Japan after being invited by Japan Foundation (JF) to deliver lectures at different top universities, JF officials could not even think he was going for a serious drive to establish the department. Dr. Mamun also recalls his memory of the preparation of the curriculum. The proposal for the department was put forward for discussion in the Academic Council. The rationality and complete package, including the curriculum for the

department under graduation and master's degrees, along with the need for faculty members in phases, have been considered- an unprecedented event in this century-old university. Thus, after a lot of scrutiny and vetting by the Academic Council, the proposal was up for consideration by the Syndicate. The Syndicate passed it and sent for UGC's approval. Finally, on 30 May 2017, the UGC gave its seal of approval and the JSC turned into the Department of Japanese Studies. The department started its graduation program for the 2017-18 admission session. With the participation of its first-batch students, MJS students and the alumni, the department celebrated its foundation with a three-day long program divided into 12 sessions—academic and extracurricular activities. The department arranged an inaugural program, academic sessions, procession, poster presentation, film show, teacher-student friendly soccer and cultural program participated by students and Japanese performers, among a host of events, to celebrate the grand inauguration.

The department ensures the Japanese MEXT scholarship for its young faculty members and/or students. In addition, it has an MoU with Shimane University, Japan, for exchange program. Every year, two to three students in two different sessions get the opportunity to go for a year as exchange students. Japan Foundation assists the department through the yearly JF Project, which includes book support, student exchange, support for travel to international conferences, conference organizing help, publication support and so on. Furthermore, the department has an MoU with Nara Women's University, Japan, where a department student gets a two-year master's degree scholarship, similar to the MEXT scholarship. However, the department is truly multidisciplinary. The courses taught here are diverse. The undergraduate program aims to provide students with broader knowledge and deeper understanding of Japanese economy, society, history, culture, government, politics, international affairs, technology, philosophy, research methodology, demography and language (Department of Japanese Studies, 2019).

Master's program covers a wide range of issues of Japanese development policies having theoretical and practical relevance. It is so designed to

help a student easily gather knowledge of Japanese development policy, public policy, political thoughts, political economy, linguistics and literature, art and film, disaster and development, and the idea of the Asia-Pacific regional studies.

The (Japanese Studies) department's vision is 'to produce knowledge-based Japanologists who in turn will produce, reproduce and disseminate the knowledge gained for the benefit of humanity'. The vision is set by the founder and chairman of the department, Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat.

### **1.7 Department of Japanese Studies: Thriving to be the Center of Excellence**

The Department of Japanese Studies has been thriving to become the center of excellence since its establishment. The founding chairman, Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat, managed the infrastructure required for the department. Several department activities have drawn the whole university's attention during his chairmanship. He was instrumental in his endeavor to increase the number of faculty positions. He increased the number of faculty members to eight. It is noteworthy here that Dr. Barkat's visionary leadership and farsighted activities have set examples for his young colleagues, leading the department's atmosphere to the true spirit of 'Team DJS'. Dr. Mamun's succession as the chairman of the department has breathed new life into academic activities since 11 June 2020. The ongoing activities reflect on Dr. Mamun's leadership built on the foundation laid by his ancestor Dr. Barkat. The following activities can see the forward march of the department:

#### **1.7.1 Network in Asia**

The DJS has facilitated the signing a MoU between Ryukoku University. With the effort made by the DJS, a MoU has also been signed with Jawaharlal Nehru University for collaborative research, teaching and exchange of resources. The DJS has also done a similar instrument with Binus University of Indonesia for academic collaboration. In addition, the DJS played a significant role in forming the Japanese Studies Association in South Asia in 2018, where Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat was the founder and

vice-president, and the current chairman had been the founder and joint secretary of the association. The DJS has also made it possible for its students pursue a master's degree scholarship of two years at NWU. This author played a crucial role while visiting NWU in 2019. DJS students started to secure scholarships in 2021.

By arranging three big conferences and a collaborative international seminar in 2021 and 2022 respectively, the DJS has helped connect scholars, researchers and academics from as far afield as Japan, India, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal, Cambodia, Laos, Taiwan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Vietnam, the UAE and Palestine. Moreover, it has started engaging international scholars including Japan to excel quality education in the department and promote research on Japanese studies by incorporating them as honorary professor and advisors such as Prof. Dr. Keiichi Ogawa of Kobe University, Japan, Prof. Dr. P. A George, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, Dr. Tam Takamichi Mito, a Professor of Global Studies at Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU), Japan, Prof. John West of Sophia University, Tokyo, Prof Ashok Kumar Chawla, Advisor (Japan), East Asia Division, Ministry of External Affairs, India, Dr. Saikaew Thipakorn, Director, Japan-ASEAN Studies Center, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, Dr. Rajaram Panda, Former Senior Fellow, IDSA, New Delhi, Lok Sabha Research, Fellow and ICCR India Chair Professor, Reitaku University, Japan, Dr Elisa Carolina Marion, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, BINUS University, Jakarta, Indonesia, Dr. Shabbir Dastgir, Director, Postgraduate Taught, Economics University of Huddersfield, UK and Ms. Mayumi Murayama, executive vice-president, Institute of Development Economics, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) who is a proud graduate of Dhaka University. At the latest, DJS Chairman Dr. Mamun delivered a lecture at Kobe University, Japan, at their invitation.

### **1.7.2 Networking Beyond Asia**

The DJS is connecting globally acknowledged universities with it for excelling in quality education and research on Japanese Studies. It has developed communication and organized exchange of lecture series with

Belmonte University, USA. The DJS is also facilitating academics and researchers of Japanese studies from the USA, the UK, Australia, South Africa, Brazil, Burkina Faso and Uganda to a network through conferences, seminars and lecture series to promote Japanese Studies.

### **1.7.3 Academia-Industry Relations**

To develop the research environment in the department and ensure job placement of the graduates of the department's students, DJS is trying to establish a stronger academia-industry relationship. The DJS has already conducted research in a joint venture and placed some of our current students in Japanese companies and organizations such as JETRO, JBCCI, Embassy of Japan, Shapla Neer, Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust and CMSS for internship, placement and volunteering. Very importantly, letters of agreement and MoUs have been signed between the DJS and Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI), Mitsubishi Corporation, CMSS and many more. In addition, an arrangement has been made to sign an agreement with JETRO. DJS has also conducted research in collaboration with JETRO on the expectation of Bangladeshi graduates from Japanese companies. The second phase of another research is about to start. It has introduced the 'Japanese Business Management' course in the department so that students can understand Japanese companies' culture and develop themselves as a good fit for Japanese. Department has also arranged lectures of top management officials of Japanese companies to share their ideas and experiences with the aspiring students.

#### ***Career Talk:***

DJS has arranged orientation and knowledge-sharing seminars by the Country Representative of JETRO, General Secretary of JBCCI, Country Chairman of Mitsui Corporation and many more dignitaries for students of the department.

### **1.7.4 Student Supporter**

Department offered all-out support for financially challenged students during and after Covid-19 pandemic. Scholarships, financial assistance,

and mobile phone support for participating in the online classes have been rendered. It managed to provide scholarships to students from Mitsubishi Corporation (the most significant scholarship in the university), Abul Barkat Peace and Progress Foundation (ABPPF) Scholarship and Rotary Club Scholarship. Moreover, twenty-one smart mobile phones have been distributed among the students of the department who had been struggling to participate in the online classes during the pandemic. In addition, being the General Secretary of the philanthropic organization 'Survive Together', Dr. Mamun has managed a handsome amount of money from there for the needy students at the department for the smooth continuation of their studies.

### **1.7.5 Infrastructural Development**

The biggest challenge had been the establishment of a language lab for the students for better learning of Japanese. With the effort of Dr. Mamun, the DJS has managed to convince the Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust (KBWT) to establish the state-of-the-art Language Lab at the department as a cost of an estimated Tk 4.0 million. It has also managed to establish a computer lab. What is more, the department managed to pursue Shoo-Koo-kai Dhaka for two laptops, two projectors and screens for classroom use.

### **1.7.6 Academic Management**

For the smooth and better performance of the department, each faculty member at the department has been entitled to some extra responsibilities to coordinate, i.e. Coordinator, Research and Publication; Coordinator, International Collaboration and Academic Engagement; Coordinator, Students' Welfare; Coordinator, Skill Development and Job Placement; etc. In addition, the department has initiated and implemented an online learning platform 'MyDJS' and an app for smoothly administering academic activities. It is the first-ever online platform at the university.

### **1.7.7 Academic Excellence**

The DJS has undertaken several academic ventures to achieve excellence for teachers and faculty members through training, trips to Japan and

collaborative research with Japanese scholars. It has developed a well-designed curriculum for BSS (Hons) and MSS. The department is optimistic to start MPhil and PhD degrees from 2023. It has managed to convince the Embassy of Japan in Dhaka to allow a faculty member or graduate student of the department to get a MEXT scholarship for pursuing PhD in Japan from 2015. In the 2022-2023 academic year, four first-batch undergraduate students have been awarded with the MEXT Scholarship because of the efforts of the current chairman, Dr. Mamun. A significant initiative has been taken to increase the number of Japanese language teachers in the department from 1 to 4, including native Japanese, as per the recommendation of the Language Committee to address the dire need for improvement in the Japanese language capacity of the students of DJS. The committee, made up of Dr. Md. Jahangir Alam, Dr. Dilruba Sharmin and Dr. Lopamudra Malek, under Dr. Mamun's direction, sought cooperation from Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust (KBWT) for the payment of the native Japanese language teacher. The KBWT also responded positively. In addition, it has organized lecture series for students by globally acclaimed Japanologists with the support of the Japan Foundation.

### **1.7.8 Lecture Series**

The DJS has arranged a Lecture Series with the participation of globally acclaimed scholars from and beyond Japan. Prof. Dr. Keiichi Ogawa of Kobe University, Japan; Christopher Born from Belmonte University, USA; Karl Ian Cheng Chua from Ateneo de Manila University, are some of the speakers who have already delivered their lectures.

A significant step has been taken to bring out a centennial book under a grant provided by the university in the observance of its centenary. The book portrays Japanese Studies' history, prospects, challenges, recommendations, and so on.

### **1.7.9 Students' Skill Development and Job Placement**

The DJS has taken student-centric policies to produce skilled human resources by providing them with the necessary training and incorporating



the suggestions of the employers in the curriculum. In addition, it has already started sending students for internships in Japanese companies. The department has signed an MoU with KBWT, which will sponsor several training programs for the skill development of the department's students. Several workshops have also been conducted in this regard. As Coordinator of Skill Development and Job Placement, the author has played a vital role under the directive of the Chairman Dr. Mamun by sending some students to eminent Japanese company CMSS as an intern who are supposed to be paid a handsome allowance. Placing DJS alumni (MJS) for various job fields at Japanese companies has become common.

#### **1.7.10 Developing Relations with Japanese Companies**

The DJS has always been keen to develop relations with Japanese companies. It has established links with almost all Japanese stakeholders in Bangladesh in this connection. The department has already arranged a job fair for the department's new graduate students. Moreover, it has conducted several research works with the support of JETRO regarding Japanese FDI in Bangladesh with intent to improve the business environment. Network meetings with 40 Japanese companies in Japan and Bangladesh, including Toyota, Honda, Mitsubishi, Mitsui and Sumitomo, have already been arranged to inform the companies of prospective skilled recruits in and outside Bangladesh.

#### **1.7.11 Developing Relations with Japanese Academia and Universities**

The DJS has signed a MoU with some Japanese academics and universities such as Ryukoku University and Shimane University to invite top scholars to deliver lectures for our students. Moreover, it has initiated exchanging students and faculty members with Japanese universities. Two faculty members, Dr. Mamun and Dr. Alam, have already received two interns from Japanese universities. Furthermore, the department is now hosting JICA Chair in Bangladesh because of the great negotiating capacity of the current chairman, Dr. Mamun. The department has successfully organized three JICA Chair seminars with massive participation. These have been the benchmark events arranged by DJS.

Associate Professor of the department Dr. Dilruba Sharmin and Mr. Saifullah, Assistant Professor of the department, worked very hard to make the seminars successful. In addition, NWU has started taking students in its two-year master's students from the DJS from 2021. In this regard, Dr. Alam, as the coordinator of international collaboration and scholarship, has been instrumental in sending the first student to NWU.

### **1.7.12 Publication of Journal**

One of the most significant academic achievements is the publication of the first-ever multidisciplinary journal on Japanese Studies in South Asia—the *Journal of Japanese Studies: Exploring Multidisciplinarity* (JJSEM) in January 2022. The august initiative was taken by the chairman of the department, Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun. Dr. Md Jahangir Alam and Dr. Dilruba Sharmin greatly contributed to the issue. Dr. Barkat is the founding editor of the journal that carried research articles and book reviews by scholars from 17 countries. The quality of the inaugural issue has been acclaimed by Japanologists worldwide.

### **1.7.13 Conference**

On the eve of 100 years of Dhaka University, the DJS, under the leadership of Dr. Mamun, organized the first-ever two-day international e-conference styled '**Japanology in New Era 2021**' where more than 70 scholars from 15 countries across the world participated and presented papers. It had been a tremendous team effort where the role of Mr. Saifullah and the author, along with the chair, had been instrumental. It has also been the organizer of the international seminar on '**Japanese Studies in India, Bangladesh and South Asia: A New Integration**' (2022) organized by the DJS and Jawaharlal Nehru University to commemorate 50 years of Japan-Bangladesh relationship, 70 years of Japan-India relationship and Japan-Southwest Asia Exchange Year 2022 which was held in two phases in both countries. Furthermore, the department has also organized the two-day international hybrid conference on '**Post-Covid Japan: Economy, Politics, Society, Culture and Literature**' (2022) with the patronage of the Japan Foundation, where more than 73 scholars from 16 countries across the world

participated and presented papers. Again, Mr. Saifullah, Dr. Alam, the author and other faculty members under the guidance of Chairman Dr. Mamun had been commendable in the successful completion of the international hybrid conference. DJS faculty members Dr. Dilruba Sharmin, Dr. Lopamudra Malek and Ms. Nashia Zaman also contributed to the conference.

#### **1.7.14 Newsletter**

The first-ever newsletter has been published by of the Department of Japanese Studies, which contains write-ups of faculty members and students of the department featuring various aspects of Japan and Japanology as well as the department's key achievements. It also has some articles from international scholars and messages from the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the university and the Ambassador of Japan in Bangladesh. Mr Saifullah, the author, founding chair Prof. Dr. Barkat, the editor of the newsletter, and Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun, along with the other faculty members, had played a crucial role in the publication of the newsletter.

#### **1.7.15 Japan-Bangladesh Relationship**

The DJS is trying to strengthen Japan-Bangladesh relations through activities, including writing scholarly articles, creating awareness of Japanese investment in Bangladesh and conducting feasibility studies. This year, while marking the 50 years of Japan-Bangladesh diplomatic relations, the DJS has arranged conferences, seminars and lecture series, written newspaper articles and syndicated several events with JETRO, JBCCI and many Japanese stakeholders. While observing the Mujib Barsha (centenary) in collaboration with JBCCI, the department arranged a conference which was graced by Foreign Minister, top politicians, bureaucrats and academicians. The DJS has formed the Dhaka University Japanese Studies Alumni Association (DUJSAA) with Dr Abdullah-Al-Mamun as its founding president with an express aim of building a close rapport amongst the DJS alumni. The DJS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Japanese Philanthropy organization Shapla Neer through which people-to-people contact between Japan and Bangladesh has increased by students' engagements with philanthropy activities and

observance of many events. The department has also arranged the film festival in collaboration with the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh this year to strengthen the Japan-Bangladesh relations in Bangladesh. In addition, it also organized earlier Japan Musical Show and Cultural Festival etc. Moreover, DJS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bangladesh Ikebana Association (BIA) and the Japanese University Alumni Association in Bangladesh (JUAAB), which connects all graduates of Japanese universities in Bangladesh to undertake activities to strengthen Japan-Bangladesh relations. Department has conducted research with the support of JETRO to improve the FDI environment of the Japanese companies in Bangladesh (School of Oriental and African Studies, 2021). On September 20, 2022, the department and the Embassy of Japan jointly hosted the unwrapping ceremony of the book *'Bangladesh-Japan Diplomatic Relations (1972-2022): A New Paradigm of Strategic Partnership'* written by the Associate Professor of the department Dr. Md Jahangir Alam.

#### **1.7.16 Community Service and Support**

Through the DUJSAA platform, the DJS collected a sizeable amount of donations for indigent students during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has arranged a blood donation program and done a handful of other philanthropic activities through this platform. Furthermore, the DJS chairman has been interviewed by the NHK World (Bengali) regarding the promotion and plan of the Department of Japanese Studies, its prospects and future direction in the country and beyond, where he has explained those in detail and expressed his vision in this regard. Moreover, DJS supports the Study in Japan Global Network Project in Bangladesh for the University of Tokyo.

#### **1.7.17 Activities with Japan Embassy and Japan Foundation**

The DJS has jointly organized the 'Study in Japan Seminar' with the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh. With the department's request, the embassy has facilitated funding options for language teaching. Moreover, the department has managed to send students as volunteers to almost all Japanese Embassy-initiated programs in Bangladesh, including Japanese Film Festival. The DJS has also managed to pursue a research grant from

Japan Foundation for its faculty members in order to do collaborative research with international academics. They have completed the first phase of the research and disseminated the findings.

Furthermore, the DJS has been able to work very closely with Japan Foundation, Tokyo and India to promote Japanese studies through research, conference and book support, among others. Dr. Mamun coined the idea of receiving support from the JF for three consecutive years to ensure the planned growth of the department. Dr. Alam, the JF project director at DJS, worked hard to get the project passed and spearhead it for three consecutive years. In sum, the department has been working relentlessly to develop the relationship with the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh and the Japan Foundation.

### **1.8 Concluding Remarks**

The Department of Japanese Studies was born at a time when its parent entity, Dhaka University, was going to celebrate its glorious 100 years of life as the country's number-one academia. Being the country's first-ever multidisciplinary area studies department to date, the DJS proudly relates itself to be a benchmark of this towering hundred-year-old institution. The department has a saga of its evolution to be what it is today from an informal platform to a study circle to a study centre only to be an independent department. Many scholars, academics, and researchers have contributed to the department's establishment and growth over the years. Many names have been mentioned here with so many dropped willingly as they made a vain attempt to tarnish the department even before its birth. A few individuals have contributed with their blood and threshold. The DJS remembers the names with sincerest gratitude. The establishment of the department has opened a new arena in knowledge generation and dissemination for the betterment of society, country and humanity. The best academic practices worldwide are being attempted to be accommodated in the department for its ever expansion as a center of excellence. The department has set twin targets of quality teaching and quality research with an eye to producing skilled human resources who can fit into any place in the changing global order.

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#### List of Interviewees

| S.L | Name of the interviewee           | Designation  | Year of interview |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1   | Professor Dr. Abul Barkat         | Founder Chairman, Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka  | 2022              |
| 2   | Prof. Dr. Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah | Ex-Director in Charge of the then Japan Study Centre and Professor of the Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka | 2022              |
| 3   | Professor Dr. S M Ali Reza        | Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka   | 2022              |
| 4   | Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun             | Chairman of the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka  | 2022              |
| 5   | Dr Md. Jahangir Alam              | Associate Professor, Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka   | 2022              |
| 6   | Dr Dilruba Sharmin                | Associate Professor, Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka   | 2022              |

|   |                           |  |      |
|---|---------------------------|--|------|
| 7 | Mr Sheikh Sayeedur Rahman | Senior Administrative Officer, Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka | 2022 |
|---|---------------------------|--|------|

## **2 Development of Japanese Studies Worldwide with Special Reference to Bangladesh**

**Dilruba Sharmin**

**Summary:** This chapter chiefly highlights the development of Japanese Studies as an academic discipline with particular reference to Bangladesh. It discusses in detail the expansion and sustainability of 'Japanese Studies' as a subject. The chapter is based on both primary and secondary data collected from interviews, books, journals, reports and cyberspace. It discusses career prospects of graduates of the DJS and its vision and mission. However, this subject is not becoming more popular among students due to obstacles such as language barriers, proper guideline, ambiguous idea about job prospects and absence of interdisciplinary subjects at universities. Therefore, time is ripe enough to bring in necessity-oriented policy and planning for the mainframe of newly developed subjects in which the young generation wants to build their career. This chapter reveals the history and development of 'Japanese Studies' and explain its prospects and challenges for broadening this subject both as a higher study and for career development.

### **2.1 Introduction**

In the modern world, interest in learning area studies is growing apace. Among such studies is 'Japanese Studies' which is attracting young minds because of its future perspective, variation in learning areas and scope for career development. Japanese Studies is linked with each and every course of Japan which is a sub-field of East Asian Studies. Japanese Studies is becoming a trendy topic in the arena of area studies and popular in today's academia. Students who are doing Japanese Studies as a program can learn a wide range of social, cultural and overall aspects. They are even able to explain many complex and interrelated aspects of Japanese society and culture. Everyone knows about Japan's economic prosperity, but many people also appreciate Japan's mindfulness,

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including its own genre of literature, painting, music and cinema. Pursuing Japanese Studies programs helps a person become proficient in Japanese language, including Japanese history and heritage, literature and culture, Japanese economy, politics, social and other contemporary issues, and this creates opportunities for him or her to pursue higher education or employment in Japan. Since Japan is now one of the world's welfare superpowers, it is quite natural that interest in learning Japanese Studies will increase. In the case of Asia, this is evident in all senses and in the fullness of time. Japan's influence in the Southeast and East Asian countries is noticeable. Since Japan as a colonial power was able to dominate many countries in Southeast.

East Asia, it is natural that those countries would be influenced by Japanese culture, language and allied things. This chapter will show how important it is to study Japanese Studies and how fast it is spreading. In the outcome of its defeat in World War II, Japan adopted a number of strategies to regain its lost status among the rest of the world and its own people. The soft power or cool Japan is the example of this strategy. Japan is continuously upgrading its strategy to popularize its own culture, heritage and technology and the growing popularity of Japan-related studies is one of those examples. Nowadays, undergraduate and/or postgraduate degrees in Japanese Studies are imparted by leading universities of the world, for example Cambridge University, Harvard University, National University of Singapore, Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Manchester University, University of Birmingham, University of Sheffield and many more.

At present, Japanese Studies is slowly growing as a 'higher studies subject' in Bangladesh. Department of Japanese Studies (DJS) at Dhaka university was established in 2018 under the Faculty of Social Sciences, which is offering a Japanese Studies degree at honors and master's levels. People are now becoming mindful to get higher education by studying this subject that also holds better job prospects for them. There are lots of tasks to popularize this subject in academia along with policy making, and it is happening gradually. This chapter work attempts to conceptualize the

possibilities of growing interest in Japanese Studies in a worldview as well as providing some recommendations to establish this important area of higher studies in Bangladesh. Moreover, the chapter will outline the academic plan of the DJS and finally include implementation strategy and target (Department of Japanese Studies, 2019).

The chapter tries to define the potential progression of Japanese Studies worldview with particular reference to Bangladesh. This chapter encompasses four parts. The first part documents the roots of Japanese Studies learning and the current status of Japanese Studies program. Here the readers will understand the prospect of learning Japanese Studies as a career pathway in other countries. This section also shows the ample scope provided by Japanese Studies programs in America and Europe. In the second part, it focuses on the generational change and aspect for learning Japanese Studies and the present circumstance of Japanese Studies learning in Bangladesh. The third part exposes the common challenges of expanding Japanese Studies as an academic realm. In the final part, the chapter suggests some policy recommendations to promote Japanese Studies program, especially in Bangladesh.

## **2.2 Development of Japanese Studies as an Academic Discipline**

At present, 'area studies' is being taught very widely in different countries of the world and Japanese Studies is one of the focuses for such studies. In North America, Japan-related study is called 'Japan Studies' and in Europe, it is also known as 'Japanology'. Academics and researchers who have profound knowledge on Japan are popularly called as 'Japanologist' in contemporary academia. Eminent economist of Bangladesh, Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat explains, "A 'good' Japanologist possesses the following traits to perform the above roles: updated multidisciplinary knowledge about Japan; understanding Japanese values and ethics; understanding Japan's worldview; understanding Japan's perspective of SAARC; understanding key dimensions of relevant bilateral and multilateral issues; understanding SAARC countries' high 'diffusion index' and 'expansion value'; understanding potential impact of cooperation, collaboration,

connectivity and coordination; understanding principles of mutual respect, mutual trust and reciprocity; understanding a 3-node pathway of concern commitment-competence; good communication skills supplemented with an open mind” (Barkat, 2021).

In Japan, Japanese Studies is affiliated with social sciences, humanities and business research. It includes numerous subjects such as Japanese economy, society, politics, history, language, culture, literature, art, music, sciences and business management. It offers a multidisciplinary study area to the students.

The origin of this subject may be rooted in the Dutch trading post at Dejima, Nagasaki, during the Edo/Tokugawa period which lasted from 1634-1854 CE. In 1634, Dejima was built to incorporate Portuguese traders in Japan and also separate them from Japanese society by digging a canal through a small peninsula as the government was worried about Christianity and its influence. After 7 years, the Dutch moved to Dejima which became the single place of direct trade and exchange with the outside world. At that time, Japan achieved technological knowledge as well as cultural clout via foreign traders. On the other hand, Japanese culture, religious beliefs and other factors gradually spread to the rest of the world.

### **2.2.1 Memoir of Japanese Studies Learning Pathway**

The starting point of pursuing Japanese Studies began after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 when Japan had fully opened its doors to Europe and America for developing trade and diplomatic relations. Asiatic Society of Japan was established in Yokohama in 1872 as the first and oldest learned society publishing research on Japan (Ogawa & Seaton, 2020). To establish Japanese Studies as an academic discipline, two persons should be always remembered with gratitude—Sir Earnest Mason Satow (1843-1929) and Frederick Victor Dickins (1838-1915). Sir Earnest Satow was a British scholar, diplomat and Japanologist while Frederick Victor Dickins was a multidisciplinary characteristic; e.g., he was a naval surgeon, and did a barrister profession, also an orientalist and university administrator.

He is commemorated as a translator of Japanese literary works. Another three names must be mentioned whose objective was to master various aspects of Japan. They are Sir Rutherford Alcock, William George Aston and George Bailey Sansom who contributed immensely to imparting knowledge about Japanese art, culture and history. Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809-1897) organized the first International Exhibition of Japanese Art in London in 1862 which is considered the beginning of Japanism/Japonism in England. William George Aston (1841-1911), a trained philologist, translated the 'Nihongi' into English and also wrote books on Japanese language and history. His book 'A History of Japanese Literature' (1899) is considered as the most widely referenced book related to Japanese literature. The works of George Bailey Sansom (1883-1965) are considered as the most classic academic examples— 'The Western World and Japan: A Study in the Interaction of European and Asiatic Cultures' (1949) and 'A History of Japan'. European countries like Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Russia have well-established departments and centers for studying Japan. Most of the Western countries encouraged Japanese Studies from the second half of the 19th century. After World War II, there was a sudden surge of interest in gathering knowledge about Japan by American scholars, thanks to the unique political and diplomatic ties with Japan. During the economic miracle period of Japan, a number of universities in America and Western countries introduced Japanese Studies programs (George, 2021).

The Japanese Studies Society of United States has published the 'Journal of Japanese Studies' since 1974. In Europe, the 'European Association for Japanese Studies' has organized triennial conferences since 1973. About 15-20 renowned scholarly journals were published from Japan which incorporated numerous researches, for example Social Science Japan Journal, Sino-Japanese Studies, Journal of Japanese Studies, Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, Japan Forum, East Asian History, and Bulletin of the National Museum of Japanese History. The oldest academic journal of Japanese Studies is 'Monumenta Nipponica' which was published from Sophia University in 1938. Some Japan-related journals were published from the 1970s onwards. One of the turning

points for Japanese Studies development was the 2000s when online journals were gaining popularity as the 'Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus' (George, 2021).

We can visualize the thoughts and understanding of American people for Japan and Japanese culture by the writing of Ruth Benedict (Benedict, 1989). The writer describes the stereotypical characterization of a nation that focuses on the main attributes of its people which relates to cultural and social phenomena. Another very informative ethnographic study is John Embree's work. Both works pioneered the Japanese Studies learning process in the mid-20th century. The Western world perhaps started thinking about Japan after Yasunari Kawabata's Nobel Prize achievement (in literature, 1968) and Western scholars understood that they ought to work on Japanese voices (Ogawa & Seaton, 2020).

'Nihonjinron', a very significant identity of Japanese people, gained popularity during the 60s and 70s. As Benedict says in his cultural relativism that each culture has its own identity which can only be understood by the detailed study of that culture, 'Nihonjinron' could also work to establish Japanese Studies in academia. A pioneering modern anthropologist, named Franz Boas, first prescribed this unique idea in the early 20th century. He is recognized as the 'father of American anthropology'. By the 1970s, Japan's post-war economic growth, tagged as a 'miracle', and showed its visible presence in the world economy and expanded globally. Not that the economy flourished only, another important aspect of Japan earned ample attention as a medium for business communication and that was Japanese language or 'Nihongo' (Ogawa & Seaton, 2020).

An important change in Japanese Studies has been witnessed by the work of Yoshio Sugimoto who is a critic of Nihonjinron. His article entitled 'Japanese society: Inside out and outside in' include that "...since the 1990s, a paradigm has been in progress and the self-glorifying Nihonjinron discourse has shown signs of waning. ...Japanese society is now increasingly characterized by internal variations and class rivalries,

comparable to advanced economies” (2014:194). “Japanese society came from being a class-oriented society to a more ‘multi-ethnic’ or multicultural society, as well as a ‘multi-class or as anyone can call it, a ‘*kakusa*’ or divided class society,” he continues (Sugimoto, 2014).

Two very prominent scholars of the 1960-1970s were Chie Nakano and Takeo Doi whose works played the unequal attributes of Japanese Studies in academia. Chie Nakano (1926-2021) was a leading Japanese social anthropologist and her published work, ‘Human Relations in Japan: Summary Translation of Tateshakai No Ningen Kankei’ (Personal relations in a vertical society), presents her arguments on the vertically structured society (Nakane, 1972). Another example for Japanese Studies expansion was Takeo Doi’s ‘Understanding Amae’ (Doi, 2005). Both write-ups show how Japanese experts were giving effort to the emerging field of Japanese Studies from the 1960s onwards. All their works claim the fundamental characteristics of Japan and the ‘uniquely unique’ quality of Nihonjinron framework.

In Japanese Studies, the economic miracle of Japan is always a focal point of discussion and the entire Asia regards Japan as a model of development. Japan’s institutional management and post-industrial problems have been discussed by Ezra Vogel in his book ‘Japan as Number One: Lessons for America’ (Vogel, 2013). Another work is from Ronald Dore, where he also argues that the world is gradually converging on Japanese sociological pattern (Dore, 1973). The earliest and most principal subject in the study of political economy is the affinity between governmental legal institutions and economic exercise which has been clearly identified in the book by Chalmers Johnson, ‘MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The growth of Industrial Policy 1925-1975’ (Johnson, 1982). Johnson argues that Japanese capitalism was assumed on the ‘developmental state’ layout, in which the national administration entertained a key role in the determinative national policy in Japan’s national interest only. Ogawa and Seaton edited a book named ‘New Frontiers in Japanese Studies’ where they mentioned that the relations between Japan and other Asian countries linger and are wholly strained by

the events of Japanese imperialism which are always synchronizing with admiration for Japan's achievements (Ogawa & Seaton, 2020). Since the establishment of Japan Foundation in 1972, Japanese language education indicated massive growth in Asia. The first Japanese Studies program in Southeast Asia was started at Ateneo de Manila University in 1966. While in India, the Japanese Studies program was launched in 1954 in the Indian School of International Studies established by the government of India and this was the first Japanese Studies program in the entire South Asia. Japanese Studies has also been attracting the attention of many American universities where Japanese Studies departments and programs are established to promote knowledge about Japan. In this way, many Japanese specialists or Japanologists became prominent. Recently, another important area of discussion in Japanese Studies is 'pop culture' like manga, anime, sushi, karaoke and J-pop. All of these pop-cultural goods and materials are spreading around the world and the viability of Japanese Studies is also increasing. The new global image of Japan is known as the 'cool Japan' initiative which is actually a government-sponsored campaign and getting attraction from the young generation, elite, non-elite and all levels of students.

In the post-Cold War era, Japan has become one of the outstanding models of soft powers (or we can say 'power skills) in the global political arena. Japan's current appearance of an affectionate, peacemaker region, which worked with endless hardship after being demolished by WWII, is rebuilt through much political and strategic engagement. This issue comes to the forefront if we study Japan's present soft policy. The '*Kawaii*' cultural aspect that Japan offers today is an example of the precise projection of national and international policies to present Japan's positive image to the world and ensures its prosperity and security in the international domain (Sharmin, 2021).

### **2.2.2 Japanese Studies at Present**

Japanese Studies in the United States commenced its journey in early 20th century. A study done in 1935 shows that an estimated 25 institutions offered courses on Japan and some of these were on Japanese language

only. Scholars such as Serge Elisseeff, a Russian-born Japanologist, had significantly contributed to the growth of Japanese Studies in the US. He taught at Harvard from 1932, Asakawa Kan'ichi at Yale and Tsunoda Ryusaku at Columbia (Hardacre, 1998). After World War II, numerous centers on Japanese Studies were founded at different universities of the United States, including Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Yale, University of California at Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of Chicago, Stanford University, Cornell University, University of Michigan and University of Washington. All these universities offer undergraduate and graduate courses in Japanese Studies, including Japanese language. Not only this, multidimensional Japanese sources for research on Japanese Studies are developed at these American universities. Every major library contains all the source books, journals, magazines and periodicals on Japan-related issues.

A report published in 1970 on Japanese Studies in the US found that the number of scholars of Japan had grown to 400, with half of them being the young generation or the so-called post-war generation. Later in the 1980s, more than 200 universities offered Japanese Studies courses and around 10,000 students were enrolled in Japanese language learning. By 1986, a total of 23,454 students were studying Japanese language and the number increased to double in the 1990s, with 45,714 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in Japanese language courses (Brod & Huber, 1992). The Japan Foundation conducted a survey in 2012 and found that there were 4,270 teachers providing lessons in Japanese language and there were 155,939 students at 1,449 different institutions. This ratio increased by 10.4% in the 2009 survey in terms of number of students (Japan Foundation, 2020). Interestingly, in the US, in some cases, Chinese subjects were taught with Japanese courses so that future career pathways could be full of opportunities. However, the journey of Japanese Studies in Europe formally began in the late 19th century and the intimal focus was language and history. A number of French, German, Spanish and UK scholars became particularly interested in Japan after the Meiji restoration and tried to understand the society more. The learning pathway continued and currently, European universities including famous one such as Oxford University and Cambridge University started offering degree programs in Japanese Studies.



‘Japanese Studies’ is totally a new subject in the academic arena of Bangladesh, though Japanese language education has a long history back in 1972, just after our independence. In fact, the common people of Bangladesh do not know much about ‘Japanese Studies’ as an academic subject. Compared to that, some traditional subjects are still prominent today. The aim of section 3 of the chapter is to give a brief overview of the history and present state of Japanese Studies program in Bangladesh followed by a discussion on the challenges the subject is facing.

Because of getting scholarships for higher studies in Japan, exchange of ideas and knowledge of Japanese Studies have become largely possible today. Higher studies and research in multidisciplinary areas have made an unstoppable development, for example the centering of academic power in Japanese Studies in the neo-liberal era, the improvement of international university rankings, impact factors in research articles, internet browsing and many others are behind this gradual rise in Japan-related research.

### **2.3 Generational Change and Aspect for Learning Japanese Studies in Bangladesh**

It is important to discuss two issues—from where the Japanese Studies came first and what is the next. In order to know the development of Japanese Studies program in Bangladesh, one must first know the information about the relationship between Bangladesh and Japan, which has a history of hundreds of years (UNB, 2019). In the early 20th century, Rabindranath Tagore, Tenshin Okakura and Taikan Yokoyama’s works showed a great influence which profoundly linked each other's works. Tenshin Okakura was a Japanese art historian and curator while Taikan Yokoyama was a Japanese master of painting. We came across many information through a book, written by Rustom Bharucha, titled ‘Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin’, where the writer truly said, “In addition to countering the imperialist subtext of Okakura’s the Ideals of the East and the Awakening of the East against Tagore’s radical critique of Nationalism, it inflicts the dominant tropes of postcolonial theory by highlighting the subtleties of beauty and the interstices of homo-sociality and love” (Bharucha, 2006).

The relationship between the two countries started then and it remains a key point in the annals of their friendship. Even the national flags of Japan and Bangladesh bear similarity of friendship, where sun is a common theme. For Japan: Hi no maru (the circle of the sun) represents goddess Amaterasu, the mythical ancestor of the Japanese emperor and daughter of Izanagi and Izanami. The red circular disc of the Bangladeshi flag is a significant representation of the bloodshed in the 1971 Liberation War. Japan provided extensive support during our liberation war in the way of collecting donation for war-affected Bangladeshi people and gave their moral support to us. For example, Senator Hayakawa Takashi, who was a Diet member of Japan, visited Bangladesh in March 1972, and felt the devastation by the war. Senator Hayakawa talked with the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman about many issues related with future nation-building and all of these were no doubt a symbol of goodwill gesture of the Japan government for Bangladesh.

Japan recognized us on 10th February 1972, soon after Bangladesh's independence. A good friendship has been boosted between Japan and Bangladesh through the establishment of the embassy of Japan on 11 February 1972. Japan was among the few countries Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation, visited first in 1973, and his historic visit succeeded in establishing a strong foundation in our diplomatic relations.

Japan is the highest ODA (official development assistance) provider for Bangladesh and one of our tried and tested bilateral friends. Since many Japanese companies are currently operating in Bangladesh and the job opportunities for our people are increasing, it is important for us to acquire knowledge about Japan. Without proper knowledge of a specific country or area, it is a very tough task to work in any of their companies. Understanding this fact well, K.M. Mohsin and Iftikhar-ul-Awwal wrote a book in 1999 where they suggested opening a dedicated department for Japanese Studies at Dhaka University (Mohsin, 1999). Realizing the same fact, a group of scholars of the University of Dhaka initially started Japan Study Circle. Eventually, the Circle became a Centre and finally the

Department of Japanese Studies has been opened at the university under Social Sciences Faculty to facilitate study of Japan and employment in Japanese organizations in Bangladesh as well as in Japan.

At present, as many as 321 Japanese business firms are in operation in Bangladesh. According to Mr. Yuji Ando, the Country Representative of JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization), Japanese entrepreneurs are now very much interested in investing in different fields of Bangladesh (The Financial Express, 2021). At present, Japan possesses the third-largest economic power of the world and its impact on South and South-East Asian countries has increased phenomenally.

The status for study of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh is discussed in two broad sections; (a) Learning ‘Japanese Studies’ as a degree program and (b) Learning Japanese language for better career.

### **2.3.1 Japanese Studies Program**

‘Japanese Studies’ is a multifaceted area; in where geography, culture, economics, government and politics, language and other aspects of Japan are taught. In many countries, Japanese Studies are taught as part of area studies or as a subject for East Asian Studies. As the world is progressing towards multidisciplinary knowledge domain and people’s capacities are developing in different challenging fields, various types of employment opportunities are being created in the same way. Moreover, a multidisciplinary area of learning programs is also developing.

It appears that only one public university offers this program at honors and master’s levels, and some universities offer Japanese language programs. As mentioned earlier, the Department of Japanese Studies came into being in 2017 under Social Sciences Faculty. Before that, it was known as Japan Study Centre. At the beginning of the 90s, there was a ‘Japan Study Circle’ on the Arts Building premises at Dhaka University, where some senior academicians sometimes shared their experiences about studying in Japan. Meanwhile, a handful of interested professors came forward to share their idea about running a center on Japan-related issues. That was actually the unofficial beginning of the journey. Japan Study Centre was established in 1994 for the extensive research on Japan.

Gradually the center was officially unified with the University of Dhaka in 2002 and started offering Post-graduation Diploma Course in Japanese Studies. The course was transformed into a full-fledged master's program in 2006. The center was able to attract a good number of Japanese academics and scholars to Bangladesh as visiting professors. However, the center gained momentum when it was made a full-fledged department in the year 2017 which is now known as 'Department of Japanese Studies' (DJS).

The DJS is a unique department at Dhaka University as its main objective is to study and research Japan, a leading development partner of Bangladesh since its independence in 1971. The fundamental goal of the department is to provide an extensive area of education and clear knowledge of Japanese politics, economy, culture and society. During the preparation of the syllabus of the department, the syllabi of all world-renowned universities were studied and 58 subjects were selected as per requirements.

Each of the 58 topics is suitable for any student who wants to know Japan. The department is offering some scholarships to its students every year, which is provided by some Bangladeshi and Japanese companies. More than 10 students are already studying in Japan by getting the prestigious MEXT scholarship from the Japanese government. The excellence of the department is not limited to its own academic activities. Recently, the department has started collaboration with Japanese companies through signing memorandums of understanding (MoU) for a better opportunity for future research. Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun, the current chair of the department, says: "The motto of the department is to create world-class Japanologists in future as well as a diverse employment opportunity for its students. The DJS is working continuously to achieve the academic excellence for a brighter future."

The DJS enrolled its first Bachelor (Honors) batch in 2017. It offers a four-year BSS (Bachelor in Social Sciences) degree and one-year MSS (Master in Social Sciences) degree in Japanese Studies under Social Sciences Faculty. The department also offers a 1-year professional masters course which helps provide Japan-related knowledge to a greater

audience of any age and profession. The graduates are equipped with specific skills and aided with an enhanced and refined understanding of contemporary issues, especially Japanese culture, history, economics, geography, politics and management, language etc. The Japanese Studies program does not train students for a specific career in Japanese Studies. Like the students of other disciplines, Japanese Studies students can excel the career as BCS officers, bankers or NGO workers. The added advantage is that the graduates of Japanese Studies can apply for any professions that are associated with Japan and have employment in Japanese companies and organizations nationally and internationally (Ovee, 2019).

To strengthen the roots of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh, the DJS has taken numerous steps. In the last two years, it has arranged multiple seminars, career talks, academic and student-friendly lectures which have been conducted by renowned national and international academicians. Chapter 1 and 5 of this book elaborate the department's own initiatives and collaborative endeavors to transform it as a knowledge hub and create employment opportunities for the graduates. In 2022, DJS has been awarded with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan's Commendation for the distinguished service in contributing friendly relations, academic exchange, and expansion of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh and the region.

### **2.3.2 Japanese Language Program**

If someone wants to prove oneself as capable for any international job or any other opportunity then language can help to prove one a more deserving candidate. There are multiple benefits for learning a new language and knowing Japanese language will definitely create new opportunities in this regard. Soon after the independence of Bangladesh, the Japanese language learning began in 1972 (Alam, 2020). Both the university-level and private language schools started to set up, although initially the percentage of language learners was not satisfactory. The interest of language learning has increased from the beginning of the 1990s and after the initiative of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) this learning process has increased more. BMET

has opened Japanese language courses in 27 technical training centers (TTC) all over the country (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1**

*Location of TTC in Bangladesh*



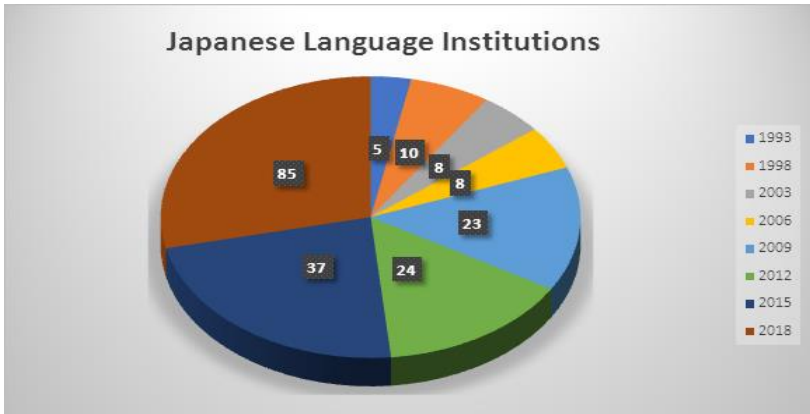
*Source:* Created by the author

In 1972, Japanese language courses were started at Dhaka University and Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh. Two years later, Institute of Modern Language (IML) was established at University of Dhaka. Gradually many Japanese language learning centers were established in the port city of Chattogram and Rajshahi University in the 80s and 90s. Besides, a Japanese language learning center was established at Jahangirnagar University, another big public university in Bangladesh afterwards. JLPT exam was first held in Dhaka in 2001 and continues to date. A study conducted by Dr. Alam showed that, in the year of 1993 only 452 students learnt Japanese language and this number increased to 2,158 in 2015 (Alam, 2020).

The increasing numbers of Japanese language institutes, language learners and teachers are an indicator of learning interest in this area studies. The number of Japanese language learning institutes was only 5 in the year 1993, which climbed to 85 in 2018. The number of Japanese language teachers was 94 in 2015 and 220 in 2018. The approximate numbers of learners were 2,158 in 2015 and 4,801 in 2018 (Japan Foundation, 2018).

**Figure 2.2**

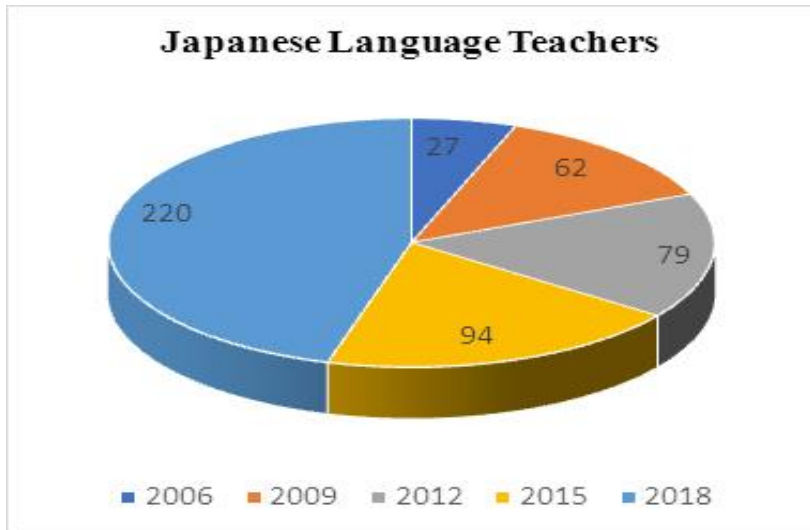
*Japanese Language Institutions in Bangladesh*



Source: Created by the author

**Figure 2.3**

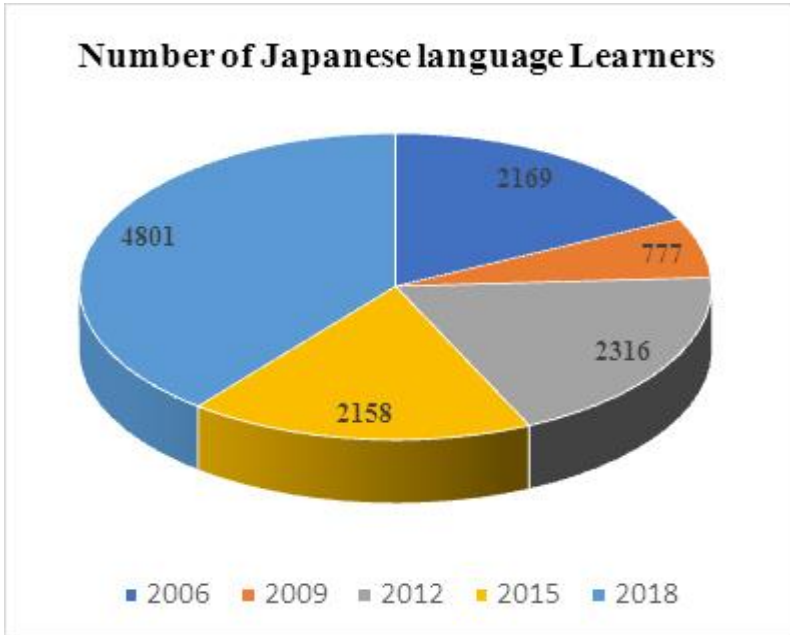
*Japanese Language Teachers in Bangladesh*



Source: Created by the author

**Figure 2.4**

*Japanese Language Learners in Bangladesh*



*Source:* Created by the author

Every year, many students return to Bangladesh with higher degrees from different Japanese universities and start their career here. The JUAAB was established on 29 September 2000 which aims to make a closer relationship among Bangladeshi nationals who completed their graduation from Japanese universities so that academic knowledge can be interchanged. JUAAB has been working hard to promote language learning courses in numerous ways and this association has already achieved a great success in producing many students who are working in Japan and increasing the chances for others to work there and remit foreign currency back home.

Why Japan-related study is important in Bangladesh? To get the answer, we have to explore the Japan-Bangladesh relationship. Both the countries have developed bonds of mutual understanding and friendship. Japan



became Bangladesh's fourth-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) by the year 2004 which is larger than the USA, the UK, and Malaysia (Rahman, 2005). Bangladesh is also getting a good amount of development aid from Japan. The bilateral annual trade of the two countries was US\$2.3 billion in 2015. Japan's ODA is classified into three types: grant aid, technical support or assistance and ODA loan aid. In the year of 2020, Bangladesh got US\$50.05 million in grant and US\$24.61 million in technical cooperation from Japan (JICA, 2020).

To enhance strength in the education sector, Japan provides many scholarships to both undergraduate, graduate, master's and PhD students. Every year, hundreds of Bangladeshi students receive Japan government's scholarships to study there. In the cultural development sector, Japan provided support for the preservation of two archeological sites of Bagerhat and Paharpur Buddhist Bihar from 1992-1997 through the UNESCO/Japan Trust Fund for the preservation of the World Cultural Heritages. In a BBC World Poll, 71% of Bangladeshi people have a positive impression about Japan. Based on a primary research, Rahman and Fee said that the number of Bangladeshi migrants in the 1980s and 90s was more than 100,000 (Rahman & Fee, 2013, p.33)." According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MoFAJ), in 2021, 17,394 Bangladeshi people are living in Japan (MoFAJ, n.d). For many Bangladeshi students who completed their study from Japan, Japan is their second home which is simply unforgettable (Oike, 2022).

Both countries celebrated thirty years of diplomatic relations in 2002 and half-century or golden jubilee of their friendship in February 2022. The support provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to Bangladesh is significant. In an interview with The Daily Star on September 2022, a senior JICA official Mr. Akito, JICA looks at its relationship with Bangladesh for the next five years with deep and vital importance as it is helping Bangladesh for reaching the next stage of advancement with the completion of a number of mega projects. He cited the example of Matarbari Power Plant Project and Dhaka Metro Rail. Answering to a media query, the JICA official said that Bangladesh's position in the Asian route is strategically very important and connectivity

can play an important role in economic activity. He further said that Japan hopes to technical support for the integrated development of the Moheshkhali-Matarbari area of Cox's Bazar district so that it could be establish as an energy and power hub in the whole region. The under-construction Moheshkhali economic zone and Matarbari deep-sea port are the major and important parts of BIG-B (the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt) project, which consists of a logistic, power, energy and waterfront industry hub for Bangladesh. The official categorically said JICA is very proud to see the development and progress of Bangladesh and achieve regional power. He suggested that it is essential to improve procedures which create an appropriate environment for Japanese FDI (The Daily Star, 2022).

## **2.4 Challenges of Developing Japanology in Bangladesh**

To develop Japanology, there are many constraints in Bangladesh. As language is a vital issue in Japanology. But in general, Bangladeshi students do not show positive attitude to foreign language like Japanese, Chinese or Korean students, this is a major challenge. The DJS at Dhaka University, being the first-ever area studies department in Bangladesh and till now this is the only one in the country, is facing the challenge of Japanese language teaching (Akon & Sharmin, 2021). However, the department has undertaken a number of steps to overcome the challenges. The steps include an increase in the number of Japanese language teachers, setting up lab and appointment of native Japanese language teacher. Because the DJS aims to produce globally competent quality graduates who could be termed Japanologists, that is, experts on Japan—not merely on language, but also on all other aspects of Japan. A quote by the DJS founding chair Prof. Dr. Abul Barkat reads:

“Our vision is to produce knowledge-based Japanologists who, in turn, will produce, reproduce and disseminate the knowledge gained for the benefit of humanity. In this process, the Department of Japanese Studies—as a knowledge hub and a center of excellence—aims to act as a dynamic catalyst and, at the same time, intends to expand the base of the department itself.”

The DJS, being a department in the Faculty of Social Sciences, firstly covers the basics of social sciences such as economics, politics, sociology,

history, international relations, trade and business, language and culture, and so on and so forth. Besides, it covers the historical development of Japanese politics from ancient times to the modern ages along with some detailed courses on Japanese government and political system. The Japanese economy has been prioritized in studying on Japan at the DJS. The economic model of Japan is of highest significance because of its size and influence in the global economy. Moreover, Japanese society, because of its unique nature is also taught with importance. The nature and features of Japanese society, how far they are conducive to economic development, are also studied with due diligence. Japan has a long-standing history of its own civilization. The students of DJS also learn Japanese history and civilization. The challenge for developing Japanology in Bangladesh is quite big. However, the possible solution is described below:

#### **2.4.1 Lack of Cultural Prevalence**

South Asia had remained one of the distant regions to Japan for a long period of time. Due to the geographical distance and less connection with the Japanese people, Bangladesh along with other South Asian countries had little knowledge about the diversified Japan and its unique culture, society, language, etc. Although Bangladesh and Japan have been in relationship since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, people-to-people contact did not increase at the expected rate. At the beginning of the 21st century, Japan gave importance to cultural relations under its ‘Cool Japan’ strategy and it is also trying to promote its culture in Bangladesh.

However, the historical gap (geographical distance) still exists in the case of Japan-Bangladesh relations and the rural masses have less knowledge about Japan. Although the practice of Japanese culture, particularly manga, anime or Japanese food sushi is increasing in urban areas, it is yet to hold an appeal for the masses in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Japanese language is sometimes difficult to learn and understand. People here are sometimes not interested in area studies due to language barrier and lack of cultural prevalence. However, promotion of Japanese Studies learning seems to be increasing in Bangladesh.

### **2.4.2 Inadequate Research and Shortage of Developmental Planning**

From 2017, Department of Japanese Studies has started its journey as an independent and fully functioning department. Since it is the youngest department of Dhaka University under the Faculty of Social Sciences and a new field of area studies, especially in Bangladesh, it is yet to promote a new horizon in the education system at large. Before establishment of this department, even Dhaka University offered only Japanese language under the IML and a few private universities and private coaching centers offered language course. Although this department has succeeded in broadening the country studies, Japan, within this short period, it is yet to produce much research work. Still the people have limited knowledge regarding the department. However, it is the very common nature of people that until they develop firm knowledge of any particular subject or topic, they show little interest in that particular topic whatever the subject has potential or not.

To produce firm knowledge about any particular topic, the mother tongue always provides a strong foundation for any kind of education. But it is a matter of regret that this department has limited literary works in Bangla. As, DJS does not have adequate published articles in Bangla language to satisfying students' needs and draw readers' attention, the promotion of Japanese Studies to mass people remains limited.

### **2.4.3 Financial Constraints**

Financial or resource constraints always stand in the way to providing quality education. It also hinders possible outcomes that spur and propel growth and development. Although Department of Japanese Studies has played a pioneering role in establishing a comparatively new study program in Bangladesh, it did not have any big source of funding. Every new institute or department needs adequate campaign, promotion and branding. Since the DJS have shortage of funding for research and academic promotion, it could not attract attention of the students, especially those who are choosing other departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Therefore, the DJS needs funding support to improve academic environment and increase research activities.

## **2.5 Forward-Looking View of Japanese Studies**

Higher studies worldwide are gradually becoming transitional and it becomes more challenging because of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. However, recommendations are presented below for future development of Japanese Studies:

1. Plan proper content for each and every topic related to Japanese Studies and try to include a case study in every topic so that students can understand the gaps.
2. To encourage students, it is essential to travel across borders, and political, ethnic, geographical boundaries to know the story of becoming a 'young star' like Japan.
3. It is necessary to establish bonding and academic understanding among all the universities or institutions of the world which offer 'Japanese Studies or Japanology' degree so that everyone can exchange their views and develop their own institutions with necessary amendments. There are lots of multidisciplinary ideas which could help develop 'Japanese Studies' as a subject for higher studies in the global arena. More than hundreds universities globally run undergraduate and graduate courses in Japanese Studies. Almost all of them have history and culture-related course and Japanese communication courses are considered for coursework. Japan can make a long-term plan where all the stakeholders of Japanese Studies can join and share their ideas and planning so that many newly developed institutions and departments of Japanese Studies can share their own stories and help each other.

For Bangladeshi students, Japanese Studies holds some good career prospects. As the partnership between Bangladesh and Japan has reached a new height, the opportunities have been created for both Bangladeshi and Japanese nationals in and outside of the countries. Many Bangladeshi nationals are now ready to do their higher study in Japan. DJS is receiving fifty students every year for Bachelor program and another forty for Master's in Japanese Studies—a one-year master's course where students are selected through highly competitive exams. Here comes a question of job placement for these students.

Firstly, in terms of the Bangladeshi nationals studying in the DJS has

ample opportunities to pursue higher studies in Japan. Secondly, like all other Social Science graduates, they have equal job opportunities in government, private and international organizations. They would rather get a special advantage in getting jobs in foreign affairs. Thirdly, they would be able to secure jobs in the UN organizations as well because of their specialty in Japan—one of the highest contributors to the UN peacekeeping missions. Fourthly, since Japan is one of the mighty economies in the world, many Japanese multinational companies recruit quality graduates having knowledge of Japan and good command of Japanese language. It is believed that DJS graduates have the highest opportunity to pursue jobs in those companies. Fifthly, there are so many entrepreneurs who are interested in establishing business with Japanese nationals because of their high-grade commitment. Studying in the DJS will help them establish business relations with Japanese nationals. Last but not least, many indigenous organizations require Japanese Studies experts for dealing with Japanese nationals in government and private projects where dozens of DJS alumni are already working.

Japan Foundation, through the Japan embassy in Dhaka, has been assisting in reinforcing the Department of Japanese Studies by way of book supply, teacher's quality development and student exchange programs. Naturally, this is a big opportunity forward for Japanese Studies in Bangladesh. Every year, a good number of students, researchers and professionals receive a Japanese government scholarship—Monbukagakusho (MEXT)—for pursuing higher studies in Japan. It has paved the way for studying Japan by Bangladeshi nationals.

The establishment of the DJS as the first-ever single-country area study on Japan in the history of Bangladesh can function as a core center for the expansion of Japanese Studies, not only in Bangladesh, but also in South Asia and beyond.

## **2.6 Recommendations and Conclusion**

The main consideration of this chapter was to evaluate the development of Japanese Studies across the world and identify the challenges for future growth. It also portrays the prospects of studying 'Japanese Studies'. This chapter establishes a far-reaching aspect of learning Japanese Studies in

Bangladesh by presenting numerous data and information, and it highlights the value of raising our own future. No struggle is successful without effort, and if we really want to establish this subject as a source for intellectual development as well as a new pathway for learning, we have to work hard and make a master plan accordingly.

Recommendations for developing Japanese Studies in Bangladesh-

- a. Teaching students by native speakers to overcome the language learning barrier,
- b. Language lab with adequate teaching paraphernalia,
- c. Increasing placement opportunity for Japanese Studies graduates,
- d. Introducing more funding sources for higher education in Japan,
- e. Arranging routine seminars, workshops and conferences to keep abreast with the recent developments of Japan,
- f. Organizing Joint research schemes in collaborations with Bangladeshi and Japanese scholars,
- g. Publishing major translation works of Japanese history, heritage, economy and social aspects in Bangla,
- h. Involving policy makers for promoting and disseminating Japanese Studies. Good policy decisions on this new subject can be properly disseminated to students.

Japanese Studies in Bangladesh is growing well. Yet, there are constraints too on the part of the DJS. Firstly, the department as a stakeholder will focus on capacity building of faculty members by training them up as well as helping them pursue higher education. Secondly, the DJS should pay due concentration on extra-curricular activities alongside quality education. This will ultimately result in increasing interest of the students to the department. Thirdly, DJS and other stakeholders may take some measures to observe different Japanese days like Hiroshima Day, arrange seminars, symposiums, workshops, national and international conferences. In addition to that, arranging cultural exchange programs with different Japanese universities and hosting the same may add value to the branding of Japanese Studies. Fourthly, the DJS has already started job placement for its graduates in different Japanese companies which may be expedited by a better collaboration with Japan embassy in Bangladesh and organizations like JICA. Last but not least, international

exposure is badly needed for the development of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh. To materialize these initiatives, Japan Foundation, JICA and Japan embassy may play a critical role. For this, the embassy may organize more workshops, seminars and symposiums on different aspects of Japanese Studies, including language and culture, politics and economy, trade and business. The embassy may play a role in establishing relations between all Japanese companies in Bangladesh and the DJS as well as other stakeholders like IML and other institutes. Since Japanese Studies graduates are the undeclared ‘brand ambassadors’ of Japan, they may be groomed and trained in and outside Japan at the initiative of the embassy or any other Japanese organization.

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# 3 Worldwide Practice of Teaching Pedagogy in Japanese Studies

**Lopamudra Malek**

**Summary:** This chapter turns the spotlight on teaching pedagogy in Japanese Studies at key universities worldwide. It comes up with the definition of pedagogy is, theories of pedagogy and its connotation with the newly established Department of Japanese Studies (DJS) at Dhaka University. Discussion on teaching pedagogy is still at shallow level. So, this topic demands an in-depth discussion in the future. This chapter endeavors to highlight the worldwide practice of Japanese Studies and special focus on South Asian experience and practice of teaching techniques, assessment policies and evaluation. A survey is conducted to know about the teaching pedagogy used by some universities and make some recommendations for the DJS. Moreover, with an eye to improving DSJ teaching pedagogy, an extensive document analysis is done to understand pedagogical practice at different universities.

## 3.1 Introduction

Before the establishment of a full-fledged department in 2017 under the Faculty of Social Sciences at Dhaka University, ‘Japan Study Centre’ was a leading research wing of the university since 1994. The centre expanded its area of activities in 2013 when Professor Dr. Abul Barkat took its charge as the director.

In its early days, Japan Study Centre used to offer only two-year master’s course in Japanese Studies. According to our founder chairman Professor Dr. Abul Barkat, the main motto of this department is “to produce knowledge-based Japanologists who will contribute, nationally and internationally, to multidisciplinary development processes.” Professor Dr. Abul Barkat established this department and now present Chairman of the department Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun is taking all the possible measures to make this department connoted with various Japanese

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companies and organizations at home and abroad. At the DJS, the teaching methodology is based on two specific aspects. Here, teaching of Japanese Language focuses on drill method and for the other subjects such as Sociology of Japanese Society, Political Economy of Japan, Japanese Education System, and Japanese Philosophy and Thought, the department focus on class lectures, PowerPoint presentations, using external resources as extraordinary lecturers, lecture series provided by Japan Foundation on knowledge-based inputs and finally internship and thesis writing. At undergraduate level, final semester thesis writing is mandatory for students. As this is an area studies department, it has specialized teaching pedagogy. But a specific set of pedagogy is needed to establish it as a center of excellence.

This chapter narrates the teaching tools and teaching pedagogy of Japanese Studies at universities across borders. It also focuses on their evaluation and assessment tools. This would be an important add-on for future curriculum planning and the position of the DJS for the next few years and in the distant future. However, due to time constraint and unavailability of resources, it has not been possible to cover majority of the universities. As this is a primary work, there is scope for improvement.

### **3.2 Changing Trend of Japanese Studies Curriculum**

Japanese Studies is a comparatively new discipline but it is well-acclaimed as an area study and there are hundreds universities across the world offering this program for the interested students and researchers. Japanese Studies is being taught at leading universities which focus mainly on Japanese language, history, society, calligraphy and so on. In our neighboring countries, especially in India, Visva-Bharati University, Rabindra Bharati University, Doon University, Delhi University (DU), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Bangalore University, Savitribai Phule Pune University have degree courses on Japanese Language and Japanese Studies. Other notable universities and research centers in this area are National University of Singapore (NUS), the University of Sydney, Monash University, Australia University of Delaware, Willamette University, University of Hawaii, Hilo, University of

Wisconsin, Whitewater, International Research Center for Japanese Studies which is Nichibunken, University of California, University of San Diego, Oakland University, Rochester Hills, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Japan Research Center, UC Berkeley's Center for Japanese Studies, University of London and so forth. These entities offer Japanese Studies degree either under a departmental or center or research wing.

According to Tadashi Ogawa (Managing Director of the Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange Department, Japan Foundation) till the 1980s, the focal interest of research on Japanese Studies across the globe was Japan's economy but in the 1990s, topics for studies expanded in several areas which old-school scholars would never have imagined of. Some topics include 'Robot Engineering and Management for the Aging Society in Japan', another one was 'Research on Purikura (photo sticker booths) from the Social Perspective' or 'Comparative Study of Islam and Shinto'. These titles say it all about a range of captivating subjects and how people are interested in doing research on Japan's every single feature.

On the other hand, scanning through the available documents, it is understood that Japan's international relations, foreign policy, Japan's bilateral and multilateral trade and strategic relations, Japan-US, Japan-China, Japan-Korea, Japan-Europe relations, Japan and Southeast Asia, Japan's traditional culture, literature, Japan's management system, quality control and Buddhism were major topics of research at JNU and Delhi University during the second half of the 20th century. These diversified research topics are the indications and suggestions of globalization of Japanese studies and its future paradigms (Ogawa, 2010). To cap it all, this shift in interest and dissemination of field has had a profound impact on the standards of teaching pedagogy of Japanese Studies.

### **3.3 History of Teaching Pedagogy**

Before talking about Japanese Studies, we should know the characterization of teaching pedagogy. Pedagogy in scholastic vernacular has obtained importance as a substitute for methods of instruction or

methods of teaching (Loughran, 2002). Pedagogy of a teacher's education is based on the construal method and it necessitates and involves some professional skills that are documented, established and polished and that they have expertise in a particular field of teaching.

An educator must have an idea of the history of teaching pedagogy and its basic principles and practices. In this part, the discussion will be on overall impression of the history of teaching pedagogy, and the social history of pedagogical methods and education, which is surely a historic phenomenon and a significant one as well, but the definite and ultimate goal of teaching and learning must be defined through transmission of knowledge and communication of culture(s). This is a well-established fact that the directives and professional characteristics of teachers are factually twofold. One is teaching and the other is socialization. Diversity and multiculturalism are an essential part of contemporary teaching.

Loughran conceptualized the theory of pedagogy as 'Pedagogy in the field of learning has expanded its value as a supplementary for means of practices of teaching' (Loughran, 2002). On the other hand, according to Grimmett and Mackinnon, teaching is a procedural and technical commotion; the instrumental understanding of pedagogy vindicates and decreases the chances of effectiveness provided to educate university level students and their skills. Consequently, the scientific pursuit of pedagogy often eradicates the main choices and communications with the core instituted education system. Nevertheless, thinking that teaching is a spontaneous activity which requires teachers' valuation to apprehend the measures of learning and practice (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992), instructional decisions are taken on the basis of pedagogical approaches as the ostensibly evident technique or approach finally taken on. According to Van Mannen, if we go back to the morphological and lexemic roots of instructor, we find that this word means not a teacher, but a striver who genuinely cares for, accompanies students to and from his or her educational institute (Van Manen, 1994). From this standpoint, pedagogy where the actions of teachers imply an individual rapport, or we can say one-to-one relationship, based on mutual knowledge and understanding of

each other. On the other hand, in the sector of educational positions, teachers are in an instructive relationship with their students. Teachers are hired to help learners toward both academic and personal growth. The essence of teaching and pedagogic accomplishment is dedicated by constant intelligence and endless resilience. The “why” and “what” of pedagogy are merged and composed by the characteristics of the relationship between an instructor and a student (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992).

It should be mentioned here that when there was no specific theory on teaching pedagogy in ancient days, the teachers of ancient India had developed their own format and in that format a teacher’s place or house was a student’s abode. Students were permitted and sometimes bound to stay there as long as their studies were not fully accomplished. Students used to sit in a particular place while teachers went to each student and delivered one-to-one service. The system was not theoretically mentioned in those days, but it was all in use. Teachers had a worthy communication with their pupils’ families who used to leave their children to their teachers in good faith for proper education. (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992).

In those days, a teacher was like an institution. Teachers had set their own teaching tools compatible with those specific circumstances. Learning from history could be an option for learning lessons from past experiences and that could be an effective lesson for advancing teaching methodology and teaching pedagogy for any future endeavor, especially in the field of Japanese Studies.

In the realm of education today, German philosopher, academic and educator Johann Friedrich Herbart of Oldenburg (1776-1841) should be mentioned here. He was the person who shouldered the transformation of interest in Realism in 19th-century and he is reckoned among the well-regarded founders of modern scientific education and pedagogy. Herbart’s theory of education is known as Herbartianism across the world. His theory has promoted five recognized steps for teaching:



Number one is 'Preparation'. This method is to connect new material to be learnt with pertinent past conceptions with the intention of giving pupil an imperative and significant interest in a particular subject matter under consideration. This one is the most important part of the teaching expedition (Herbar & Friesen, 2020). Number two is 'Presentation', a system in which a teacher presents new material or the continuation of the old by means of concrete objects and teaching materials. This reflects the teacher's capability to render what he or she has to proclaim (Grimett & MacKinnon, 1992). Number three is 'Connotation' with the students by acclimatizing a fresh idea through evaluating it with past ideas and consider both their similarities and differences in order to bring the new impression into students' cognizance. Number four is 'Simplification', a method which is specifically significant for educating juveniles and it is designed to develop the functional mind to think beyond the level of discernment to try to learn the percept something solid. Finally, number five is 'Application' which hammers home the use of acquired knowledge. So, every learned idea develops as a part of the practical cognizance and supports a student to have the powers of interpreting their perspectives through their fast implementation of that very conception in their life.

Herbart tried to prove that a written and model science is possible to use as teaching pedagogy. Our ancestors also had an idea and clear conception of teaching, but it was probably not theorized or given it a heavy name. Herbart's attempt has helped the teaching pedagogy to uphold it as a science of teaching and he nurtured the conception that education should be a topic for university study. His conceptions took off like a rocket in his country in the 1860s and then flew to America also. Nevertheless, these five steps had disintegrated to an automatic formalism of teaching theories (Refsing, 2016).

### **3.4 Theory of Pedagogy**

The theories of pedagogical approaches are the theories that claim the way of the teaching materials should be carried out, the way in which the teaching should be put into exercise and the path of making study as an advantageous one to the students in order to sharpen their aptitudes and capabilities (Rutto, 2017).

The core objective of this part of this chapter is to comprehend the theories of pedagogy. The theories of pedagogy are mentioned as a significant notion that makes establishment of understanding of the teachers that they should be concerned and they put valid expansion of their knowledge. Teachers should be concerned about –

- a. Teaching-learning methods
- b. Educational goals and objectives
- c. Aspects related to the overall system of education
- d. Teaching-learning materials
- e. Needs and requirements of students and
- f. Evaluate and assist students properly.

According to Herbart, pedagogical concepts are very significant to achieve conceptualized academic goals and to strengthen the overall teaching mechanism. Pedagogical theories are certainly unavoidable. Through guiding research on the theories of pedagogy, the educator would be capable to be satisfied and confident with their understanding, and their understanding in terms of teaching approaches and materials would reach a new level.

### **3.4.1 Pedagogical Theories of the New London Group**

In 1996, the New London Group mentions an international association of scholars who concentrated on steering research on literacy pedagogies. Four components of pedagogy were identified from their research (Rutto, 2017).

*Situated Practice:* While talking about the form of the teaching-learning process, it occurs through the participation at the classroom activities such as doing projects works, giving and checking assignments, dissertations and other study materials in case of language teaching. Flash cards, gaming cards and word hunt could also be used as an equipment of teaching and that could enhance the basic framework and level of learning. This designates that if the pedagogical methods are kept into action properly, the use of materials, and social encounter and interaction will work accordingly.

In case of language teaching, this situated practice is significantly effective. For other subjects such as theoretical courses, doing classroom activities and preparing assignments are just like practicing the theory in practical life and that makes it an effective one. The situated practice is considered as an important module of teaching pedagogy.

***Obvious Instruction:*** This instruction encompasses the structure of knowledge about what the learners have already had and it also includes the explicit needs to improve the instructional strategies. In the case of predominantly higher educational institutions, the students are young adults and grown-ups. They generally correlate their previous practices and experience with their present acquaintances. This component would allow students to learn in a factual manner and this method helps them achieve a certain educational goal.

***Critical Framing:*** Talking about critical framing, the students are directed to scrutinize the complexly designed concept with those whose interests are served by some principal ideologies.

Moreover, the ideas, which are interrelated to the cultural and social frameworks of the designs, should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, it contains the visions for the pupils to advance the skills and aptitude, necessary to evaluate and re-evaluate the knowledge that is based on circumstantial information in the light of new ideas (IGI Global, 2020).

***Transformed Practice:*** Transformed practice helps students develop proficiencies to conduct such practice which is founded on their knowledge as well as understanding level and they learn to use the knowledge to provide solutions to their problems. Students can use their knowledge practically and beyond their classroom premises.

This is a real-life practice of transforming their knowledge in a situational survival. Transformed practice is an accurate learning experience as students are both the products and receivers of learning multi-literacy. For the Department of Japanese Studies at University of Dhaka, this particular transformed practice should be introduced to enhance the level of students' capability and confidence. The book *Marugoto* is a real-life

practice of transforming their knowledge in a situational survival (Japan Foundation, 2017).

In addition to this, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), introduced by the DJS's current Chair, Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun, is very impactful and it makes a great contribution to the field of contemporary study equipment at the department. This is a major supporting tool for teaching activities.

### **3.4.2 Learning Theories**

Learning theories are the theories that function as the theoretical framework to educate and to learn. The major learning theories are behaviorist: learning theories, constructivist learning theories and cognitive learning theories (Rutto, 2017).

Behaviorist learning theories are the theories which put light on learning and give importance on the behavioral variations. According to Rutto, there are three types of behaviorists learning theories- operant conditioning, classical conditioning and observational Conditioning (Rutto, 2017). On the other hand, constructive learning theories attach importance to the active involvement of the pupils during the structural level of their knowledge and learning process. Its focus is on practical and applied activities. Some of the educationists and researchers have worked on a number of constructivist theories. Jean Piaget (1896-1980), was a psychologist from Switzerland and his name always comes first when doing this study. He did wide-ranging research on the development of children and propagated the cognitive and perceptive development theory. (Rutto, 2017). However, the constructivist learning theory is categorically found in the *Marugoto* book which focuses on language and culture learning by practical learning. It is devised mainly keeping adult learners in mind. The book focuses on real-life communicative approaches which form the most effective and essential part of language learning (Japan Foundation, 2017).

### **3.5 What We Provide at Department of Japanese Studies**

A large variety of textbooks and audio-visual supplementary books have been prescribed to teach Japanese language initially, and a lot of research

works done on Japanese Studies over the past 20 years and the teaching pedagogy of Japanese Studies has increased. However, there is room for improvement. Entities are requested to arrange similar experiences in broader aspects for students so that they can participate in similar programs at various universities at home and abroad. This could mean:

- Providing access to well-stocked library with all required reading materials, including books available both physically and/or electronically.
- Access to reputed research papers and well acclaimed journals
- Introduce and utilize VLE system to support teaching
- Working with local employers to present real-life case studies and learn from their experiences.
- Creating schemes of work that provide a variety of teaching and learning methods
- Listening to the student voice and work on it (Pearson Qualifications, 2021)

The virtual learning system, MyDJS that we provide here has successfully covered all the parts mentioned above. This VLE system, according to Pearson, is an important support system for language learning and pursuing Japanese Studies.

### **3.6 Worldwide Teaching Practices of Japanese Studies**

As it was mentioned earlier that more than hundred renowned universities teach Japanese Studies. In some institutions, it is recognized as East Asian Studies such as at Delhi University and SOAS – School of Oriental and African Studies, UK. Surprisingly, Japan also provides so many opportunities to teach and promote Japanese Studies, such as International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto.

For this specific chapter, a survey has been conducted targeting ten universities worldwide and among them eight institutions replied to the author. The survey mainly focused on the teaching pedagogy of Japanese Studies at their respective universities. A questionnaire was used. Some

questions were structured and some of it open-ended. The zest and quest of the survey was to identify the teaching pedagogy of other countries and recognize the gaps of teaching methodology of the DJS. The universities participated to the survey were Jawaharlal Nehru University, Visva-Bharati University, Rabindra Bharati University, English and Foreign Languages University, Indonesia University, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and Belmont University. It is to be noted that this survey was done on a limited scale. Therefore, it is hard to jump to the conclusion about the worldwide teaching pedagogy of Japanese Studies, but readers may get an abrupt idea about teaching pedagogies used by the universities which teach Japanese Studies and Japanese language. In the survey, each entity answered 10 questions.

### **Visva-Bharati University, India**

Visva-Bharati University started teaching Japanese Studies in the year 1954. As per their syllabus, they emphasize Japanese language such as Japanese at preparatory level, intermediate level, advanced level, advanced level of reading and writing Japanese and translation techniques. There are other courses treated as elective, which students take according to their interest level. In master's courses also, they offer mostly the same topics in a larger perspective. Japanese language, Japanese culture, society and literature are their main topics of teaching. In the case of PhD, they mostly concentrated on Japanese Studies focusing on language, literature and culture.

In the survey, Visva-Bharati University participant responded that their syllabus emphasized linguistics, literature, history, culture and socio-cultural concepts. The teaching tools of Visva-Bharati University are mainly concentrated on lecture, group discussion and presentation. Being particular with Japanese Studies, this leading Indian university uses Japanese textbooks, audio-visual resources, materials from various internet sources. While teaching the language part, they put emphasis on grammar-translation, audio-visual, communicative language teaching, task-based language learning. Their methods of teaching are lecture and group discussion-based.

Regarding students' assessment, Visva-Bharati University respondent mentioned that the basic tools for student assessment are continuous progressive assessment, assignments and end term test. They evaluate their students with combined score of student assessment. Visva-Bharati does not provide online teaching in normal circumstances. The university has not introduced the system for their students yet.

### **Rabindra Bharati University**

Rabindra Bharati University also offers Japanese under the School of Language and Culture. It started the subject in the year 2006. They focus mostly on language and culture. For language teaching, they provide the textbook namely-みんなの日本語 (with its audio and video) and they follow the teaching technique of language learning as provided in the book みんなの日本語. The teaching is abruptly based on audio-visual method and old-style grammar-based analysis. While teaching Japanese culture, Rabindra Bharati University emphasizes basics of Japanese culture and its assessment system is based on internal exams and final exams which encompass audio-visuals and role-play with the method settled previously.

Rabindra Bharati University does not have any online teaching system right now, although classes were taken in online mode during the coronavirus lockdown period. However, the university is also not very accustomed with the VLE idea.

### **Sister Nivedita University (SNU)**

Sister Nivedita University in Kolkata has also a School of International Languages and it has started teaching Japanese language since 2021. It uses 'Japanese for Busy People' as a textbook. Regarding teaching pedagogy, the SNU follows all the techniques of Rabindra Bharati University. It provides online teaching but is not also well-equipped with the VLE system (Rabindra Bharati University, 2022).

### **Jawaharlal Nehru University**

Jawaharlal Nehru University started Japanese Studies in the year 1971. Its Center for East Asian Studies under the School of International Studies

(SIS) started MPhil/PhD in Japanese Studies in 1971, and the Center for Japanese Studies started Japanese language teaching in 1973 and integrated MA program in Japanese in 1974. Moreover, pre-PhD/PhD program was launched in 1982.

Their syllabus covers the major contents of Japanese Studies, including Japanese history, economics and society, language, literature, and translation studies. Courses in the Center for East Asian Studies and the Center for Japanese Studies are different. The Center for Japanese Studies has undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD programs. In undergraduate courses, there are several Japanese language courses and several optional courses. All the postgraduate courses in the Center focus both on Japanese Studies related courses and language. The SIS Japanese Studies has only PhD program but it does not have any MA program.

They mostly use language teaching tools for extensive courses like spoken, kanji, grammar, comprehension, and use multimedia audio-visual inputs for interpretation. They prefer mixed method, mostly communicative method and they use Power Point presentations and lecture, debates and assignments as classroom activities. The basic tools for student assessment are exams, assignments and presentations. They evaluate through various forms of examinations. Regarding the VLE, they use Google Classroom as an online platform to study but they do that circumstantially when needed. They do not have any departmental journal (Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2019).

### **English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India**

The Department of Japanese Studies started at English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India, in the year 2009. Their BA course is mainly a language-related course. In their MA course, major contents of the syllabus are Japanese history, Japanese society and culture, and Japanese literature. The Japanese Studies teaching pedagogy of this university is imparting student's holistic education about Japan along with solid foundation in Japanese language. They



also offer Japanese language course. They teach Japanese language using established teaching methodologies, using books like みんなの日本語 and some basic grammar books.

The method they follow is communicative as well as traditional grammar teaching method to teach Japanese language. To teach courses other than language, they use flipped classroom method for history/society courses. In this policy, students decide topics, do readings and make presentations like 発表会. Assessment and evaluation are done through term paper assignments and checking each paper carefully and providing feedback personally. They also provide online teaching system and VLE (English and Foreign Language University, 2020).

### **Belmont University**

Belmont University in the United States started the Department of Japanese Studies in the year 2000 and their contents of teaching are Japanese language, history, culture, sociology, anthropology, literature, religion and philosophy, international business, general Asian studies. The Japanese Studies teaching pedagogy of the university is based on performed culture and communicative approach to Japanese language and close reading of texts. They emphasize on speaking, reading, listening and writing skills competency in understanding cultural differences and gaining competency in understanding Japan.

The DJS at Belmont University provides language courses, such as Elementary Japanese 1 and 2, Intermediate Japanese 1 and 2, Advanced Japanese 1 and 2, and Independent Studies. The language teaching books they follow as teaching tools are 元気 textbooks and workbooks, including Kanji Look and Learn and Tobira. Textbook Quartet is selected for supplementary readings. The methods they follow to teach Japanese Language are lecture, seminar, guided research and collaborative projects.

Students' assessment and evaluation are based on oral proficiency exam, written exam, classroom performance, JLPT proficiency for

expected levels and ACTFL proficiency testing. Regarding VLE, they use virtual Zoom platform during the Covid-19 pandemic and created video and other forms of asynchronous learning.

The DJS at Belmont University is growing due to students' interest. They are doing community outreach with local Japanese population to ascertain how to make immigration experience more welcoming and easier for Japanese who come to Belmont area. Belmont University respondent mentioned that they work closely with their Japanese consulate (Belmont University, 2022).

### **Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines**

The Japanese Studies department was established at Ateneo de Manila University in the year 1966. They do not offer undergraduate major, but a minor in Japanese Studies and a master's degree. The Japanese Studies teaching pedagogy in undergraduate program is a minor as it is a lecture-based concept which introduces latest trends in Japan (society, politics, history, etc.). For MA program, they align classroom readings to their students' interest level so that they can begin with their RRL (review of related literature) from the beginning of their program.

For undergraduate students, regarding Japanese language teaching, they offer six classes to choose from. For graduate program, they integrate their language education with their one-year exchange program with ICU. Regarding teaching tools, they use textbooks and free online content.

The method they follow to teach Japanese language is the pedagogy of Genki and *できる日本語* which focuses on communicative theory as opposed to pattern practice. They abruptly follow communicative theory for the courses related to Japanese studies other than language. Assessment is done on paper tests, oral exams and evaluation is based on the complexity of sentence structures students make. They also provide the VLE system.

Their curriculum only allows one language class for their degrees;

hence their students take the minor to be able to take more classes. They opt to have their students in their master's get an immersive experience in their language learning, as their purpose is for research (Ateneo De Manila University, 2022).

### **Tokyo University of Foreign Studies**

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) was established in 1954. They have basic Japanese courses tailored for international students to obtain and polish their proficiency in Japanese language. Classes are organized by level and degree of aptitude and skills. There are specified and dedicated courses on Japanese language skills. There are classes for both Japanese natives and international students to level up and advance their academic and commutation level through language skills, especially in Japanese language. They also provide a master's course on Japanese Studies. Regarding assessment and evaluation, they go through a rigorous assessment system for students, and courses are so correctly designed, they provide great accomplishment regarding that (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2022).

### **Universitas Andalas, Indonesia**

Universitas Andalas started the Japanese Studies department in the year 2004 and they mostly focus on Japanese linguistics and literature. They follow the teaching method of Japan Foundation. Their teaching tools are focused on textbook and language lab. They also teach Japanese language. They follow TCL (teacher-centered learning) and SCL (student-centered learning) to teach Japanese language. Their method of teaching is centered on project-based learning. They have not elaborated about their assessment procedure and evaluation system. Assessments are mostly done through various modes of examination. They have VLE for students (Universitas Andalas, 2018).

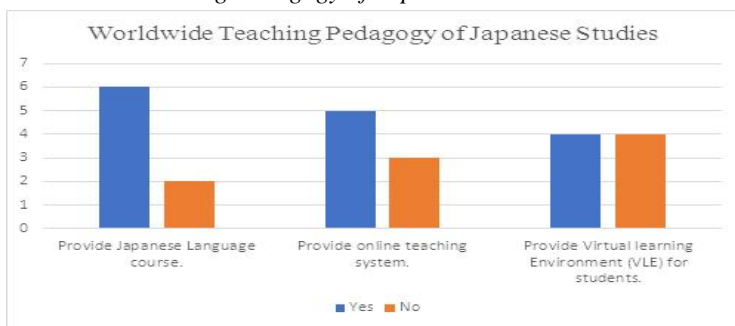
### **3.7 Summary Findings of the Survey**

As mentioned earlier, a survey was conducted to achieve the objectives of this research and 10 entities were requested to join and eight of them responded. An attempt has been made to determine the value of each unit.

**Table 3.1***Worldwide Teaching Pedagogy of Japanese Studies*

| Sl. No. | Question                                 | Yes | No |
|---------|--|-----|----|
| 1.      | Do you provide Japanese language course? | 6   | 2  |
| 2.      | Do you provide online teaching system?   | 5   | 3  |
| 3.      | Do you provide VLE for students?         | 4   | 4  |

Source: International Online Survey on Japanese Language, March 2022.

**Figure 3.1***Worldwide Teaching Pedagogy of Japanese Studies*

Source: International Online Survey on Japanese Language, March 2022.

The findings show that six of the eight universities provide Japanese language courses, whereas two of them do not teach language. Regarding online teaching system and VLE, five of these universities use online system and the rest are not accustomed with the VLE system yet. Regarding the major content of the syllabus, six participants respond that they have Japanese history as a basic component of their syllabus and only one has Japanese economics as a major content of their Japanese Studies syllabus. Three of them mention about teaching Japanese society and culture. Four of them mention about teaching Japanese literature and two entities teach Japanese linguistics as well. Only one participant said that they have Japanese religion and philosophy, anthropology, international business and translation studies in their curriculum.

Regarding the teaching pedagogy of Japanese Studies, most of the universities offer lecture-based teaching. However, some universities use pedagogy of *Genki* and *できる日本語* which focuses on communicative theory as opposed to pattern practice, some focus on mixed communicative method, some on mainly classroom teaching and some use grammar translation, audio-visual, communicative language teaching, task-based language learning, performed culture and communicative approach for natural language acquisition. One respondent talked about communicative and traditional grammar methods.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

Nowadays, it is a recognized fact that area study is necessary for deeper understanding. Among other area studies, Japanese Studies has reached its height in the field of area studies, cultural studies and translation studies. As it has enhanced its theoretical parts, various aspects can be seen in practical as well as in classroom practices. This chapter has tried to focus on the contemporary teaching pedagogy of Japanese Studies and the language is also inextricably linked with Japanology. Emphasis has been given on study materials, teaching techniques and tools in teaching Japanese Studies across the world. Some similarities and some dissimilarities in teaching techniques could be found but those are quite natural for teaching-related work because each country has its own style of teaching. In the case of language teaching, there are differences in grammatical patterns, intonation and lexicons. Influence of localization is also an important factor.

While teaching Japanese Studies, there is a tendency to find some similarities with each domain and that influences the entire learning process. The same thing applies to the language-teaching. But the newly prescribed book *Marugoto* and *Tobira* written and edited by Japan Foundation can be taken as a criterion and standard for teaching Japanese language as a tool to acquire knowledge about Japanese Studies, more precisely on Japanese society and culture.

There are some research on how to teach Japanese Studies, but there must be a set of tested teaching modules that will surely attract a bunch of students in area studies. There should be unification in study materials, curriculum and teaching pedagogy to capture the mood of area studies in a much more composed manner. The survey was conducted in a limited portion, yet this limited result shows that standardization and fixed criteria in teaching techniques is an absolute necessity for both the contemporary Japanese Studies and Japanese language teaching.

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## **Appendix-I**

### Questionnaire

#### Teaching Pedagogy of Japanese Studies

Name:

Designation:

Name of your university:

Email:

1. When was the Japanese Studies department established at your university?
2. What are your major contents of Japanese Studies in the syllabus of your university?
3. What is the Japanese Studies teaching pedagogy of your university?
4. Do you provide any course on Japanese language?
5. If yes, what are the language teaching tools of Japanese Studies at your university?
6. What method do you follow to teach the Japanese language?
7. What method do you follow to teach courses other than language?
8. What are the basic tools for student assessment?
9. How do you evaluate?
10. Do you provide online teaching?
11. Do you have a Virtual learning Environment (VLE) to your students?
12. Do you have any other comments regarding your Japanese Studies program?



## Appendix-II

1. Dr. Gita Keeni, Associate Professor, Visva-Bharati University, West Bengal, India.
2. Dr. Purabi Mukhopaddhyay, Associate Professor, Rabindra-Bharati University, West Bengal, India.
3. Dr. Tariq Sheikh, Assistant Professor, English and Foreign Language University, Hyderabad, India.
4. Dr. Janashruti Chandra, Assistant Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India.
5. Dr. Shobichatul Aminah, Professor, Indonesia University.
6. Masahiko Togawa, Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
7. Christopher Born, Professor, Belmont University.
8. Rima Devi, Associate Professor, Ateneo De Manila University, Philippines.

# 4 Comparison of DJS Curriculum with International Universities and Organizations

**Nashia Zaman**

**Summary:** Japanese Studies as an area study has flourished extensively in terms of study and research. The multifaceted concentration of Japanese Studies has made the discipline acceptable to a wider range of audiences around the world. Like scores of reputed universities globally, University of Dhaka, the Oxford of the East, is the pioneer of opening the first-ever area study department back in 2017, and it is the Department of Japanese Studies (DJS). This chapter attempts to conduct a comparative study of the curriculum of the DJS with that of international universities and research organizations. While doing this comparative analysis, the determination of gaps was the primary objective of this chapter. A set of recommendations has been made to address the gaps in order to keep the Japanese Studies curriculum of Dhaka University (DU) in sync with that of the universities abroad. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this comparative study is to develop a global standard curriculum to churn out world-class graduates from this department.

## 4.1 Introduction

Japanese Studies as an area study has drawn huge attention worldwide due to its unique element of relevant lessons from various dimensions. A large number of universities around the world offer courses and conduct research on various aspects of Japanese Studies concentrating on different disciplines. Therefore, both similarities and dissimilarities are there in the curricula of different academic institutions and research centers. This chapter entails a comparative study of DU Japanese Studies' curriculum with the ones of international universities and research organizations. Its primary objective is to find out the difference between DJS and international curriculum. This chapter also suggests ways of addressing the differences and updating DJS's present curriculum to meet the global

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standard fitting all possible aspects with an eye to producing world-class graduates. Initially, this chapter gives a short narrative of a number of universities which offer Japanese Studies programs along with distinguishing features with their departmental curricula. Then the course matrix of the DJS at DU has been presented for a better understanding of the readers. A description of notable research centers on Japanese Studies is also given. Finally, some ideas have been suggested for incorporation in the DJS curriculum to make it market-driven and really timely.

## **4.2 Japanese Studies Programs Globally**

A significant number of universities across the world offer different types of courses on Japanese Studies with a special focus on the East Asian country's language and culture. A wide range of multidisciplinary areas are also addressed in their academic curricula. Short descriptions of some notable institutions and the course-related programs they offer are as follows with recommendations for the DJS to improve its curriculum:

### **4.2.1 University of Delhi, India**

Founded in 1969, Japanese Studies belongs to the department of East Asian Studies under the Faculty of Social Sciences at Delhi University. MA in Japanese language and literature is offered at this department along with the postgraduate intensive diploma and advanced diploma courses in Japanese language. In MA course, linguistics and language, society and culture are prioritized. A detailed way of learning Japanese is reflected in their curriculum. Translation, writing and interpretation of the same ilk is emphasized which is very essential to adopt a foreign language like Japanese. Dhaka University can take lessons from Delhi University while reformulating its curriculum, especially the courses related with language. Apart from the written part, there is a lot more to learn to internalize the language for learners (University of Delhi, 2011).

### **4.2.2 Visva-Bharati University, India**

Shantiniketon has been providing informal lessons on Japanese since 1905. The Department of Japanese was first initiated in Visva-Bharati in 1921. At present, they offer programs such as BA, MA and PhD in

Japanese offering 27, 16 and 3 courses respectively, including one-year preparatory course before BA program (Visva-Bharati, 2022). Great emphasis is given on language, literature, society and culture. Postgraduate and PhD courses were initiated in the year 2006 and 2011 respectively. Visva-Bharati plays a crucial role in creating cultural bonds between Japan and India.

The BA in Japanese is a 3-year course program, whereas the duration of the MA is 2 years. The PhD program varies from 2 to 4 years. In the bachelor program, there are 14 core courses which primarily focus on intermediate and advanced Japanese language, creative and rapid reading with translation. Students can choose 4 out of 7 courses provided from discipline-specific electives where courses like Japanese literature, education system and cultural history are taught. Compulsory generic elective courses are part of Japanese language and culture learning by activities and conversation. Communicative language activities and competence are two skill-enhancement compulsory courses for the students of Japanese at the BA program. However, there are 16 courses in the MA program at Visva-Bharati. There are courses on Japanese grammar and linguistics, modern Japanese literature, history of modern Japan, contemporary Japanese society and culture, theory and practical translation etc. That is the advanced stage of Japanese language, literature, culture, society and history of Japan. On the other hand, in PhD coursework, the students need to take courses on research methodology, technical/advanced topics on research, review of related studies and literature.

Reviewing the syllabus of this old institution, the DJS can incorporate sustainable parts in their curriculum. Along with the traditional Japanese language learning, emphasis needs to be given to other components like spoken, translation and rapid reading part as well to make graduates competent enough in Japanese language, which is an integral part of the DJS curriculum along with other multidisciplinary components.

### **4.2.3 Jawaharlal Nehru University, India**

The Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS), established in 1970 (Center for East Asian Studies, 2022), and the Center of Japanese Studies (CJS), established in 1973 (Center of Japanese Studies, 2022), at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, offers programs on Japanese Studies. CEAS offers only PhD program on Japanese Studies, whereas CJS has BA in Japanese, MA in Japanese Studies and MPhil/PhD in Japanese Studies. Scholars of CEAS are from the multidisciplinary background of history, political science, sociology, economics, international relations and language, which has a similarity with that of the DJS at DU.

### **4.2.4 Rabindra Bharati University, India**

Japanese as a school of language and culture was initiated first in 2006 at Rabindra Bharati University, India. Japanese language and culture are the main parts of this school. They offer university diploma and certificate courses in Japanese language, which is divided into four semesters of 6 months each.

### **4.2.5 National University of Singapore (NUS)**

NUS Department of Japanese Studies focuses on a variety of study fields such as linguistics, business, sociology, anthropology, international relations and politics. They offer BA, MA and PhD courses in Japanese Studies. They also offer various exchange programs and scholarships to students. Their aim is to produce experts on Japanese Studies who can contribute their knowledge to business and the wider community, promote good understanding between Japan and Singapore and encourage research. They also have a mentorship program where students are guided by faculty members. Undergrad Programs offered by NUS are BA (Honors), BA (Single Major), Second Major, JS Minor and Asian Studies Minor (National University of Singapore, 2022). Eventually, DJS can consider offering BSS (Honors) Japanese Studies degree in different majors such as Japanese Studies (Language Major) or Japanese Studies (Studies Major).

#### **4.2.6 The University of Sydney**

The Department of Japanese Studies at University of Sydney focuses on developing students' language skills and their knowledge of Japanese culture. Students can take selective courses to learn about Japanese culture or they can do a minor or major in Japanese Studies. Students are expected to be able to communicate in Japanese, know aspects of Japanese culture, conduct research on Japan and use their skills in other fields of study.

Besides, students can achieve honors in Japanese Studies through their thesis work. There is also advanced coursework for students who completed bachelor's (The University of Sydney, 2022).

#### **4.2.7 William and Mary College, Virginia, USA**

This college offers both major and minor in Japanese Studies. They offer 4 levels of Japanese language programs with courses in Japanese society, economy and culture. Students can combine their Japanese Studies major with another major like business or international relations. They also offer 'Study Abroad' programs in Japan for a semester or one whole year. Some courses offered are Japan's alternate histories, cultures of catastrophe, Japanese cinema, etc (William and Mary College, 2022). Moving forward, the DJS can assess the possibility to offer combined degree with the other department of the Faculty of Social Sciences along with Japanese Studies.

#### **4.2.8 University of California, San Diego**

University of California, San Diego (UCSD) offers various programs on Japanese Studies. Students can do a major, minor, honors or double major in Japanese Studies. They mainly put emphasis on Japanese language, Asian history and contemporary Japan (UC San Diego, 2021).

#### **4.2.9 Monash University, Australia**

Monash University allows students to do a major, minor and honors in Japanese Studies. (Monash University, 2021). Their key focus is on Japanese language, but students also study Japan from a political and

economic perspective. Cultural communication is also prioritized. Students can take Japanese Studies courses while studying other subjects also. Surprisingly, 8 different courses across the discipline from engineering, business and arts faculties are offered along with the major program on Japanese Studies, which is really unique. Many universities mainly put emphasis on linguistic and cultural aspects. But students in Japanese Studies program at Monash University are getting the unique opportunity to take another major or minor simultaneously like engineering and arts, information technology and arts, international business and arts, politics, philosophy and economics and arts, etc. They consider themselves as a cross-disciplinary subject (Monash University, 2022). This can be a good model to experiment at the University of Dhaka.

#### **4.2.10 University of San Francisco**

University of San Francisco has a 4-year undergraduate program where they put importance on language skills and other study fields such as religion, history, arts and business. They also have exchange programs with Japan's Sophia University and Ritsumeikan University. They also have extra-curricular clubs like the Japanese Writing Center and Japan Club (University of San Francisco, 2021).

In their curriculum, there are courses on art and literature such as 'Zen and Art Japanese Calligraphy', 'Zen Buddhism' and 'Naturalism in Japanese literature'. However, in the DJS curriculum at DU, there are similar courses but not so specific. Again, there are course like Japan-US relations in University of San Francisco, whereas there is a course like Japan-China and Japan-Bangladesh relations in the DJS curriculum here.

#### **4.2.11 Auckland University of Technology (AUT)**

At Auckland University of Technology (AUT), students can get a BA degree in Japanese Studies. They can take it as a double major also. This program will equip them with the skillset to pursue a career in social sciences, translation, business or international studies. Students will learn about Japanese culture, and there are social clubs where they will be able

to practice their language skills. Students have to take some core courses which are divided into three parts: Academic Communication, Culture and Society, and Knowledge and Inquiry. AUT also offers a variety of course such as Conventions and Expectations, Learning in a Digital World, Knowledge and Inquiry, Research in Action, Creative Learning Inquiries, Introduction to Philosophy and Introduction to Social Data Analytics. On the other hand, Japanese Studies courses offer Intercultural Competence, Speak Japanese I, Write Japanese I, and Intercultural Competence in a Global World, Japanese Society and Culture, Japanese Language in Practice I, Speak Japanese II, Write Japanese II, Integrated Japanese, East Asian Values and Beliefs, Japanese Language in Practice II, Japanese Written Interaction and Japanese Oral Interaction. Students at AUT also get a whole semester of workplace experience as a part of their degree. They can choose their own workplace (Auckland University of Technology, 2021). This model of placement can be replicated by the DJS, DU.

At AUT, there are some computer-related courses such as Learning in a Digital World, Introduction to Social Data Analytics, culture-related courses such as East Asian Values and Beliefs, and Intercultural Competence. On the other hand, in the DJS curriculum at DU, data science courses are absent, but ICT courses are there. Course on data analytics and science will be helpful. AUT has more Japanese language courses compared to the DJS at DU.

#### **4.2.12 Earlham College**

Earlham College has been offering undergraduate programs on Japanese Studies for more than 50 years now. They put focus on Japan's complex society and culture. Students can take it as a major or minor. There are two 'Study Abroad' programs, one in partnership with Japan's Waseda University. Earlham also has an Institute for Education in Japan. They also have Japan House which is culturally themed like a Japanese house and students can get a taste of living in Japan by staying there. Earlham's fundamental focus is language (Earlham College, 2021).



Various internships are provided for students in non-profit organizations, museums and also in some other places of Asia in addition to Japan. Earlham College has more courses in Japanese language than the DJS at DU. Nevertheless, the DJS can make a serious consideration to introduce joint degree or 'Study Abroad' program for the students.

#### **4.2.13 University of Delaware**

University of Delaware's undergraduate program on Japanese Studies offers an in-depth understanding of Japanese culture from calligraphy to video games. Their specialist language courses are designed to prepare students for all types of conversation. They also have 'Study Abroad' programs in Japan (University of Delaware, 2021). In their first year, students study courses such as Seminar in Composition, Elementary Japanese I, Elementary Japanese II, Intermediate Japanese, Japanese Culture, Contemporary Mathematics, First Year Experience, University Breadth Courses and Elective Courses. In the second year, courses are Composition and Conversation, Advanced Intermediate Japanese I, Advanced Intermediate Japanese II, University Breadth Courses and Elective Courses. Junior courses include Japanese Literature in Translation, Advanced Japanese Grammar, and Advanced Japanese Conversation, Issues in Japanese Society, University Breadth Courses (general education requirements) and Elective Courses. Finally, senior students study Japanese Translation: theory and practice, Reading Japanese Literature, University Breadth Courses and Elective Courses. This is evident that University of Delaware broadly focuses on linguistics courses only. Nonetheless, University of Delaware and University of Dhaka both have courses in Japanese culture and mathematics/statistics.

#### **4.2.14 Hope College**

This program at Hope College makes you fluent in Japanese and gives you a good understanding of their culture and society. Students majoring in Japanese studies need 16 credits for language learning. They can also have these credits from other institutions and still get a major from this college. Alongside language they need credits from courses in history, philosophy, political science and others. There are also courses on Asian

politics and Japanese history. An exchange professor from Meiji Gakuin also takes some special courses (Hope College, 2021). Both Hope College and University of Dhaka focus on the language and culture of Japan. Both of them have courses in political science and history also.

#### **4.2.15 Depauw University**

Depauw University puts emphasis on linguistics, Japanese history and also contemporary topics such as anime and technology so that students can connect Japan with global context (Depauw University, 2021). Major requirements are total 10 courses. Core courses: 4 courses in Japanese language, 1 course in Japanese culture (literature, art history and others). Minor requirements are 5 courses, 2 of them being specialist language courses.

#### **4.2.16 Gettysburg College**

The Japanese Studies major gives an inter-disciplinary understanding of Japanese language, culture, politics, society, film and music at Gettysburg College. Students are recommended to study in Japan for a semester or a year. The college has affiliations with two universities in Japan: Kansai Gaidai University and Temple University Japan. Students can do credit transfer from Japanese universities for the semesters they did there (Gettysburg College, 2021). Core courses at Gettysburg College are modern Japan and Japanese culture and society. Comparative courses include World Philosophy, Introduction to Buddhism, Introduction to Asian Art, East Asian Economic History and Development, History of East Asia, Language Study. Elective courses include Classical Japanese Literature, Traditional Japanese Theater, Japanese Cinema, and Modernity in Japanese Fiction based on Arts and Humanities. On the other hand, East Asian Economic History and Development, Modern Japan, Tokugawa Japan, Geisha and Samurai courses focus on history and social sciences.

There are some similarities between Gettysburg College and the DJS at DU. As both Gettysburg College Japanese Studies and Dhaka University Japanese Studies offer a multidisciplinary course. Again, both offer exchange programs to study abroad.

Nonetheless, there are some differences as well. At Gettysburg College, studying one semester or one year at a Japanese university is compulsory in their curriculum, but the DJS at DU does not offer such program. However, the DJS is getting connected with many universities both inside and outside Japan who offer Japanese Studies and exploring to provide such kind of opportunity to their students. Gettysburg College can be one of the options for DJS students to transfer their credits because of the similarity of the curriculum. Gettysburg College offers many literature-based courses such as Modernity in Japanese Fiction, Genre in Modern Japanese Literature, Classical Japanese Literature and Japanese Detective Fiction. However, the DJS provides only one comparative literature studies between Japan and Bangladesh.

#### **4.2.17 Willamette University**

Willamette University is the sister concern of Tokyo International University (TIU) in Japan. Here students learn about Japanese language, culture, arts and history. Willamette University has a ‘Study Abroad’ program with the TIU. There is a student exchange program where Japanese students come to visit Tokyo International University in America (Willamette University, 2021).

Major courses at Willamette University focus on Japanese language and culture like Japanese Reading and Composition, Conversational Japanese Reading and Conference, Topics in Japanese Studies, Modern Japanese Society and Culture, Japanese Cinema and History of Modern Japan.

Both universities offer multidisciplinary courses in Japanese studies which include language, culture, society and economy.

Willamette University has an exchange program where Japanese students visit their university. However, there is no such program at Dhaka University. No course like Japanese cinema is offered at the DJS here, only part of it is covered in the course ‘Popular Culture of Japan’. Willamette University offers ‘Study Abroad’ program for a semester and has credit transfer facility, whereas the DJS offers ‘Study Abroad’ program for a month and does not allow credit transfer.

#### **4.2.18 University of Hawaii, Hilo**

University of Hawaii offers special curricula for two types of students—native Japanese speakers and non-native Japanese speakers. Their main focus is on Japanese language. Students will also get a good understanding of Japanese civilization and use their knowledge in sectors such as business, tourism, journalism and many other professions (University of Hawaii, 2022).

Both University of Hawaii and University of Dhaka have similar courses which are multidisciplinary in nature. One distinctive feature of University of Hawaii is that they offer different curricula for native and non-native Japanese speakers, which is absent in the DJS at DU.

#### **4.2.19 Furman University, Greenville**

Furman University has made it compulsory to study at least 4 courses other than Japan along with at least 12 courses in Japan (Furman University, 2022). Both Furman University and Dhaka University provide multidisciplinary courses in their programs but there is some dissimilarity as well. Furman University offers 10 levels of Japanese language, whereas the DJS offers 6 levels of Japanese language. Furman University has separate Buddhism courses—‘Introduction to Buddhism’ and ‘East Asian Buddhism’. But the DJS has a course in Japanese religions but no separate course in specific religion. Again, Furman University offers two courses related to films—‘Modern Japanese Society through Films’ and ‘Japanese Cinema’, whereas there is only one course in ‘Japanese Media’ in the DJS.

#### **4.2.20 Illinois College, Jacksonville**

Illinois College has a 30-year-old student exchange program with Ritsumeikan University in Japan. They also have a breakaway trip to Japan and club activities related to Japan (Illinois College, 2022). At Illinois College, Japanese language courses are divided into three parts—Japanese for global citizen, Japanese for living abroad and Professional Japanese. Conversely, the DJS at DU has Japanese language courses in Elementary Japanese, Intermediate Japanese and Advanced Japanese.

#### **4.2.21 Oakland University, Rochester Hills**

Oakland University offers BA program in Japanese Studies with core courses and other courses (Oakland University, 2018). They have 8 credits on Japanese language, many art-related courses like Japanese art, Buddhist art and Global arts, Study Abroad facility. It also runs many courses on China, including China and inner Asia, Chinese art. Whereas, the DJS at DU has 2 courses with 4 credits on Japanese language—one course on art, including Sculptural art and architecture of Japan and Bangladesh, and the other on China, including Japan-China rivalry and partnership.

#### **4.2.22 University of Wisconsin, Whitewater**

University of Wisconsin offers 6 levels of Japanese language courses. There are also courses on Japanese history, politics, geography and society. Students can travel to Japan for internships under ‘Study Abroad’ programs (University of Wisconsin, 2022). Major requirements to earn a degree at the university include a thesis, a portfolio with three papers or projects from courses and an oral exit interview in Japanese. The DJS at DU has no such requirements except completion of a thesis in the final semester undergraduate program. Dhaka University also seeks to provide internship opportunities for students in Japan like University of Wisconsin does. Both the universities have 6 levels of the specialist language course.

### **4.3 Japanese Studies Curriculum of DJS, DU and Modification**

The vision Statement of the Department of Japanese Studies at DU is “To produce knowledge-based Japanologists who will contribute, nationally and internationally, to multidisciplinary development processes”. This vision statement is set by Professor Abul Barkat, founding chairman of the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka.

The DJS syllabus includes a wide range of courses on Japan. The course matrix of Bachelor of Social Sciences, BSS (Honors) and Master’s of Social Sciences (MSS) is presented below for the understanding of the readers.

**Table 4.1***Syllabus of BSS (Honors) in Japanese Studies*

| Year     |            | Courses   |
|----------|------------|---|
| 1st Year | Semester 1 | <u>Compulsory Courses</u><br><b>JS 101:</b> Principles of Economics<br><b>JS 102:</b> Principles of Sociology<br><b>JS 103:</b> Principles of Political Science<br><b>JS 104:</b> Elementary Japanese Language (Part-1) |
|          | Semester 2 | <u>Compulsory Courses</u><br><b>JS 201:</b> Statistics<br><b>JS 202:</b> Japanese History and Civilisation<br><b>JS 203:</b> Sociology of Japanese Society<br><b>JS 204:</b> Elementary Japanese Language (Part-2)      |
| 2nd Year | Semester 3 | <u>Compulsory Courses</u><br><b>JS 301:</b> Bangladesh Studies<br><b>JS 302:</b> Modernisation and Economic Development of Japan<br><b>JS 303:</b> Post-elementary Japanese Language                                    |
|          |            | <u>Optional Courses (any one)</u><br><b>JS 304:</b> Japanese Business Management and Communication<br><b>JS 305:</b> Social and Cultural Geography of Japan<br><b>JS 306:</b> Japanese Kanji (Part-1)                   |
|          | Semester 4 | <u>Compulsory Courses</u><br><b>JS 401:</b> Government and Politics of Japan<br><b>JS 402:</b> Information and Communication Technology: Japan and Bangladesh<br><b>JS 403:</b> Intermediate Japanese Language (Part-1) |

|          |            |   |
|----------|------------|---|
|          |            | <p><b><u>Optional Courses (any one)</u></b><br/> <b>JS 404:</b> Sculptural Art and Architecture of Japan and Bangladesh<br/> <b>JS 405:</b> Japanese Media<br/> <b>JS 406:</b> Japan and South Asia<br/> <b>JS 407:</b> Japanese Kanji (Part-2)</p>   |
| 3rd Year | Semester 5 | <p><b><u>Compulsory Courses</u></b><br/> <b>JS 501:</b> Japan in International Affairs<br/> <b>JS 502:</b> Japan Bangladesh Relations: (Economic, Political, Social and Cultural)<br/> <b>JS 503:</b> Intermediate Japanese Language (Part-2)</p> <p><b><u>Optional Courses (any one)</u></b><br/> <b>JS 504:</b> Popular Culture in Contemporary Japan<br/> <b>JS 505:</b> Issues of Conservation and Restoration: Bangladesh and Japan<br/> <b>JS 506:</b> Environmental Issues and Concern in Japan<br/> <b>JS 507:</b> Comparative Literature Studies: Japan and Bangladesh</p> |
|          | Semester 6 | <p><b><u>Compulsory Courses</u></b><br/> <b>JS 601:</b> Trade Policy of Japan<br/> <b>JS 602:</b> Social Science Research Methodology<br/> <b>JS 603:</b> Advanced Japanese Language</p> <p><b><u>Optional Courses (any one)</u></b><br/> <b>JS 604:</b> Japanese Intellectual History<br/> <b>JS 605:</b> Japan and China: Rivals and Partners<br/> <b>JS 606:</b> Japanese Corporate Culture<br/> <b>JS 607:</b> Japan and Asia-Pacific Region</p>  |
| 4th Year | Semester 7 | <p><b><u>Compulsory Courses</u></b><br/> <b>JS 701:</b> Japanese Philosophy and Thoughts<br/> <b>JS 702:</b> Education and Socialisation in Japan<br/> <b>JS 703:</b> Demography, Ageing and Related Issues in Japan</p>  |

|  |            |   |
|--|------------|---|
|  |            | <p><b><u>Optional Courses (any one)</u></b><br/> <b>JS 704:</b> Food Culture and Cuisine in Japan<br/> <b>JS 705:</b> Religion in Japan<br/> <b>JS 706:</b> Comparative Study of Archaeology: Japan and Bangladesh<br/> <b>JS 707:</b> Advanced Japanese Writings</p>   |
|  | Semester 8 | <p><b><u>Compulsory Courses</u></b><br/> Comprehensive Examination [50%] + Viva Voce [50%]<br/> Field Research/Thesis/Internship/Project Work</p>   |
|  |            | <p><b><u>Optional Courses (any two)</u></b><br/> <b>JS 801:</b> Tourism in Japan<br/> <b>JS 802:</b> Agriculture of Japan<br/> <b>JS 803:</b> Japanese Social Anthropology<br/> <b>JS 804:</b> Industrial Development in Japan<br/> <b>JS 805:</b> Microscopic Analysis of Ceramics: Japan and Bangladesh</p> |

Source: Prospectus and Curriculum of DJS

**Table 4.2**

*Syllabus of MSS in Japanese Studies*

| Year    |            | Courses  |
|---------|------------|--|
| Masters | Semester 1 | <p><b><u>Compulsory Courses</u></b><br/> <b>JS 901:</b> Development Policy of Japan<br/> <b>JS 902:</b> Japanese Linguistics<br/> <b>JS 903:</b> Japanese Law, Society and Public Policy</p>   |
|         |            | <p><b><u>Optional Courses (any one)</u></b><br/> <b>JS 904:</b> Post-war Japanese Political Thought<br/> <b>JS 905:</b> Modern Japanese Literature<br/> <b>JS 906:</b> Minorities and Marginalities: Class and Conflict in Japan</p> |



|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Semester 2</b> | <p><b><u>Compulsory Courses</u></b><br/> <b>JS 1001:</b> Political Economy of Japan<br/> <b>JS 1002:</b> Contemporary Japan<br/> Comprehensive Examination [50%] + Viva Voce [50%]</p>  |
|                   | <p><b><u>Optional Courses (any one)</u></b><br/> <b>JS 1003:</b> Disaster and Development in Japan<br/> <b>JS 1004:</b> Post-war Japanese Literature<br/> <b>JS 1005:</b> Film, Animation and Performing Arts<br/> Thesis/Internship/Project Work</p> |

*Source:* Prospectus and Curriculum of DJS

The syllabus of the Department of Japanese Studies (DJS) is similar to those of other universities overseas. It focuses on Japanese language, culture, society, economics, politics and international relations. A few more courses can be added to DJS syllabus. The DJS can have a data analysis course where useful software such as SPSS can be taught to help in students' research. DJS has a course on Japanese media, it can also have an optional course on Japanese cinema. Japan has many good flicks and studying them will help understand their philosophies better. There can be courses on Asia, for example gender in Asia. This can help to find out a wide range of research topics on the entire Asia. DJS has a course on Japan-China relationship. DJS can have another course on Japan-US relations. There is a course on comparative literature of Japan and Bangladesh. DJS can have more specific courses in literature such as Japanese fiction or Japanese poetry. The students who are interested in literary writings may find these courses helpful. A course on calligraphy, an important part of Japanese culture, will help students who have taken Kanji.

Other Japanese Studies centers and DJS do similar research on Japanese language, culture, literature, history, economics, trade and relations. Many foreign study centers have specific research topics like connection and relations between Japanese and Japanese-Americans or the influence of a university in Japan in shaping Japan. Dhaka University can also have specific research topics, for instance research on how Japanese NGOs have improved livelihood of poor people.

## **4.4. Some Notable Research Centers on Japanese Studies**

### **4.4.1 International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken), Kyoto**

Nichibunken is an inter-university research institute funded by a government grant. Its research is concerned with the study of Japanese culture and history and international cooperation (Nichibunken, 2021).

- Nichibunken accepts graduate students who majored in Japanese Studies.
- Research fellows will get access to Nichibunken Library which has over 500,000 works on Japanese Studies and many old photos and maps.
- Nichibunken conducts seminars every year.
- There are many group projects where foreigners and Japanese researchers will work together and can form valuable connections.

### **4.4.2 Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies, Keio University**

Fukuzawa Memorial Center was founded in 1983 to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Keio University (Fukuzawa Memorial Center, 2021). Its main objectives are as follows:

- Preserve archives of Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of Keio University
- Conduct research on thoughts of Fukuzawa and the history of the university
- Publish a research journal every year and conduct seminars

### **4.4.3 SOAS Japan Research e (JRC), University of London**

The Japanese Research Center of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at University of London has been doing Japan-related research since 1978. They also welcome research associates and visiting scholars working on projects related to the center. (School of Oriental and African Studies, 2021). They conduct seminars and special lecture series. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they conducted online seminars which reached the global audience.

They have a study series called ‘SOAS Studies in Modern and Contemporary Japan’. They have many published works, including:

- Japan as a Maritime Power by Masataka Kousaka
- Gender Culture and Disaster in Post 3.11 Japan by Mire Koikari
- Origins of Modern Japanese Bureaucracy by Yuichiro Shimizu
- SOAS also has the British Association for Japanese Studies (BAJS) which aims to recognize good research works on Japanese Studies by giving awards and encouraging them to do more work. They publish the journal “Japan Forum” every three years and they also make podcasts of their lectures available for all.

#### **4.4.4 Center for Japanese Studies, UC Berkeley**

Center for Japanese Studies supports research related to Japan and also on the connection between Japanese and Japanese-Americans. They conduct seminars and symposiums every year. They offer fellowship grants and welcome visiting scholars.

#### **4.5 Similarities and Differences between DJS and other Centers**

While surfing the websites of some Japanese Studies Research Centers abroad such as International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) and Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies, it appears that their research areas are quite similar to those of DJS. All research centers focus on Japanese history, culture and also contemporary Japan, their economy, politics and other things. In addition to research, these centers also arrange conferences and symposiums which DJS also does. Those centers also publish research journals and so is done by DJS too. However, many research centers focus on specific fields such as the Center for Japanese Studies, UC Berkeley supports research on the relations between Japanese and Japanese-American people. The Fukuzawa Memorial Center also focuses on research about the influence of Keio University in the development of Japan. It is suggested that DJS can also focus on specific topics, say the role of Japanese NGOs in the development of rural Japan or other such topics.

**Table 4.3***Country-wise List of major research institutions on Japanese Studies*

| Country | University/Institution   |
|---------|--|
| Japan   | Statistics Bureau of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan External Trade and Organization, Bank of Japan, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Justice, House of Representatives, House of Councilors, Diet Proceedings Search System, The Japan Foundation, Japan-Korea Cultural Foundation, Japan-Taiwan Exchange Center, University of Tokyo, Ryukoku University, International Christian University, Meiji University, Chuo University, Osaka University, Kyoto University, Doshisha University, Kanagawa University, Ritsumeikan University, Gakushuin University, Kinki University, Kanto Gakuin University, Hosei University, National Diet Library, Gakushuin University Library, Keio University Media Center, Kyoto University Digital Library, National Archives of Japan, National Museum of Ethnology, National Institute of Japanese Literature, Digital Library form Meiji Era, Doshisha University Library, Tokyo Keizai University, Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, University of Tokyo, Ryukoku University Library Collection, Sophia University Library, Fishery Research Agency, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, Waseda University, Japan External Trade Organization, University of Tsukuba, Kokugakuin University, Toyo Bunko, Hosei University Library, Hitotsubashi University, The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, Geological Library, National Institute for Educational Policy Research |

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| USA       | Columbia University, Duke University, George Washington University, Harvard University, Indiana University, Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, University of Chicago, University of Colorado, University of Hawaii , University of Kansas, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, University of Oregon, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, UCLA, University of Virginia, University of Wisconsin |
| Canada    | University of Toronto, Waterloo University  |
| England   | British Association for Japanese Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh, University of London, University of Oxford  |
| Sweden    | European Institute of Japanese Studies  |
| Denmark   | University of Copenhagen  |
| Australia | Japanese Studies Association of Australia   |

*Source:* Institute for Japanese Studies, 2022

Examination of the research activities of international research centres on Japanese Studies and DJS reveals some specific similarities and dissimilarities. The similarities are: more research interests in contemporary Japan, arrangement of seminars on research topics and publication of journals. However, the dissimilarities include: some centers have specialized research fields, for example Berkeley has a topic of connection between Japanese and Japanese-American people which is absent in DJS curriculum. DJS can also have more specific research topics, for example, research on Japanese NGOs in Bangladesh.

## 4.6 Recommendations

The syllabus for the DJS bachelor's degree is quite robust and well-balanced. But there is room for improvement. To meet the current demand and based on the current trend of innovation, the ICT course can concentrate more on the computer/data analysis part. Students can learn basic computing skills such as MS Office and some data analysis software like SPSS used for research and programming language such as Python used for data analysis. Students will find these applications useful when they do social science research and work in the industry after graduation. The DJS can run some optional courses as follows:

**Translation:** Language proficiency is an integral part of learning and understanding Japanese Studies accurately and deeply. A course focusing on advanced level of translation can be offered to enable the students to be more proficient in Japanese translation.

**Japanese Cinema:** The DJS has courses on Japanese pop culture and media. In addition, there can be an optional course on Japanese cinema. Cinema is an important medium for expressing public opinions and thoughts and it also is a big industry. Students can take this course if they are interested in research on films or joining the film industry. They can implement Japanese thoughts or methods in Bangladesh's film industry or they can also go to Japan to work in their industry.

**Gender in East Asia:** There is a course in Japan and South Asia. DJS can have more specific pan-Asian subjects such as "Gender in East Asia" or "Culture and Beliefs of East Asia". This way, students can learn more about East Asia and get a better understanding of Asian politics and economy. They might find new research topics from these course materials.

**Japanese Literature and Calligraphy:** There is a course on Comparative Literature Studies: Japan and Bangladesh. DJS can have more specific courses on different types of Japanese literature to make students interested in literary works such as writing or translation. They can gain more knowledge about their fields of interest. Furthermore, the students

who are interested in arts and Japanese language can take a calligraphy course. They will learn more about Japanese Kanji while doing this course. This will help them develop their language skills.

Japan-US relations: The DJS has a course “Japan and China: Rivals and Partners”. It can also have a course on the US-Japan relations. The USA and Japan had been poles apart before the World War II, but they have been important development partners in the postwar world. So, their relationship can be studied more specifically in this course and students might find their research topic on the elements from this course. Although this part is covered in courses like Japan in international affairs, a separate optional course might be helpful.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

The Japanese Studies program is expanding exponentially across the world. Historically, a bias has been observed regarding the curricula of many universities on language, literature and culture. More language-based courses like Japanese reading and composition, conversational Japanese reading and conference can be incorporated into or partly added to the present curriculum. Now is the age of artificial intelligence. The future really starts now and it largely depends on artificial intelligence, data science and analytics. Thus, students from any arena, including social science faculties, who possess advanced knowledge or technical know-how on these matters, might get added advantage in the job market. However, a new trend is also observed where there is a taste of multidisciplinary among the courses offered in Japanese Studies programs. The DJS can play a pioneering role in upholding and spreading the multidisciplinary dimension of Japanese Studies across the globe. In sum, a fine-tuning to this current DJS curriculum at Dhaka University will surely add attributes to take it to the next level.

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# 5 Collaboration for Improved Teaching Research and Skills Development

**Md. Saifullah Akon**

**Summary:** The necessity of academic collaboration has increased globally with the rapid march of globalization. There is no substitute for collaboration across diverse groups, especially when it comes to achieving sustainable development goals. This chapter attempts to unveil the importance of local and international collaboration with particular emphasis to the Japanese academic and professional organizations. The chapter also outlines an action plan for the improvement of teaching and research at the Department of Japanese Studies. The action plan suggests necessary measures for the development of students' skills and the creation of employment opportunities via establishing link with Japanese organizations and beyond. Following the descriptive method, this chapter highlights the number of collaborative arrangements already accomplished by the Department of Japanese Studies.

## 5.1 Introduction

The terms 'collaboration' and 'partnership' are frequently used interchangeably. They have become a catchphrase in the international development parlance, particularly when it comes to adopting and executing programs across borders. According to Sullivan and Skelcher (2017), collaboration gives practitioners and researchers room to permeate organizational and scholarly boundaries to spur inter-organizational, sectoral or inter-governmental partnership through vertical and horizontal engagement. The international collaboration between academic institutions and professional organizations benefits everyone particularly students and faculty. Academic cooperation benefits teachers in terms of acquiring new teaching techniques and students in terms of broadening their knowledge and learning diverse ways of solving problems. It also promotes successful communication and relationships alongside providing

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equitable chances for all team members. It respects and celebrates each member's personal and organizational style. Collaboration improves ethical behavior by promoting honesty, integrity, fairness, openness and secrecy. Knowledge of academics flows through good communication, strong collaborations and extensive networks. Such collaboration and networking works wonders not only for exchanging knowledge about new techniques and resources, but also for gaining specialized and new skills. These collaborative efforts help change the attitude of teachers and students to accommodate a culture of cooperation. Besides, academic collaboration with professional organizations has several advantages for businesses, higher education institutions and national development. Boosting university-industry collaboration also helps create more industries and minimize the unemployment rate, although it has some disadvantages too, i.e. reducing academic freedom and freethinking. This university-industry tie-up reduces graduate unemployment by ensuring industry-relevant education for university students. Students become capable of enhancing their skills in accordance with market demand, which helps them get work after graduation.

In developed countries, this method is increasingly being used with success. Universities across the globe are already forging global alliances and establishing links with other schools to take full advantage of the opportunities they churn out. International collaboration is not only a trend, but it is almost a must for several universities in developing countries. Unfortunately, this practice is sometimes neglected in Bangladeshi institutions. In Bangladesh, there is a shaky link between universities and industry. Highlighting the significance of this new tool, the Department of Japanese Studies (DJS) under the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Dhaka has initiated a collaborative approach with Japanese academic and professional organizations to excel in teaching and research. To succeed as a new department, there is no alternative to good communication and collaboration with different Japanese academic and professional organizations. However, DJS has also prioritized students' skill development and job placement by adopting well-orchestrated academia-industry collaboration. The DJS has laid great

emphasis on inter-institutional collaboration, notably with Japanese institutions, to increase quality, resources and capacity of both teachers and students.

However, this chapter maps out DJS's collaborative efforts with other Japanese academic and professional organizations across the globe to increase the capacity of both teachers and researchers as well as to enhance students' skill development. The chapter is structured as follows. First, it briefly focuses on the importance of local and international collaboration with academic and professional organizations. Second, it outlines an action plan for the improvement of teaching and research of the DJS as a new department. Third, it analyzes the action plan for the development of students' skill development. Finally, it focuses on the department's approach to job prospects, which includes relationships with Japanese companies and beyond.

## **5.2 Collaboration with Academic and Professional Organizations**

When world-class resources are scarce, cooperation has become par for the course as a means of learning knowledge and expertise in developing countries. Collaboration with different educational institutions may also help universities in developing countries improve their teaching, research, service and management standards by exposing them to best-in-class teaching, research and management practices. Collaboration is essential not only for sharing information, but also for making equipment, resources and laboratories available to other researchers, even if they are from another country or another university. It creates open lines of communication, and participants must be encouraged to take advantage of this scope to refresh outdated systems. University collaboration provides a multitude of options for both students and faculty members. It also offers an opportunity for students to travel and study in other countries through an exchange program.

The only way to foster research and development is the working collaboration between people and institutions. Institutional territorialism and the desire to own technical skills and material assets not only stymie

growth, but also hurt the country's overall higher education development structure. There is no substitute for intellectual and professional collaboration to overcome these obstacles. Any research and educational institution can only succeed if it prioritizes intellectual collaboration. New researchers and educators may extend their work, publish it in reputed professional journals and discuss it professionally through this collaboration. As for students, the institutional partnership provides for a student interchange that benefits from both teacher exposure and academic culture.

For the growth of higher educational institutions in developing countries, academic collaboration is of paramount importance. Universities must continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by consolidating their academic environment and attracting and retaining world-class staff. Higher educational institutions in Bangladesh have limited government funds. In this case, collaboration holds the key. Universities may obtain grants from sources such as businesses, foundations and international organizations, particularly for international collaborative research. This will not only increase the quality of education and research at Bangladeshi universities, but also increase the opportunities and acceptance of students in the international job market.

The Department of Japanese Studies has successfully undertaken multiple initiatives under the stronger stewardship of Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun, to recognize the value of relationships with academic and professional organizations. After taking charge of the department as its Chair, Dr. Mamun and his expert team have already forged global alliances and fostered relationships with other Japanese academics. In addition, the Department of Japanese Studies has signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and agreements of cooperation (AoCs), as Table 1 shows, with different universities and organizations, initiating a wide range of skill development training for students so they can brace for the challenges of the 21st century and become more competitive in the global job market. What is more, the department has so far conducted several lecture series and seminars with an eye to improving the quality of education.

**Table 5.1***MoUs and AoCs signed by DJS with different organizations*

| <b>Organization Type</b> | <b>Organization Name</b>                                      | <b>Agreement Type</b> |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Academic Institution     | Jawaharlal Nehru University, India                            | AoC                   |
| Academic Institution     | Shimane University, Japan                                     | MoU                   |
| Academic Institution     | Ryukoku University, Japan                                     | MoU                   |
| Academic Institution     | Binus University, Indonesia                                   | MoU                   |
| Welfare Trust            | Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust                                  | MoU                   |
| Organization             | Bangladesh Ikebana Association                                | MoU                   |
| International NGO        | ShaplaNeer, Japan   | MoU                   |
| Trade Organization       | Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI)     | LoA                   |
| Organization             | Japanese Universities Alumni Association in Bangladesh (JUAB) | MoU                   |

Currently, the DJS assists in implementing various academic programs at its collaborative institutions in Japan such as a short-course winter program with Sophia University. Each year, two to three students visit there and learn different subjects both theoretically and practically. Students can also apply for scholarships at Shimane University and the Nara Women's University of Japan to pursue further higher education. In addition, they can get the Japanese government's MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology) scholarships easily. Besides study, such collaborative efforts with Japanese academia will

allow students to travel and work in Japan or any other country. However, these programs ultimately allow the DJS to promote themselves more effectively in those partner universities.

### **5.3 Development of Teaching and Research**

Academic collaboration and professional organization play a significant role in the development of teaching and research. In particular, the contribution and implication of collaborative work behind the development of the academic excellence of the DJS are undeniable. In this regard, as a new department, the DJS has initiated several collaborative plans and activities to develop teaching and research. Thanks to an increasing number of qualitative programs within the social science paradigm, the importance of Japanese Studies as an area study has expanded significantly and its popularity has grown around the world. The academic curriculum of the DJS provides advanced training in the Japanese language as well as professionalized knowledge of Japanese society, culture and business, among others. However, the action plan for the improvement of teaching and research of the Department of Japanese Studies is as follows.

#### **5.3.1 Seminar and Lecture Series with Local and Foreign Japanologists**

The exchange of information is essential for both teachers and students to maintain lifelong learning. The most notable method for exchanging information is to hold lectures and seminars. Teachers, during the lectures, must evaluate the objective of developing a more collaborative and interactive learning environment in order to provide the best opportunity for students to participate. When internationally renowned experts are invited to such lecture sessions, the results are more fruitful. The Department of Japanese Studies made the first attempt to initiate such local and international lecture series and seminars to bring in prominent professors with the goal of providing students with a wide range of possibilities to expand their knowledge and connect with top intellectuals from across the world. The objective is to bring in successful and prominent speakers from around the world to meet with the students of the department.

The department intends to organize different lecture series in order to provide opportunities for students to receive information from a whole lot of specialists. A series of lectures have already been organized by the department, as indicated in Table 2. The majority of the specialists are foreign professors who have covered a variety of issues with the students. The lecture series were an attempt to orient students and young scholars to new ideas and academic direction for their future studies and research from those eminent specialists from foreign universities.

**Table 5.2**

*List of local and international lecture series organized by DJS*

| <b>Pattern of Activities</b> | <b>Title of Lecture</b>  | <b>Key Speaker</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| International Lecture        | Bangladesh's Journey towards the Middle-Income Country: JICA's Contribution to Government Sector | <b>Mr. Hiroki Watanabe</b> , Representative, JICA, Bangladesh Office          |
| International Lecture        | Development of Japanese Education System from Economic Perspective                               | <b>Professor Keiichi OGAWA, PhD</b> , Kobe University, Japan                  |
| International Lecture        | Japanese Customs and Popular Culture: Religion, Culture and Society                              | <b>Dr. Christopher A. Born</b> , Assistant Professor, Belmont University, USA |
| International Lecture        | Education and Socialization in Japan   | <b>Professor Keiichi OGAWA, PhD</b> , Kobe University, Japan                  |



|         |   |   |
|---------|---|---|
| Lecture | Japanese Society and Culture  | <b>Ashir Ahmed, PhD;</b><br>Associate Professor,<br>Kyushu University,<br>Japan                       |
| Lecture | Emerging Global Geo-<br>Strategic Scenario of 21 <sup>st</sup><br>Century | <b>Ambassador Md.<br/>Abdul Hannan,</b><br>Adviser at UN Central<br>Emergency Response<br>Fund (CERF) |

As a new facility, the Department of Japanese Studies is active in manifold academic activities. Besides the lecture series, the department's other long-term goal is to organize regular pertinent seminars. Following this, the DJS has hosted seminars on a variety of relevant themes, as shown in Table 3. These seminars and webinars were kept open in order to make the most of these opportunities, such as getting guidance on how to pursue higher education at universities abroad, conducting research under the supervision of well-known researchers and updating knowledge that has the potential to transform the lives of youth in general.

### **Table 5.3**

*List of seminars and webinars organized by DJS*

| <b>Pattern of Activities</b>              | <b>Title of Seminar/Webinar</b>                             | <b>Key Speaker (s)</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| CJS, JNU-DJS, DU<br>International Seminar | Japanese Studies in India and South Asia: A New Integration | <b>Professor Takamichi Mito,</b><br>Kwansei Gakuin University,<br>Japan<br><b>Professor Brij Tankha,</b><br>Professor (retd), University of<br>Delhi, India |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| International Webinar                               | Manhattan Project to Hiroshima-Nagasaki: Least Talked-about Facts        | <b>Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun</b> ,<br>Chairman, Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka   |
| Seminar   | Study in Japan Seminar-2021  | <b>Dr. Hafiza Khatun</b> ,<br>Bangladesh Agricultural University<br><b>Dr. Jahangir Alam</b> ,<br>Jahangirnagar University<br><b>Dr. Kaosar Afsana</b> ,<br>Education Adviser, Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh |
| e-Seminar to Commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day | Post-liberal Peace and Intercultural Dialogue                            | <b>Dr. Juichiro Tanabe</b> ,<br>Faculty Member of Kumamoto University, Japan  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> JICA Chair Seminar                  | Japanese Experience of Economic Development: Implications to Bangladesh  | <b>Professor Dr. Kenichi Ohno</b> , National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> JICA Chair Seminar                  | Japanese approach to International Cooperation                           | <b>Prof. Hiroshi Kato</b> ,<br>International University of Japan  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> JICA Chair Seminar                  | Japan after the World War II and Japan-China Relations in the Modern Era | <b>Prof. Akio Takahara</b> ,<br>Executive Director of JICA<br>Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, Graduate Schools for Law and Politics, University of Tokyo, Japan                    |

|                             |                       |  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| National Webinar with JBCCI | Bangabandhu and Japan | <p><b>His Excellency Dr. A K Abdul Momen, M.P.</b>, Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs , People’s Republic of Bangladesh</p> <p><b>Professor Dr. A.S.M. Maksud Kamal</b>, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic), University of Dhaka</p> <p><b>H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen</b>, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of Bangladesh</p> <p><b>Dr. Muhammad Abdul Mazid</b>, Ex-chairman, NBR and Adviser, JBCCI</p> <p><b>-Ms Mayumi Murayama</b>, Executive Vice-President, IDE-JETRO, Japan</p> <p><b>Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mamun</b>, Chairman, Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka</p> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|

These lecture series and seminars have been organized in collaboration with a variety of local and international organizations, and Bangladesh-based Japan-related organizations with the participation of Japanese professors and Japanologists from other countries. The fundamental purpose of this collaborative method is to provide students with a unique teaching and learning experience. The department of Japanese Studies should try to develop more collaboration with Japanese and other renowned universities of the world so that high-level lectures and seminars can be organized and students can listen to the world-class scholars.

### **5.3.2 Collaborative Research**

Collaborative research is one of the primary consequences of different academic partnerships which may be thought of as an emergent, self-organizing and networked system in which researchers choose their partners and study venues (Kwiek, 2020). This research collaboration is an extremely beneficial instrument that not only accelerates progress, but also improves the quality of work and expands the partners' repertory. Collaborative research projects provide a host of advantages in different sectors and have shown to be a major stratifying factor (Kwiek, 2020). Sharing techniques, knowledge and expertise is the key tool that propels the studies forward and sparks new ideas. In scientific research, researchers heavily rely on closer cooperation from their peers.

In this globalized world, academics and researchers are finding it easier to interact with other faculties and exchange their academic ideas and thinking. Within the academic research community, collaboration among many scholars is becoming increasingly widespread. By sharing experience and challenging opinions, good research work develops with academic and scientific accomplishment. With easy internet access, new communication technologies such as videoconferencing, electronic mail and enormous online libraries have become available. All these tools have increased the number of possibilities for researchers to collaborate. Even though participants are located all over the world, large amounts of data may be viewed, sent and debated at the same time.

Researchers working together guarantee that their information, skills and approaches are made available to anybody interested and that the participants profit from it. The more the researchers collaborate, the faster they are likely to succeed and solve problems. It necessitates a common interest, motivation and goals as well as collaborating partners that share the same vision in a research effort. The DJS, in this case, facilitates collaborative research with other Japanese academia, particularly universities, think-tanks and other research organizations. Although the department has made its collaborative research work with the help of the Japan Foundation (JF), there are plans to launch new research projects with other organizations and academic institutions. Meanwhile, as shown in Table 4, the DJS has begun joint research initiatives with JETRO and

Mitsubishi Corporation where they are cooperating closely. Besides, the DJS has taken a different initiative to help researchers maximize the benefits of collaborating. It is assisting in the recruitment of interns from local and foreign institutions. Two interns from Japan are already working with the DJS.

**Table 5.4**

*List of collaborative research initiated by DJS*

| <b>Types of Activities</b> | <b>Organization/Funding Agency</b>        |
|----------------------------|---|
| Research Grant             | Japan Foundation (JF)                     |
| Information Intelligence   | Mitsubishi Corporation                    |
| Collaborative Research     | Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) |

However, despite different initiatives taken by the DJS, there are other sectors it needs to give more concentration on. More collaborative research activities and high-quality research programs are needed by the DJS to help individuals comprehend the Japanese Studies curriculum. Indeed, raising awareness and highlighting the strengths of the current department and its possibilities may help understand individuals beyond their stereotypes. The crunch is that the department receives less funding for research than tiny elite research institutes. As a result, it focuses less on research and more on teaching, resulting in the separation of education and research. Due to fund constraints, most of the noteworthy research is in the theoretical realm. Language barriers, inadequate funding, insufficient regulatory framework and diverse interests are all significant roadblocks in joint research. In this case, Japanese stakeholders, such as JICA, JETRO, JBCCI and other businesses, should also strengthen their relationships with academic institutions and finance Japan-related research.

**5.4 Students’ Skill Development**

**5.4.1 Interaction with Heads of Different Organizations**

Since its inception, the Department of Japanese Studies has been pursuing its principal goal of producing high-quality graduates who can effectively

enter the job market after completing their studies. As company leaders and human resources experts understand the benefits of successful working relationships, there is no substitute for collaboration with key personnel from diverse Japanese organizations in this scenario. The department has intensified its interaction and meetings with the heads of several Japanese professional groups in Bangladesh in this respect. Such collaborations can be of significant benefit to the graduates.

**Table 5.5**

*List of career-related programs organized by DJS*

| <b>Types of Activities</b> | <b>Key Speaker</b>            | <b>Affiliation</b>   |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Career Talk                | Mr. Tareq Rafi<br>Bhuiyan Jun | Secretary-General, Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI)                 |
| Career Talk                | Mr. Yuji Ando                 | Country Representative, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Dhaka Office              |
| Career Seminar             | Ms. Kexin Wang                | Doctoral Candidate, Kobe University, Japan   |
| Meet the Ambassador        | H. E. Mr. Ito Naoki           | Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the People's Republic of Bangladesh |

Furthermore, a focus has been made on student connections with key persons from various organizations, which will continue to grow in the future. Career seminars with key figures from various institutions, according to Table 5, have been arranged at the department's initiative to guide students about their future and make them aware of their responsibilities. Moreover, arrangements have been made for the

department's students to meet with the Japanese ambassador in Dhaka. This type of gathering encourages students to learn more about the subject and receive guidance for the future.

### **5.4.2 Skill Development Training**

The process of identifying a skills gap in youth and offering skills training and job rewards to them is known as skill development. Skill development programs are designed to recognize and support young people's abilities by providing them with necessary assistance, infrastructure, opportunities and motivation to help them reach their goals. Education and skills are both necessary for everyone's job advancement, and they go hand in hand. It appears that highly regarded academic credentials may no longer be enough to gain work (Saunders & Zuzel, 2010; Lubbe et al., 2021). In this regard, to meet the demand of the 4th industrial revolution (4IR), students need to be skilled in different sectors. Employers focus on graduates' critical thinking, problem-solving capacity, leadership skills to lead the team, and oral and written communication skills. It will be difficult for new graduates to compete or find employment without proper support from universities or departments to prepare them for the world of work. Workplaces are changing at an alarming rate throughout the world. A good number of employees will be affected by automated technologies over the next decade.

To address these emerging challenges, mass skilling programs will be required. Besides the traditional theory-based teaching and learning, the new era needs skilled graduates to meet the demand of different private companies. One of the difficulties in generating such graduates is whether they possess the necessary information, skills and attitudes. In this regard, neither universities nor employers will be able to fix these new challenges alone. Here, academia-industry collaboration is necessary to meet the new demand and help graduates to be trained with specific skills. Universities require sufficient funding from industries or commercial groups to train their students. By the same token, universities must extend their collaboration with organizations to better understand their needs and requirements.

The DJS has set its long-term goal to grind out qualified graduates for the job market, recognizing the importance of skill development training for students. It has formed relationships with the industry to improve the skill development program with a view to providing routine training, reaching out to a bigger pool of industry and gaining overseas industrial training placements. Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust has already signed an agreement to finance the skill development training for the students of the DJS. The training program's primary goal is to generate graduates with academic knowledge and practical job capabilities. Undergraduates will have a chance to enter the workforce through this program, which will expose them to industry-relevant information and skills alongside making them more aware of industry expectations and requirements. It also puts trainees in close touch with industry professionals who may help them find work after graduation.

### **5.4.3 Japanese Language Learning**

Learning a new language has always been a fascinating experience. It is an adventure full of thrills and spills, and strange and unexpected encounters. Japanese language skills are required for the greater scholarly work in Japanese Studies which is described as the 'heart and soul' of Japanese Studies by Hardacre (1994). Having a good command of the Japanese language makes it easier to collaborate with Japanese companies. Japanese investors have good presence in Bangladesh, with strongholds in the car, electronics, semiconductor and optical media industries. Employment as translators and interpreters, Japanese trainers, working in Japanese embassies, jobs in travel and tourism or other Japanese companies and jobs in the IT sector are among the top career prospects after learning the Japanese language properly.

Recognizing the importance of Japanese language, the DJS has taken several initiatives to teach Japanese to students. Every semester, students are required to take Japanese language as a major course. As Japanese language is being taught each semester, students have an opportunity to start learning Japanese at an earlier stage. Teachers from Japan, with the help of Japan Embassy and Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust, teach lessons in partnership with the department's regular teachers. Apart from this, the department has a Japanese language club whose major goal is to make



students fluent in Japanese.

On the other hand, many language-based institutions have budgetary challenges when it comes to outfitting a modern language lab with the necessary equipment. Even this modern lab requires long-term budgeting to cover the costs of operation and maintenance. Most significantly, such an advanced language lab needs a team of experts who not only have the technical know-how to operate it properly, but also the ability to teach students accurately to advance their proficiency. Without collaboration with other organizations and industries, it is sometimes difficult for this new department to launch any language lab. Because of the department's expansion bid and working relationships, Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust has established a state-of-the-art language lab at the department. As a result, students are now able to learn the Japanese language more accurately and perfectly. However, the department should continue its endeavor to bring more Japanese teachers and increase the local pool for language teaching.

### **5.5 Employment of the Graduates**

Employability is defined as a "collection of accomplishments – skills, understandings and personal characteristics – that enable graduates to acquire employment and succeed in their chosen jobs, benefiting themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy" (Yorke & Knight, 2006). Students invest in university education in order to better their chances of finding work. Over the last decade, employability has been a growing concern in higher education throughout the world, notably in Bangladesh. Approximately a year before graduation, a majority of Bangladeshi university students begin looking for jobs. Some students find jobs quickly while others struggle for months or even years. There is a common tendency for Bangladeshi university students to fight for government jobs. Several issues subscribe to this current tendency: job security, economic safety and the working environment (Akon & Sharmin, 2021). But limited vacancies in the public service are insufficient to accommodate a wide number of fresh graduates, resulting in the problem of unemployment. The rising rate of unemployment has been a serious issue of concern in Bangladesh, particularly in the 21st century.

The Department of Japanese Studies, on the other hand, has developed a long-term strategy to provide career stability for its students. For that purpose, the Department of Japanese Studies is expanding its collaboration with several internal and overseas organizations, particularly Japanese organizations. It also empowers students by offering a variety of skill development training. The good news is the students of Japanese Studies are in high demand in Japanese companies, whereas the employment rate for newly graduated students from other disciplines is declining. The department has already been able to employ its undergraduate students to CMSS, Mitsui Corporation, JETRO and Kazuko Bhuiyan Welfare Trust.

### **5.5.1 University-industry Collaboration for Employment**

Collaboration between industry and academia is a burning topic in emerging nations as a way of boosting economic growth through creating human capital. Collaboration with companies tends to have a favorable influence on graduates' employability chances. Besides, it increases the confidence of the graduates to deal with the employers. This partnership can take a variety of forms. Experts stress industry-academia collaboration to address the market needs and the 4IR. The gap between university and industry is becoming more of a problem, especially in emerging nations like Bangladesh. The link between industry and academia is mutually reinforcing. Industry turns to academia for competent people to fill open positions in their workforce. Academic achievement, on the other hand, is primarily determined by the employability of graduates. To reduce the gap, businesses and academic institutions must work together more closely for mutual gains.

The Department of Japanese Studies has extended its connections with Japanese organizations, recognizing the value of the industry-academia partnership. Furthermore, the Japanese Studies program might serve as a link between industry and academia. Without the academia-industry link, no field can truly cater to the needs of society as well as sustainability. This relationship is not restricted to engagement with Japanese organizations only, but also includes a partnership with Japanese businesses and Bangladeshi organizations. Students of Japanese Studies

have already been able to do the internship and get employed with several Japanese companies, including Mitsubishi Corporation and CMSS Consulting Company Ltd. It is worthwhile to mention that Mitsubishi Corporation is providing 1 million Yen scholarship to the students.

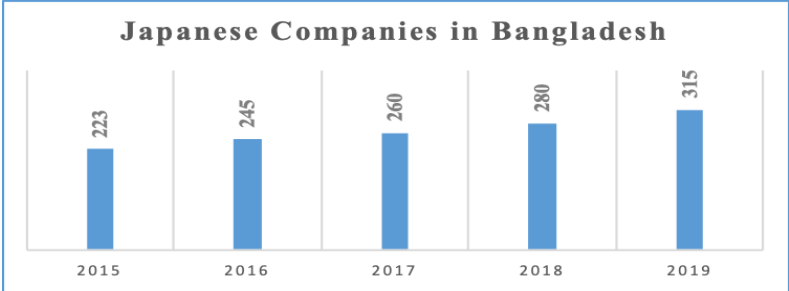
However, the Department of Japanese Studies needs to take a more collaborative approach in different forms. If the DJS can establish an intensive program with Japanese enterprises in Bangladesh, it will eventually assist students in collaborating more effectively between academia and industry. In this regard, Japanese organizations like JETRO are happy to work with the DJS to foster more collaboration between academia and industry.

### 5.5.2 New Employment Opportunities in Japanese Companies in Bangladesh

Due to the economic liberalization policies by the Bangladesh government, Japanese investment increased in Bangladesh during the 1990s. Since the mutual visit of the prime ministers of the two countries in 2014, Japanese investment has increased manifold. Bangladesh has become one of the next investment destinations for Japanese companies for a number of factors, including the country's growing geostrategic importance, cheap labor, natural resources and economic growth. The number of Japanese companies operating in Bangladesh has been steadily increasing over the years.

**Figure 5.1**

*Increasing Japanese Companies in Bangladesh*



Source: JETRO

At present, according to Chart 1, about 315 Japanese companies are operating in Bangladesh and, according to Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), about 50 new Japanese companies are arriving in Bangladesh every year with their investment proposals. On the other hand, a 2019 survey by the JETRO found that most of the Japanese companies based in Bangladesh are keen to expand their business for the next couple of years. According to the survey conducted among 5,073 Japanese companies of 20 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, 73.2 percent have made Bangladesh their top priority. This increased number of Japanese companies needs huge staff to operate their production. In this case, there is a possibility that the Japanese companies may prioritize Bangladeshi citizens who are familiar with Japanese language, business and culture as the employers need capable graduate applicants.

However, these Japanese companies could be the best employment provider for DJS graduates in addition to the public-sector jobs. As students from the DJS know Japanese language and are taught about business management and communication, they will certainly get an advantage in getting jobs in Japanese companies. The DJS has already connected with a number of Japanese companies and pursuing them to allow DJS graduates to have jobs in their respective companies and also for internships during their final semester of graduation and post-graduation. Such job opportunities in Japanese companies will certainly increase the value of the Department of Japanese Studies.

### **5.5.3 Demographic Crisis, Labor Law Amendment and Opportunity to Work in Japan**

Japan has been facing a demographic crisis for decades as the number of elderly people is growing, but the birth rate is declining on the other. As a result, the number of working people in Japan is shrinking alarmingly. This labor shortage in Japanese companies is having a significant negative impact on the country's economy. Due to the country's protracted economic downturn amid labor shortages in healthcare, construction, agriculture and other sectors, the Japanese government has now been compelled to abandon its long-standing conservative immigration policy. It is worth noting that immigration has always been discouraged in Japan.

This conservative attitude towards immigrants and the existence of a stringent immigration system helped Japan establish its unique culture during the Tokugawa era. Around 250 years of isolation during the Tokugawa era gave rise to a kind of separatist attitude among the Japanese people. Even though the Dutch and the Chinese traded with Japan at that time, this did not help the country dispel its conservative outlook.

Since the Meiji restoration in 1868, Japan's trade relations with the outside world have increased and Japan emerged as an economically and militarily strong country. At this time, the majority of the Japanese workforce was made up of Korean and Chinese citizens. In the early 20th century, Chinese workers and expatriates began to come with small working communities in various cities in Japan. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Japanese cabinet adopted anti-foreign labor policies. But in the 1980s, controversy erupted over foreign workers in Japan due to the economic growth in Japan called 'bubble economy'. In 1986, the Japanese labor ministry advised employers to recruit foreign labor but it was rejected by justice ministry. This scenario, however, did not take long to change. The Japanese government reformed its immigration policy (Immigration Control Act or ICA) in the 1990s in response to a severe labor shortage. Besides, in 1993, following an agreement between the ministry duo, a technical intern training program was launched in Japan. In addition, Japan amended a law in 2017 to ensure that production processes at various private companies are not disrupted. The new law allows private companies to increase their hiring of foreign workers from 5.0 percent to 10 percent.

However, the labor crisis has intensified recently. Understanding the current demographic crisis and labor shortage in their industries, Japan's Lower House has amended their 'Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act' in 2018 by introducing two new visa categories: "Specified Skills 1" and "Specified Skills 2". This newly amended immigration law allows more foreign workers to enter Japan. South and Southeast Asian countries, which are mostly involved in the export of skilled workers, are continuing their attempts to access Japan's new labor market. This newly opened market is likely to become a potential

destination also for Bangladeshi skilled professionals. In this regard, students from the DJS will probably have the opportunity to work or study in Japan.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The Department of Japanese Studies is a new department under the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Dhaka. The DJS focuses on local and international collaboration to improve teaching and research quality while assisting students with job placement. This collaboration appears as a key factor in attracting students to this particular program. The DJS may greatly benefit from these productive relationships with others, both domestically and globally. However, while deciding on such collaboration, DJS must prioritize the improvement of teaching and research quality.

In Bangladesh, generally, when industry and institutions collaborate, there are disagreements over aims, conflicting hypotheses, cultural divides and technological challenges. In addition, companies' lack of enthusiasm and knowledge of the necessity of the university-industry tie-up were major barriers to such collaboration. As a result, the industry-academy alliance is severely lacking in Bangladesh. On the one hand, a lack of such collaboration deprives students of quality education and skills development training, while academic institutions confront different impediments to fundamental research for lack of funding. Despite several challenges, the Department of Japanese Studies has maintained its commitment to improving comprehensive collaboration with the Japanese academia and professional organizations. Simultaneously, it engages in a variety of initiatives aimed at improving educational quality and shaping student research and skills development.

However, for this relationship to be successful, DJS and Japan-related organizations and industries must work together to develop an academic climate that encourages collaboration by aiding each other with ideas, projects and innovations. They must also go beyond territoriality to foster effective cooperation and the frequent use of buildings, equipment and other resources. To this end, the Japanese embassy and the Japan Foundation must strengthen their cooperation and collaboration to build a strong Japanese Studies program and give appropriate funding to increase

the scope of Dhaka University's existing Japanese Studies program. Furthermore, the government might serve as a link between Japanese and Bangladeshi institutions to facilitate cooperative research and teaching.

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# 6 Significance of Japanese Studies to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh

**Md Jahangir Alam**

**Summary:** This chapter portrays the significance of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh, particularly in achieving SDGs. Over the decades, Japan has evolved from a major donor to a key development partner of Bangladesh, making Japanese Studies crucial for further strengthening bilateral ties. Besides, Japan constantly supports Bangladesh in implementing SDGs through numerous development programs. Since the 1971 independence, Japan has contributed to overall development of Bangladesh with technical support, grants and loans, thus becoming its most significant development partner. This chapter highlights the how-to's for Bangladesh so that it does not get caught in a 'debt trap', rather it eludes drawbacks to ensure the transfer of skills and technology. This chapter also adopts the game theory to explain the nation-building process, and analyses the role of Japanese Studies in translating the Japanese experience to achieve SDGs in Bangladesh. Finally, it attempts to theorize a new model for the socio-economic development of Bangladesh with policy recommendations for a latent global emblem.

## 6.1 Introduction

In 1971, shortly after Bangladesh attained independence, Japan provided substantial support to rebuild the war-torn country and built a successful and trusted relationship as a development partner. Bangladesh strives to graduate from the least-developed country classification by 2026 and become a developed one by 2041. Japan is one of Bangladesh's most important development partners and a critical source of support for development. Bangladesh and Japan have a broad spectrum of bilateral relations. Hence, to understand the diplomatic relations between the two friendly nations, Japanese Studies is essential when considering the comprehensive study of its economics, politics, sociology, history,

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philosophy, international relations, science and technology, art and culture, language, and literature. The goal of Japanese Studies is to develop knowledge-based Japan specialists, also known as Japanologists, who act as catalysts, facilitators, role players, and ambassadors for the welfare of humanity (Wibawarta, 2010). This study defines the critical role of a Japanologist in developing relations between Japan and South Asia, particularly Bangladesh. Japanese Studies attributes to perform updated multidisciplinary knowledge of Japan, an understanding of Japanese values and ethics, Japan's worldview, comprehensive knowledge about the critical dimensions of relevant bilateral and multilateral issues for high 'diffusion index' and 'expansion value,' and the potential impact of development and cooperation. Globally, Japanese Studies assist in developing 'relation-building capability' through the multidisciplinary process and the individual country's interest in development (Ogawa, n.d.). Japanese Studies with those mentioned above understand that Japan-Bangladesh relations account for the significant growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Moreover, the diplomatic relations between the two nations can play a crucial role in fostering a win-win situation in the development process through trade diversification, investment, business, exchange of ideas and cultural ties. Relationships between the two countries are never involuntary; they derive from deliberate efforts driven by mutual development and cooperation needs. It is considered successful and productive only when this conscious effort is complemented by a comprehensive knowledge of Japanese Studies for the developmental needs of Bangladesh to achieve SDGs. Further, it is suggested that networks of Japanese Studies scholars be developed in Bangladesh to expedite the capacity-building process and enhance Japan-Bangladesh relations (Alam, 2022a).

## **6.2 Background and Importance of Japanese Studies**

As a part of Japanese Studies, Japanese Area Study (日本の地域研究, Nihon no Chiiki Kenkyū) encompasses various aspects like history,

culture, economics, politics, trade and industry, international relations, and language and linguistics of Japan. When compared globally, Japanese Studies has a long history of contributing to the field of development and cooperation (Rafael, 1994). Japanese Studies may be traced back to the first scholarly journals dedicated to area studies. In 1938, Sophia University published 'Monumenta Nipponica,' the earliest notable academic publication in Japanese Studies, whereas most of the other prominent publications date from the 1970s and afterwards. The development of online Japanese Studies publications was another key event in the 2000s. Japanese language education took a significant amount of time to develop. Masaaki Seki divides Japanese Studies education into three periods: guiding foreign nationals coming to Japan to learn the Japanese language and culture until the late 19th century, Japanese Studies education as an imperial instrument until 1945, and Japanese studies education as part of global interaction after 1945 (Seki, 1997).

Western institutions also offered Japanese Studies education throughout the first several decades of the 20th century. At the same time, contemporary Japanese Studies' foundations were laid before the Second World War (WWII). However, Japanese Studies emerged mainly in the United States during and after the war as a multidisciplinary study (Gerstle & Cummings, 2016). The United States' interest in learning more about its competitors and foreign threats prompted the development of a new area studies program in the wake of WWII. Departments of Asian Studies have also been launched in universities around the United Kingdom. The University of Sheffield established its School of East Asian Studies in 1963. It soon became a pioneer of the 'dual degree' model. East Asian languages are taught alongside social sciences and other courses, a technique that has since become standard across the United Kingdom (University of Sheffield, n.d.).

Because of the multidisciplinary field encompassing regionalized research in cultural studies, sociology, international relations and political science, Japanese Studies is known as 'geopolitical studies' (Oba, 1995). Although area studies do not rely on language as heavily as other fields, the students

who are proficient in Japanese can conduct a field study to better comprehend the geopolitical situation for regional and bilateral relations. Knowing, examining and interpreting different cultures, whether people of both countries seek to experience the other country, is an act of area studies adaptation (Szanton, 2004). It is simply an attempt to explain different groups and cultures' hypotheses, definitions, structures and dynamics.

However, it also creates reflective opportunities for foreigners' perception of their society and culture to expand, even if it is challenged by diversity (Bates, 1997). The 'multidisciplinary spectacles' are necessary because no particular educational method can apprehend and dispatch a complete comprehension of different communities or cultures (Alam, 2022c). Hence, as an academic field, Japanese Studies is analyzed comprehensively, including its overall influence on Bangladesh, its likely future outcomes and more. As shown in Table 6.1, the perspectives of participants, who may be categorized as Japanese, non-Japanese or, more recently, multicultural and the contexts in which they work, were assessed to analyze the evolution of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh. Japanese Studies is divided into two periods: pre-and post-World War II. The pre-war period is the foundational phase, whereas the post-war period is when universities began to provide specialized Japanese Studies programs.

**Table 6.1**  
*Evolution of Japanese Studies*

| <b>Location</b>                 | <b>Non-Japanese Academics and Researchers</b>                               | <b>Japanese Academics and Researchers</b>   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Early Imperial (to 1905)</b> |   |   |
| Outside Japan                   | Foreigners had minimal knowledge of Japan and acted as amateur specialists. | Travellers roamed worldwide and acted as representatives of Japanese culture.       |
| Inside Japan                    | The colonial explorers became almost 'native'.                              | Anthropological study elements were offered to the local audience by Japanologists. |
| <b>Late Imperial (to 1945)</b>  |   |   |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Outside Japan   | Japanese language education in Western institutions began.  | There were a few Japanese language instructors at Western institutions; widespread language teaching in Japan's colonies.                            |
| Inside Japan  | As the conflict neared, the Western presence was reduced.   | Along the way to war, the academics promoted nationalist viewpoints.   |
| <b>Post-war (to the 1960s)</b>                            |   |  |
| Outside Japan   | Specialisation in Japanese Studies.   | Ban on Japanese commoners from travelling overseas.  |
| Inside Japan  | Post-occupation area study enthusiasts in Japan for field study.  | In the post-war period, Japan was introspective as it confronted loss and sought new philosophical orientations.                                     |
| <b>Internationalisation (from the 1970s to the 1980s)</b> |   |  |
| Outside Japan   | With increased Japanese Studies publications, area study enthusiasts viewed Japan as an ideal nation.                                     | Expat academics taught language along with humanities and the social sciences.   |
| Inside Japan  | Western scholars were working on Japanese literary works and socio-cultural aspects.  | Nihonjinron debate; native analysts of the success of Japan who had fame outside Japan.  |
| <b>Globalisation (from the 1990s to the 2010s)</b>        |   |  |
| Outside Japan   | Maintaining academic authority in Japanese Studies within the neoliberal educational age.   | The rise of Japanese scholars pursuing careers overseas.   |
| Transnational   | A massive rise in interconnectivity in the era of the Internet; the gradual fading of the 'Japanese-Western' divide.                      |  |
| Inside Japan  | As Japan became a popular overseas study destination, fascination with pop culture surpassed interest in economic strategies for success. | Local Japanese scholars acted as global representatives by releasing their online content; Japanese Studies received monetary and political support. |
| <b>New Horizons (the 2020s onwards)</b>                   |   |  |
| Outside Japan   | Diffusion of power centres to intellectuals in countries excluding the West, particularly in Asia; de-westernisation of Japanese Studies. | Internationally mobile intellectuals whose reputations are becoming entirely unbound by nationality.   |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Transnational | Japanese Studies is becoming increasingly diverse and global. The role of Japan in battling climate change, an ageing population, and migration emerges as critical challenges.   |
| Inside Japan  | The internationally mobile Japanese intellectuals whose fame and rank are becoming increasingly unbound by nationality. Japanese Studies has shifted its focus from local to global challenges. Relationships with Asia have been strengthened. |

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*Source:* Ogawa & Seaton (2020)

### **6.3 Significance and Rationale of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh**

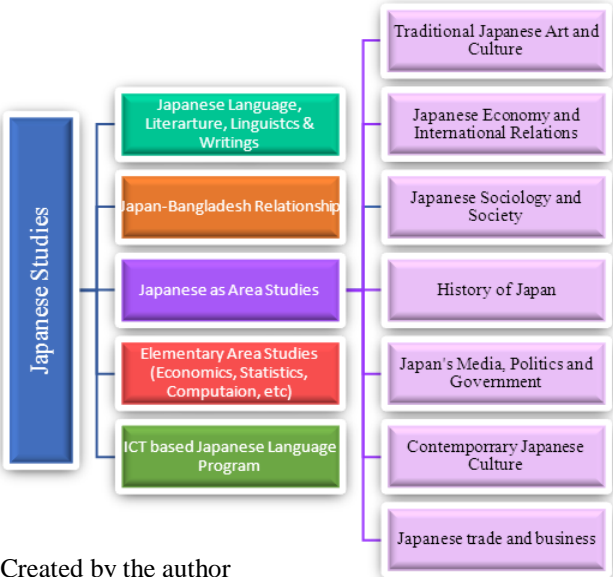
Many development partners have helped Bangladesh for its socio-economic growth since its independence in 1971. Japan is assisting Bangladesh to improve in all areas, including the economy, human resources development, technological advancement, disaster management and sundry others. As a primary development partner, Japanese Studies in Bangladesh are critical for strengthening bilateral ties and maximizing the benefits of a comprehensive partnership (Harootunian & Sakai, 1999; Sakakibara, 1994). Even though many Bangladeshis are given opportunities to visit Japan each year for cultural exchange programs, they can gain a lot from Japanese Studies. Furthermore, Japanese Studies might strengthen mutual relationships for development in achieving SDGs.

Japanese Studies has typically focused on Japanese language, culture and developmental issues. So far, the goal of Japanese Studies has been to appropriately connect with non-Japanese people and provide them with a clear and broad perspective of Japan. On the other hand, people working in Japanese Studies as researchers and academicians must think to innovate for further developmental of the area. There are two fundamental reasons for adopting the paradigm of area studies: philosophical and practical (Tjandra, 2012). Regarding philosophy, researchers and scholars should take full advantage of researching issues from diverse geographic viewpoints, shifting from ‘methodological nationalism’ to ‘methodological cosmopolitanism’. Besides the theoretical rationale, there is a more pragmatic and practical reason. The Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Dhaka was founded with all these ideals in

mind as Bangladesh’s first and only area studies program. Before going on to specialized fields of knowledge such as the Japanese economy, trade and business, society, politics, history, language, art and media, culture, literature, statistics and information technology, students are taught the principles of social sciences and humanities (Figure 6.1). As a knowledge hub and a centre of excellence, the Department of Japanese Studies intends to be a catalyst in this process, expanding the department’s base and boosting diplomatic relations between Japan and Bangladesh.

**Figure 6.1**

*Classification of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh*

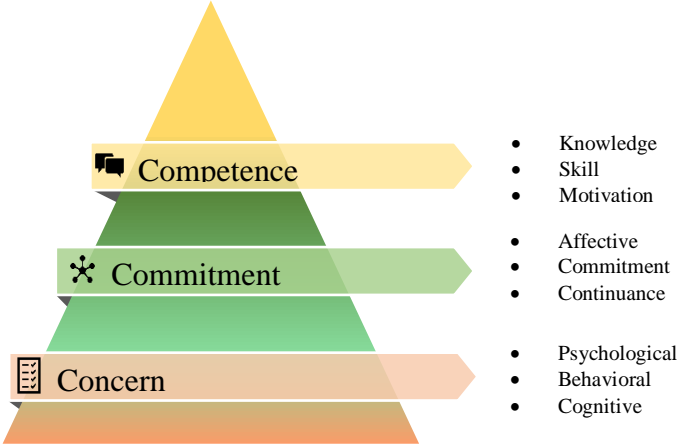


Source: Created by the author

Japanese Studies is essential to understand the development pattern for much-needed capabilities such as updated multidisciplinary knowledge about Japan. This knowledge helps them understand Japanese values and ethics, Japan’s worldview, critical dimensions of bilateral issues between Bangladesh and Japan, and clarity of mutual trust-respect-reciprocity principles (Figure 6.2). With the assistance of competent Japanologists, Bangladesh will understand Japan better, which is required to retain

strong relations and conduct business with relevant stakeholders. Japanese Studies may assist Bangladesh in achieving economic and regional political success and SDGs by maintaining strong ties with Japan and encouraging them to pay attention to Bangladesh with the support of Japanologists.

**Figure 6.2**  
*Node Pathways for Japanese Studies*



Source: Created by the author

**6.3.1 Relevance of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh**

Area studies have garnered considerable attention in recent years, and Japanese Studies is undoubtedly one of the most-researched topics for development. Bangladesh has significant economic, diplomatic and cultural relations with Japan, thus, adoption of Japanese Studies at the tertiary level is crucial for Bangladesh. Many Japanese corporations and organizations are now functioning in Bangladesh and many individuals are acting as a ‘bridge’ between the two countries. Japanese Studies programs in Bangladesh, including the Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Dhaka, might create many well-versed opportunities. Furthermore, Japan’s population has been shrinking rapidly, so the country desperately needs qualified workforce. Bangladeshi graduates with a sufficient understanding of Japan and the essential abilities can be

sent to Japan. In turn, Japan will undoubtedly be benefited from skilled human resources. It would also help Bangladesh's economy by reducing the number of educated unemployed individuals. In today's international society, Japan is considered a significant soft power. Studying Japan to comprehend the country's philosophy, worldwide impact fully, and other features are also vital. Japan is also one of the few countries which achieved tremendous economic growth and industrialization. Through the Japanese Studies Program, Japan's experience and policies can benefit Bangladesh in addressing the SDGs.

#### **6.4 Theoretical Framework and Implications in Bangladesh**

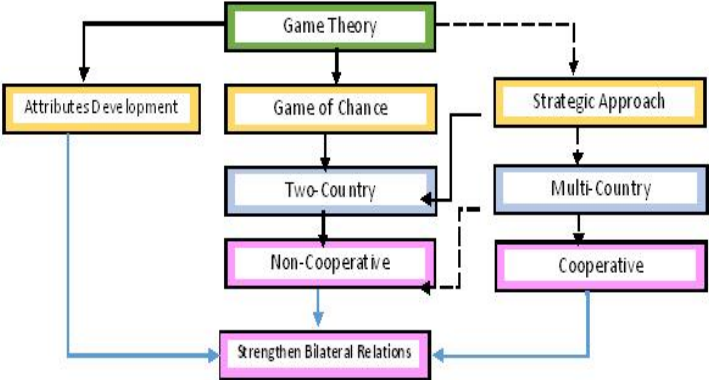
Game theory applies to understanding relationships in social sciences such as economics, political science, international relations and philosophy. In other words, it is the science of tactics, or more precisely, it is the study of the individuals who make decisions in contexts where they are strategically interdependent. Similarly, as both nations are strategically interconnected and interdependent, a comprehensive study of Japanese Studies is required to understand every dimension of their bilateral relationship through game theory. In 1940, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern introduced this theory. John Nash, a mathematician, is often credited with offering the first significant expansion of von Neumann and Morgenstern's work on game theory (Hayes, 2021) (Figure 6.3). This theory deals with strategies and conflicts in which an agent's decision success is contingent on others' actions. It originated within economic development to comprehend various financial behaviours, including companies, markets and consumers. It has also developed ethical or normative behaviour theories and apprehended rational action. This theory has a significant influence on a country's economic development. However, the theory's relevance to international relations is undeniable. It is a classic remark that states interact by attempting to anticipate the responses of other nations to their decisions. The application of game theory benefits understanding the prospects and addressing the challenges of Japan-Bangladesh relations.

This chapter implies the game theory, a framework for understanding bilateral relations among partners. Using game theory, technology, and political economics modelling assists in furthering the goals of Japanese



Studies in Bangladesh. The non-cooperative notion as an evaluative tool and macroeconomic framework hypothesis about partners' local interests and motives offers a distinct view on international relations than realist theories and other state-centric approaches. Likewise, through Japanese Studies, we can learn what makes Bangladesh as a state more important to Japan and, as a result, can assist the nation in thriving by utilizing this bilateral bonding. Since Japan is Bangladesh's most important development partner, it is essential to understand their strategic plans and earn their trust by providing mutual benefits, which cannot be done better in any other way but through Japanese Studies. Game theory allows one side to understand the other's response to their actions. It is critical to have skilled Japanologists who can conceive game theory to comprehend and assess Japan's strategic movements towards Bangladesh. This theory shows Japanese Studies' relevance to optimizing bilateral relations between Japan and Bangladesh.

**Figure 6.3**  
*Theoretical Framework*



Source: Created by the author

The game theory has been deployed in explaining the bilateral relations between Japan and Bangladesh to develop and test the relationships' dynamics to allow stakeholders to select between one or more strategies for development. It is demonstrated within the framework of game theory while conforming to behavioral, social and moral criteria for bilateral

relations (Kyburz-Graber et al., 2006; Osborne & Rubinstein, 1994; Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1953; Corridoni et al., 2014). Implying the theory in showing the role of Japanese Studies in analyzing the strategy for further development of the bilateral relationship as follows:

First, the game theory implies that both participating countries, i.e. Japan and Bangladesh of this theory, will reap the profit or lose the gain depending on one variable's choice. In this case, in-depth knowledge of Japanese strategies will help Bangladesh emphasize the bilateral relationship between Japan and Bangladesh and allow both countries to help each other by distinguishing between modified and unmodified equilibrium strategies (ES) to determine the possibilities of a mutual bilateral relationship.

Second, in explaining Japanese Studies' influence, this study chooses ES based on an ethical and developmental case analysis evaluation. Both nations may have to take a value-oriented approach to the theory, linking it to the study and mobilizing competencies based on ethical ideals. Again, it is crucial to understand Japanese moral values, which can only be provided through thorough research about Japan. On the other hand, both governments can use analytical competencies based on technical-scientific knowledge to see the influence of the Japanese Studies game through a critical lens.

Third, throughout this theory, countries' visions change in response to input relating to ES's selection of particular social dynamics. To achieve steady and intentional sustainable development, a complete picture, values and analyses are necessary, and 'winning the game' also implies attaining mutual bilateral relations is the core of this theory.

Finally, the game structure and regulations, notably the country-to-pure-ES ratio, impact all procedures for bilateral relations.

#### **6.4.1 Implications of Japanese Strategies for Governance and Development in Bangladesh**

Since 1972, the bilateral diplomatic relationship between Bangladesh and Japan has strengthened through loans, grant aid and technical assistance.

Japan's prime focus on Bangladesh's development was poverty reduction. Japan has been assisting in establishing more employment opportunities for the unprivileged people to reduce the rate of unemployment which is interconnected to poverty reduction. Japan is also providing skills development and technical training to less educated people. Japan is capitalizing on its experience as a donor country to become Bangladesh's largest provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA). The current tendency in Japanese aid policy is remarkable, emphasizing the relevance of human capital over physical resources. Under the new criteria, the Japanese government prioritizes human capital investment in Bangladesh, including education, health care, skills enhancement and numerous vocational training programs (Alam et al., 2022b).

For the economic growth of Bangladesh, Japan has played a crucial role over the years. Bangladesh has experienced rapid economic progress in recent years and Japanese aid in trade and business is one of the reasons behind it. Beginning in 1972, Japan has been providing loans to Bangladesh and investing in various sectors, which are key factors in the country's socio-economic development. As a significant ODA-receiving country, Bangladesh has received Japanese assistance for the construction and development of multiple economic zones in Bangladesh, with different names such as Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). These economic zones are expected to contribute to Bangladesh's economic progress in the future. Japan is also investing in several mega projects in Bangladesh which will contribute to achieving SDGs and Vision 2041. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a major Japanese organization contributing to Bangladesh's development, is constantly involved in numerous infrastructure projects to improve the quality of life in urban and rural areas. One of these is the renovation of Jamuna Railway Bridge, widely known as Bangabandhu Bridge.

Another example is the reconstruction of the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Bangladesh benefits from this project because it connects its two major cities and several business areas. Cox's Bazar highway is another significant construction project and aims to improve cargo delivery

between Matarbari deep-sea port and Chattogram's highly populated districts.

Japan, through JICA, is also contributing to the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport expansion project which would significantly boost Bangladesh's economy in future. Another significant undertaking is the construction of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) in Dhaka. This initiative, which aims to reduce traffic congestion and environmental pollution in Dhaka, will surely improve the city's environment and benefit the economy. Furthermore, JICA is helping to develop Bangladesh's food and agricultural sectors. Since Bangladesh's independence, Japanese agricultural experts have introduced over 40 types of rice and numerous other goods such as broiler chicken, radish, improved varieties of broccoli and watermelon. JICA also brought modern agricultural instruments to rural Bangladesh to increase the productivity significantly. Japanese agricultural models are now being successfully replicated in Bangladesh. Japan is working closely with Bangladesh to ensure good governance at every level. An innovative governance system with digital data centers and remote services saves valuable time, cost and visit (TCV). Transparency and accountability are now more and more ensured because of these innovations. As a result, citizens enjoy a better service delivery experience than ever before. Japan's development strategies are being adequately replicated at many levels of the governance system in Bangladesh. There will be less corruption, and Bangladeshi people will face less harassment in governmental institutions because of a sound governance system. Therefore, Bangladesh will move forward faster and undoubtedly flourish over time. Also, it will meet SDG-16, which promotes peace and justice in inclusive institutions.

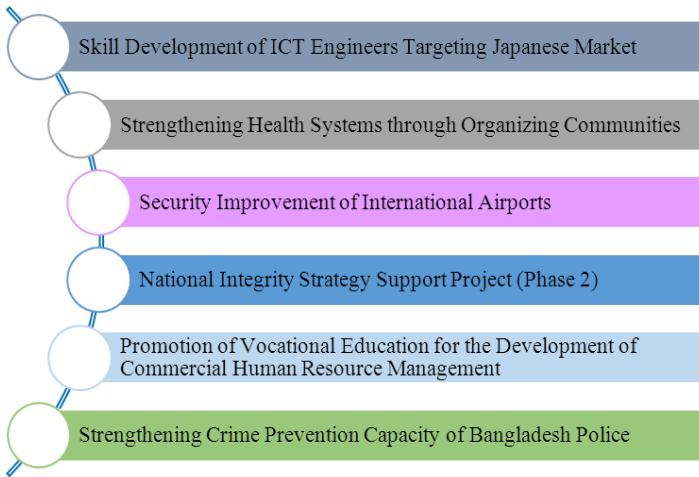
#### **6.4.2 Implications of Japanese Studies for Technological Advancement**

With Japan's continued support, Bangladesh has developed its information and communication technology sector. Globalization has had a significant impact on assistance, as even non-Japanese enterprises also require Japanese language professionals. Companies from Bangladesh and abroad with production or business facilities in Bangladesh are among

them. Japonologists might contribute a lot to Bangladesh’s technological development by helping replicate Japan’s technological advancement and all of its successful policies. Proper implementation of these policies will help trade and business with Japan flourish, and Bangladesh will hugely benefit from receiving technical assistance from Japan (Figure 6.4).

### Figure 6.4

#### *Japanese Technical Cooperation Projects*



*Source:* Created by the author

For a long time, Japan has provided Bangladesh with diverse technological assistance, which has proved to be highly beneficial to the country’s overall development. By adequately utilizing such assistance, Bangladesh can improve its technological advancement and shift into an era of digitization for inclusive development. Therefore, it will be fulfilling SDG-04 which promotes quality education, SDG-08 which refers to decent work and economic growth, and SDG-09, which is industry, innovation and infrastructure.

### 6.4.3 Implications of Japanese Studies to Enhance ODA for Development

Japan provides increased Official Development Assistance (ODA) to

Bangladesh through grants, technical cooperation and loans. The lion's share of Japanese ODA (in 2017) is debt, followed by technical cooperation and grants (Table 6.2). Grants are primarily used to expedite the process of human development, mitigation of climate change and communication improvement. As for the technical cooperation projects, they are predominantly designed for capacity-building purposes. Loans are mainly intended for infrastructural development.

**Table 6.2**

*ODA-funded Projects in Bangladesh*

| <i>ODA-funded Projects</i>  |
|---|
| <b><i>Grants Project</i></b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meteorological Radar System installation in Rangpur and Dhaka</li> <li>• Human Resources Development Scholarship (three-year cycle)</li> </ul>   |
| <b><i>Technical Cooperation Project</i></b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT Engineers' Proficiency Development for Japanese Industries</li> <li>• Strengthening Health Systems through Organizing Communities</li> <li>• Security Improvement of International Airports</li> <li>• National Integrity Strategy Support Project (Phase-2)</li> <li>• Enhancement of Vocational Education for the Development of Industrial Human Resources</li> <li>• Strengthening Crime Prevention Capacity of Bangladesh Police</li> </ul> |
| <b><i>ODA Loan</i></b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project for the Development of Small-scale Water Supplies (Phase-2)</li> <li>• Dhaka Underground Substation Construction Project</li> <li>• Construction of Meghna-Kanchpur-Gumti 2nd Bridge as well as Rehabilitation of Old Bridges</li> <li>• Dhaka MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) Project</li> <li>• Power Project in Matarbari</li> <li>• Expansion of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport</li> </ul>  |

*Source: JICA (2019)*

The Japanese ODA, in its three forms, is conceptually well-knitted. The distribution pattern in terms of the amount is balanced, serving the purpose of each state. Japanologists are well endowed to act as a facilitator in maximising the impact of ODA. With their keen knowledge

of Japanese values, norms, customs and culture, Japanologists from Bangladesh can be instrumental in advocating further expansion of ODA from the Japanese government. As a developing country, Bangladesh needs technical assistance, loans and grants for its development. Although Bangladesh is not really receiving assistance from Japan with the help of Japanologists, their interventions may create more significant impacts in the country's infrastructural and industrial development. Doing so will contribute to SDG-08, which supports decent work and economic growth, and SDG-09, for developing robust infrastructure, supporting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and encouraging innovation.

#### **6.4.4 Implications of Japanese Studies to Increase Trade with SAARC Countries**

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) formally intends to accelerate development through regional cooperation, multilateral by nature but does not exclude bilateral cooperation. Each country in the SAARC has specific strengths and needs, and each has its perspective and plans for development. From Japan's perspective, SAARC is a region with high and increasing potential endowed with a vast population comprising about 24% of the world's total population, which needs to be transformed into human resources. Japan also considers SAARC as a geopolitical and economic space of global significance and intends to promote peace and prosperity in the region as part of the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' policy.

However, trade among SAARC countries has been relatively insignificant in recent decades. Intra-regional trade among SAARC countries is less than 7% which is 27.4% among ASEAN nations. One of the significant reasons for intra-regional trade backwardness in SAARC is high trade costs (ESCAP, 2016). The vital issue here is that underdeveloped transport infrastructure that hinders smooth 'cost-effective' transportation of goods and services among SAARC countries and from SAARC to other regions. As part of Japan's policy of ensuring a global environment that will benefit Japanese trade and commerce, Japan emphasizes free trade and trade promotion of SAARC countries. To accelerate this process, Japan implements large-scale projects for improving transport

connectivity in the SAARC region. Furthermore, transport infrastructure projects and other Japanese projects, including capacity-building ones, enhance the productivity of SAARC countries, thereby improving the domestic economy and society. Therefore, a Japanologist can rightly argue using the game theory, without ambiguity, that all these will benefit both the individual SAARC countries and Japan, at least through market expansion.

The intra-regional export and import of merchandise products are very low among SAARC countries compared to high-income countries. In 2017, Japan's merchandise export to high-income economies was 61.1%, and SAARC was only 2% of the total merchandise export. Japan's merchandise import from SAARC countries in 2017 was only 1.1% of the total import. SAARC countries' merchandise import from Japan was only 4.7%. This export-import scenario is intimidating. However, adequate considerations must be made because the actual GDP growth rates in SAARC countries are already high. Considering that GDP growth rates for 2021 are projected to be high and stable at 3.5% for Afghanistan, 7.3% for Bangladesh, 5.9% for Bhutan, 7.2% for India, 5.6% for the Maldives, 6.5% for Nepal, 3% for Pakistan and 3.7% for Sri Lanka, the SAARC region can be a potentially large market for Japan's export and import. The diffusion index in 2019 was relatively as high as 60 for Bangladesh, 52.2 for India and 36.4 for Sri Lanka. The expansion value of the approach to future business challenges also increased to 73.2% for Bangladesh, 72.8% for India, 66.7% for Pakistan and 62.5% for Sri Lanka. Based on these indices, a Japanologist may further argue that these attracted their business industries to establish in these SAARC countries (ESCAP, 2016). As mentioned by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in 2018, the critical reasons for business expansion will be as follows: increased sales in native markets, substantial growth opportunities and increased sales attributable to export growth, strategic client partnerships, reconsideration of manufacturing and supply networks, efficiency improvements, deregulation and securing labor force. The JETRO study also indicated that business expansion would be accompanied by the proliferation of the following functions: sales function, production, logistics, R&D, administrative function in providing services and the role of regional headquarters.



**Table 6.3***Merchandise Export and Import of SAARC Countries and Japan*

| Country/Region | Merchandise imports from (% of total merchandise import) |  | Merchandise exports to (% of total merchandise export) |  |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|
|                | High-income economies                                    | Low- and middle-income economies SAARC | High-income economies                                  | Low- and middle-income economies SAARC |
| Afghanistan    | 10.8   | 17.0                                   | 12.8   | 78.8                                   |
| Bangladesh     | 35.5   | 16.4                                   | 71.5   | 2.2                                    |
| Bhutan         | 7.6  | 89.5                                   | 3.6  | 96.0                                   |
| India          | 51.3   | 0.6                                    | 63.8   | 6.9                                    |
| Maldives       | 51.7   | 20.4                                   | 36.2   | 18.7                                   |
| Nepal          | 12.8   | 65.2                                   | 29.5   | 56.1                                   |
| Pakistan       | 50.0   | 4.0                                    | 64.3   | 12.3                                   |
| Sri Lanka      | 42.4   | 24.4                                   | 72.1   | 8.9                                    |
| Japan          | 53.1   | 1.1                                    | 64.1   | 2.0                                    |
| World          | 63.1   | 2.0                                    | 68.4   | 3.3                                    |

*Source:* WDI (2019)

SAARC countries' trade with Japan is still low, with a relatively high import dependency. Their total import from Japan in 2018 was almost three times higher than the total export to Japan. The significant players in imports from Japan are India (\$11 billion), distantly followed by Pakistan (\$2.1 billion), Bangladesh (\$1.6 billion) and Sri Lanka (\$1.3 billion). The two big exporters to Japan are India (\$5.5 billion) and Bangladesh (\$1.44 billion). Considering the bilateral and multilateral relations, there is ample scope to enhance export and import between SAARC and Japan.

**Table 6.4***Trade Scenario of Japan and SAARC Countries*

| Country     | Import from Japan | Export to Japan |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Afghanistan | \$59.8 Million    | -               |
| Bangladesh  | \$1.6 Billion     | \$1.44 Billion  |
| Bhutan      | \$8.9 Million     | -               |
| India       | \$11 Billion      | \$5.5 Billion   |

|           |                |               |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|
| Maldives  | \$25 Million   | -             |
| Nepal     | \$52.5 Million | -             |
| Pakistan  | \$2.1 Billion  | \$353 Million |
| Sri Lanka | \$1.3 Billion  | \$273 Million |

*Source:* Trading Economics (2018)

Given the Japan-SAARC relations, this might have the natural traits of understanding and analyzing the above process of strengthening bilateral and multilateral ties to promote trade, investment and production. Japanese Studies, being multidisciplinary, is supposed to accelerate the transaction process between stakeholders of SAARC and Japan, manage the parties involved most appropriately and uphold the Japanese work culture and multicultural environment among SAARC countries. Japanese Studies might also contribute to adopting the Fourth Industrial Revolution in these countries by introducing technological and industrial advancements and social changes. These transformations might create a potential future trade hub in this region, which will also benefit Japan. The importance of the Indo-Pacific region will be increased to a great extent. Taking all these massive possibilities into account, Japanese Studies will help replicate and implement Japan’s experiences, prolonging the ties between SAARC countries and Japan.

#### **6.4.5 Improving Employability and Reducing Poverty**

Studying and working abroad contribute to reducing poverty, especially in developing countries like Bangladesh. Currently, 321 Japanese enterprises are operational in Bangladesh, requiring vast human resources. Employers of these companies always emphasize skilled graduates for job opportunities. Moreover, there is a considerable global demand for experts, and many firms actively recruit students with an international learning experience, especially if they are fluent in a second language. Suppose students choose to return to their homelands after graduation. In that case, they can rest assured that their time in Japan has already improved their potential to draw the attention of large companies, particularly those operating worldwide. In Japan, people who continue their studies enjoy a big job market for skilled graduates. A recent survey found that about half of the large Japanese companies wanted to employ immigrants who graduated from Japanese universities. Japanese Studies possesses an

outstanding potential to produce a workforce for national and international placement. It will bring stability and reduce poverty among graduates. This increase in employability and poverty reduction will contribute to achieving SDG-01, which refers to ending poverty by all means, SDG-02, which promotes zero hunger, and SDG-08, which promotes long-term economic growth and stable employment work for all.

#### **6.4.6 Providing Technical Training**

Japanese Studies might meet the required human capital demand of many Japanese companies. Various workshops and sessions regarding technical training and skills development must be arranged to achieve sustainable employment opportunities. By producing skilled human resources, Japanese Studies might contribute to attaining SDG-08, which refers to decent work. The educated unemployment rate will also decrease. At present, language skills and the ability to communicate fluently with clients, other necessary soft skills and hard skills, career-oriented thinking capabilities and many more traits are taught to the students of this discipline. Moreover, having a strong connection with many Japanese organizations, this discipline might provide the opportunity to work and learn closely with Japanese professionals. These opportunities will help promote SDG-04 for quality education and SDG-08 for championing decent work and economic growth.

#### **6.4.7 High Educational Standards**

Japanese Studies might contribute to the higher education sector in Bangladesh, as it covers a broad spectrum of area studies. Japanese Studies is equipped with diverse knowledge ranging from history, culture, international affairs, politics, diplomacy, Japanese language and many more. By pursuing this degree, each graduate will undoubtedly act as a 'Japanologist,' thus contributing to many fields. Moreover, due to different influencing forces, the global economic, political, social and cultural situations are constantly redefined. It brings up new study options necessary to comprehend these shifts and their repercussions. It means that universities offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees now need to focus more on language, literature, linguistics and pedagogy. In this perspective, Japanese Studies is already one step ahead of many other

subjects. At the same time, students are also provided with a solid basis for research in many areas, which will help Japanese Studies maintain global education standards. It also fulfils SDG-04 (quality education), thus contributing to higher education in Bangladesh.

#### **6.4.8 Global Opportunity for Japanese Studies Graduates**

Japanese Studies offers its students a wide range of career opportunities, including research, corporate fields, civil services such as diplomatic jobs, interpreter jobs and plenty of others. Japanese Studies provides students with a clear understanding of the Japanese language, culture and other aspects, enabling them to become specialists in Japan-related matters. The number of Japanese companies globally is numerous, which is an excellent opportunity for students in terms of employment. Japanese companies and organizations offer very decent salaries, which will be lucrative for fresh graduates. They also contribute to working overseas, letting their employees explore and enjoy their careers. Nowadays, most Japanese companies and organizations want employees with good Japanese language and cultural proficiency. The students of Japanese Studies will have a clear priority in this regard. Thus, SDG-08 will be achieved, referring to decent work opportunities for Bangladeshis.

‘Good Japanologists’ may become successful flag-bearers as academicians, researchers and practitioners in any social sciences and humanities discipline due to their in-depth multidisciplinary knowledge of Japanese Studies and a deep interest in multidimensional developmental fronts (Barkat, 2022). Theoretically speaking, there is no reason to think about the future of a Japanologist from a narrow vision. Instead, there is every reason to broaden the vision. It is equally valid that a Japanologist might assist in continuously strengthening relations between Japan and Bangladesh irrespective of their professional or occupational identity.

Considering the globalization of Japanese Studies research, which is at the core of research diversification, the field of study is expanding to attract much international attention. The globalization of Japanese Studies offers an excellent opportunity to expand the domain of the study. However, there is some concern that prominent academics can cluster in a single institution in a single country, leading to brain drain and increasing gaps

among research centers. With this end in view, Japanese Studies researches as a worldwide asset and develops cooperation networks, including the exchange of research data and international collaboration, to encourage future researchers (Ogawa, n.d.). It will also contribute to SDG-04, which promotes quality education and SDG-17, which refers to partnership for achieving sustainable goals.

### **6.5 An Incentive for Development: A Critical Perspective of SDGs in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is strategically vital as a crossroads for India and ASEAN countries. The country's economy is growing at roughly 7.2% for its strong textile and RMG exports. Having a population of more than 160 million, it possesses an ample supply of low-cost, high-quality labor. It also possesses a relatively high market potential, attracting many other countries to invest here. The number of Japanese-affiliated companies has increased from 61 in 2005 to 321 in 2021. Moreover, the 'Japan-Bangladesh Comprehensive Partnership' is a formidable step toward instituting solid bilateral relationships and cooperation in regional and international affairs. This relationship contributes significantly to solving many socio-economic problems faced by Bangladesh, reflecting the Japanese assistance in the development process of various sectors of Bangladesh (Figure 6.5).

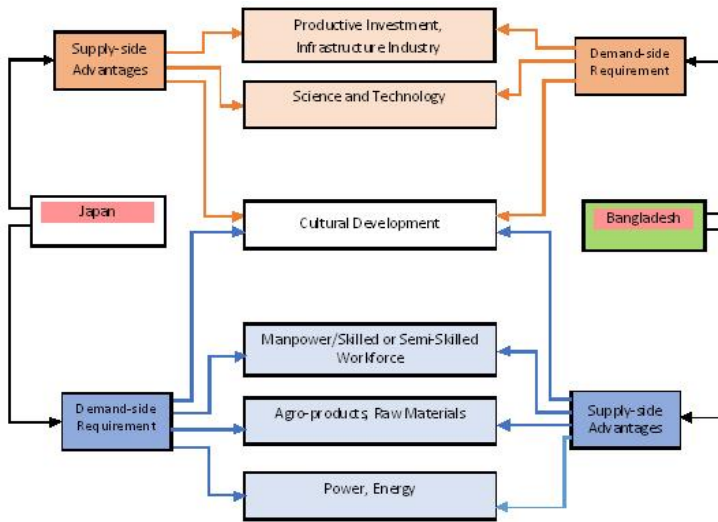
The aim of strengthening Japan-Bangladesh relations is to accelerate sustainable development. Traditionally, economists are tempted to see such development in increased GDP and high economic growth rates. A Japanologist should be able to refrain from this traditional point of view on development in the following manners:

- a) Development is not merely an economic phenomenon but a multilayered process that involves reorganizing and reorienting the whole economic and social framework through bilateral relations.
- b) Development is about enhancing human livelihoods, not just the economy.
- c) Development is the process of ensuring human independence. Independence is the primary objective of development and is also

the dominant origin of development. Development means enhancing independence, enabling individuals to believe they have enough reasons to live.

**Figure 6.5**

*Japanese Assistance in Bangladesh's Development*



*Source:* Created by the author

It is important to note that the mere understanding of demand and supply factors may not be adequate to realize the full potential of the Japan-Bangladesh relationship. Japan is experiencing a stagnant economy amidst various macroeconomic challenges, including decreasing labor force due to the negative population growth rate. On the other hand, Bangladesh possesses a vast population and a manufacturing base with ample high-quality labor at a low cost, which can be offered to Japan for more FDI. Bangladesh is trying to achieve SDGs within the targeted time frame. However, Bangladesh cannot achieve them alone, and Tokyo is always assisting Dhaka in attaining these goals. Among these goals, zero poverty, zero hunger, clean water and sanitation, and economic growth are the notable ones that Japan is constantly supporting Bangladesh to achieve. Bangladesh can emerge as a vital player in the global geopolitical arena in achieving SDGs.

## **6.6 A New Model of Bangladesh's Development Process and Challenges**

The game theory strategy determines an agent's ability to make decisions throughout challenges for development. Social science researchers have used the theory to understand rational behavior to improve bilateral relations among nations. This hypothesis bears a significant influence on a country's economic development. Using game theory in Bangladesh's growth is translated for further development (Bhuiyan, 2016). Developing an effective strategy with the supposition of partners' plans and actions is the purpose of the game theory. This theory enables the developer to predict the activities of strength and weakness. The standard form of game theory models portrays adverse interactions between development businesses, whereas the characteristic function form describes cooperative relationships between developments such as resource, integration and assimilation (Kurakova & Khomyak, 2016). Basic optimization and game theory models establish the search pathways in the domain of development, which is critical for Bangladesh. In light of the game theory concept, it can be said that Japan's help for development will not just benefit Bangladesh; it will also become an essential economic destination for Japan. Because of Japan's unstable relationship with the eastern part of Asia, the Japanese financial ties get shaky from time to time, impacting its economy gravely. With investments in Bangladesh and other parts of the South Asian region, Japan will be able to strengthen its economy and become more powerful regionally and globally.

Translating the Japanese strategy for Bangladesh might be challenging considering the socio-economic status and the government approach. Time management seems to be a big challenge for Japanese Studies students in Bangladesh. The Japanese people culturally emphasize this quality, and Bangladeshi students are still not accustomed to it. Japanese ethics and etiquette are also barriers for students due to cultural differences. Japanese customs and ethics barriers aside, students' language barrier is another major problem. Many aspiring Japanologists face difficulty mastering the Japanese language, and as a result, they don't accumulate enough knowledge about Japanese culture and society. So, the students do not connect with Japanese people appropriately because they

do not understand Japanese ethics and manners, keeping the cultural divide apparent.

Moreover, the business environment in Japan is also considerably different from that in Bangladesh, making it difficult for Bangladeshi graduates to get jobs in Japanese firms because of their language barriers. Even though a few hundred Japanese companies operate in Bangladesh and thousands in other countries, few get their desired jobs because of language and cultural barriers despite numerous job opportunities. Understanding and speaking Japanese fluently is necessary to understand Japan and become a perfect Japanologist.

In addition, Japanese Studies delineates a subtle influence of ‘Japanese hegemony’ in how students from ‘inferior’ nations to Japan, say South Asian countries, view Japan. Countries with a Japanese Studies program often face difficulties gaining a neutral mindset in their academics due to strategic relations between Japan and their respective countries, Japan’s economic power and young people’s enthusiasm for Japanese pop culture. In Bangladesh’s case, it may not be very different. Dependency on Japan’s economic and strategic support or preference for their culture can lead to difficulties conducting a neutral case study on Japan. These factors can impede scholars from optimizing the Japan-Bangladesh relationship from Bangladesh perspectives. Therefore, maintaining a balance while conducting an impartial investigation seems critical.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

Japanese Studies has shifted its focus from Japan’s uniqueness towards critical thinking about Japan. Japanese Studies employs significant time and effort to discover Japan’s unique features. Japanese traditional culture and management style are presently being explored more than ever. As a result of this approach, there has been discouraging understanding of the value of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh. Japan has a considerable influence on the development of Bangladesh because of its ever-friendly attitude and remarkable industrial strength. The growing popularity of understanding Japanese popular culture makes perfect sense in this context. The exchange of ideas and information between Japan and Bangladesh might impact the two countries’ current socio-cultural and



political relations by cementing the bilateral relationship. Japanese Studies in Bangladesh has been reinterpreted in a new light by setting it in the context of Japan's relationship with Bangladesh, with positive outcomes. As part of defining what constitutes 'Japanese Studies' in this context, Bangladesh is tempted to take the initiative and contribute. Such a unique Japanese approach may also extend Japan's continuous effort to maintain a cordial relationship with Bangladesh. Finally, materializing the development strategy of Japan might contribute to the socio-economic development and attainment of the SDGs.

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# 7 Japanese Education Policy and Practice for Sustainable Socio-economic Development: Lessons for Japanologists in Bangladesh

**Keiichi Ogawa and Kohei Uno**

**Summary:** This chapter presents current Japanese socio-economic and human resources development issues and explores the government's current education policy and best practices to promote manpower development for sustainable economic growth. Despite Japan's economic boom, it has undergone recession in recent years with many challenges such as a decline in working population numbers, poverty among single mothers, single elderly households and GDP growth stagnation. Japan has failed to keep up with world markets that have shifted from a financial and manufacturing-driven economy to a market dominated by IT-based industries. For sustainability in a predicted new era, 'Society 5.0, with new technology and innovation, Japan has implemented education policies from early childhood to higher education levels. This chapter thus analyses the government's current education policy and practices to encourage human capital development for sustainable economic growth. It also outlines the lessons Bangladesh can learn from Japan to improve its society and education system and signifies the role of Bangladeshi Japanologists in this regard.

## 7.1 Introduction

Historically, Japan has benefited from its investment in human resources development which significantly contributed to the socio-economic growth of the country. However, Japanese economy has remained almost stagnant in the past thirty years. It faces socio-economic issues, including low productivity, increased social inequality, an aging population, low level of innovation and development.

The government has implemented multiple socio-economic and education policies to address these issues and promote sustainable economic

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advancement through monetary easing, fiscal stimulus, structural reforms, free early childhood education and senior secondary education. Japan has recently implemented "Society 5.0" which was proposed in the 5th Science and Technology Basic Plan to achieve a high degree of convergence between cyberspace (virtual space) and physical space (real space) by accumulating all kinds of information from sensors in physical space. Artificial intelligence (AI) analyzes big data and feeds it back to human societies in various forms. Society 5.0 aims to balance economic advancement with the resolution of social issues by incorporating new technologies, including robotics, AI and big data, into all industries and social activities. In addition to delving on the current socio-economic and personnel perspectives, this paper examines the Japanese government's current education policy and practices to support human resources development for sustainable economic growth. Furthermore, it discusses how these developments in Japanese education policies can be helpful for Bangladeshi Japanologists for the enhancement of the South Asian nation.

## **7.2 Current Socio-economic Issues in Japan**

### **7.2.1 Current Social Issues**

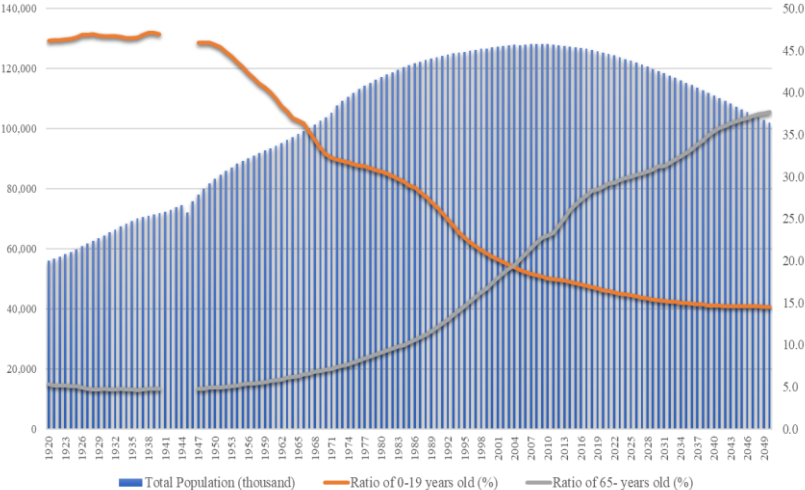
Some of Japan's current significant social issues are a declining working population, a low birth rate and an increasingly aging population. Nowadays, Japanese society is called a super-aging society. Today, Japan has a population of 126 million, the third-largest among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries after the United States with over 330 million and Mexico with 129 million. The Japanese population is much larger than Germany with 83 million, France with 67 million and the United Kingdom with 67 million. However, 20% of the population are older than 65 years in 2022, and it is estimated to increase to more than 35% by 2049 (Figure 7.1).

On the other hand, the population between 0 and 19 years old is projected to decrease by 15% by 2049, which used to be more than 35% when Japan boasted rapid economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, looking at the employment situation of women and the elderly, it can be seen that they have difficulty finding work despite a high level of

enthusiasm to work. In order to arrest this decline in the working population, it is essential to create a working environment where people who want to work can choose various ways of working that match their lifestyles and fully demonstrate their abilities.

**Figure 7.1**

*Population Ratio of Age 0-19 and 65*



Source: Created by the authors based on the Statistics Bureau of Japan (2015) Note: Data for 2016-2050 is predicted

A significant reason for the decline in the working population is the low fertility rate and the decline of a younger demographic in Japan. According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW, 2019), the total fertility rate was 1.34 percent in 2021, which declined for the fifth year. The number of births in 2020 was 840,000, the least number in Japanese history. One of the reasons behind this low fertility rate in Japan is the poor parenting environment. According to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (NIPSSR, 2015), women are not interested in having a child because they are concerned about the financial burden for education, their work and career interference, and lack of support from their husbands. Besides, after having their first child, around half of the women retired from their jobs (NIPSSR, 2015). Poor parenting

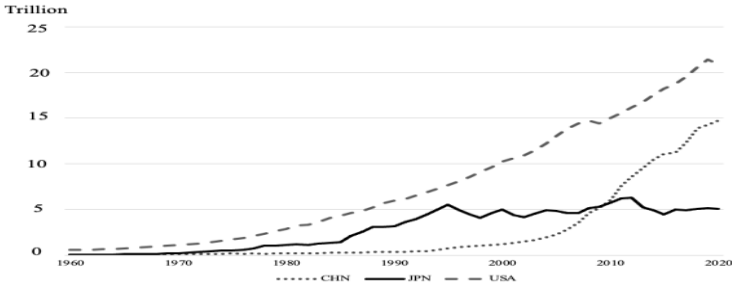
and lack of support for mothers and household maintenance in Japan can also be seen leading to a low fertility rate.

Another social issue is the single-mother households and single-elderly households. According to the MHLW, Japan's relative poverty rate, the number of households whose income falls below half of the median income, has been rising since the mid-1980s and remained unchanged at 16% in the 2010s. Another issue is an increase in single-parent households with high poverty rates, especially single-mother households. More than 50% of single-mother households and 30% of single-elderly households are under the relative poverty line. It is much higher than in two-parent households (6%).

### 7.3 Current Economic Issues

Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) shows that the economy has not grown for more than 20 years (Figure 7.2), with rounds of decline and stagnation since its peak in 1997 (Cabinet Office, 2019). In 1997, Japan's GDP per capita was the fourth-highest among OECD countries and almost twice as high as the OECD average. In 2019, however, Japan was ranked 19th out of 37 countries and was below the OECD average (OECD, 2019). In addition to an increase in the elderly population, the main reason for the weak growth in labor productivity is the slow response to digitalization (Tomiyaama et al., 2021).

**Figure 7.2**  
*GDP of Japan, China and United States (Currency: US Dollar)*



Source: Created by the authors based on World Bank Data (2021)

As of 1989, Japanese companies dominated the top five market capitalization rankings, followed by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT). Thirty-two Japanese companies can be seen among the top 50 companies in 1989 (Table 7.1). Among them, 17 companies are financial institutions. This is the symbol of Japan's prosperity during the economic bubble era. In contrast, the top spots were occupied mainly by information technology (IT) companies, including GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) in the U.S. and Chinese IT companies in 2019. Only one Japanese company, Toyota, is ranked among the top 50. This change indicates that the world market has shifted from a financial and manufacturing-driven economy to a market dominated by IT-based industries.

Another social issue is a lack of balance between government revenue and expenditure. The Japanese government has a staggering amount of national bonds, and it reached 256% of GDP in 2020. It is the highest ratio compared to other developed countries, including the U.S. (127%), the U.K. (103%) and Germany (69%). Japanese tax income has remained static, but expenditure for social welfare has increased three times over the last 20 years. On the other hand, government spending on education and public services has remained the same. Although the Japanese government has gradually implemented an increment of consumption tax, it would be difficult for Japan to achieve sustainable socio-economic development if national bonds keep increasing.

**Table 7.1**

*Top 50 Market Capitalization Rankings in 1989 and 2019*

| 1990 |                 | 2020      |    | 1990    |           | 2020 |  |
|------|-----------------|-----------|----|---------|-----------|------|--|
| 1    | NTT             | Apple     | 26 | NISSAN  | AT&T      |      |  |
| 2    | Industrial Bank | Microsoft | 27 | MHI     | Chevrolet |      |  |
| 3    | Sumitomo Bank   | Amazon    | 28 | Du Pont | PING AN   |      |  |



|    |                          |                    |    |                            |               |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------|----|----------------------------|---------------|
| 4  | Fuji Bank                | Alphabet           | 29 | G.M.                       | Home Depot    |
| 5  | Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank     | Royal Dutch Shell  | 30 | Mitsubishi Trust Bank      | CCB           |
| 6  | IBM                      | Berkshire Hathaway | 31 | B.T.                       | Roche Holding |
| 7  | Mitsubishi Bank          | Alibaba            | 32 | BellSouth                  | UNH           |
| 8  | Exxon                    | Tencent            | 33 | B.P.                       | Pfizer        |
| 9  | TEPCO                    | Facebook           | 34 | Ford Motor                 | Wells Fargo   |
| 10 | Royal Dutch Shell        | J.P. Morgan        | 35 | Amoco                      | Boeing        |
| 11 | Toyota                   | Johnson & Johnson  | 36 | Tokyo Bank                 | Coca-Cola     |
| 12 | G.E.                     | Exxon Mobil        | 37 | CEP                        | Union Pacific |
| 13 | Sanwa Bank               | ICBC               | 38 | Sumitomo Trust Bank        | China Mobile  |
| 14 | Nomura Securities        | Walmart            | 39 | Coca-Cola                  | ABC           |
| 15 | Shin Nihon Seiyaku       | Nestle             | 40 | Walmart                    | Merck         |
| 16 | AT&T                     | Bank of America    | 41 | Mitsubishi Estate          | Comcast       |
| 17 | Hitachi Inspire the Next | Visa               | 42 | Kawasaki Steel Corporation | Oracle        |
| 18 | Panasonic                | P&G                | 43 | Mobil                      | Toyota        |

|    |               |               |    |                  |                              |
|----|---------------|---------------|----|------------------|------------------------------|
| 19 | Philip Morris | intel         | 44 | Tokyo Gas        | PepsiCo                      |
| 20 | TOSHIBA       | Cisco Systems | 45 | TMNFI            | LVMH Moët Hennessy           |
| 21 | KEPCO         | Master Card   | 46 | NHK              | Anheuser-Busch Cooney's      |
| 22 | LTCB          | Verizon       | 47 | ALCO             | HSBC Holdings                |
| 23 | Tokai Bank    | Walt Disney   | 48 | NEC              | Novartis International       |
| 24 | Mitsui Bank   | Samsung       | 49 | Daiwa Securities | Formentor Economico Mexicano |
| 25 | Merck         | TSMC          | 50 | Asahi Shoji      | Netflix                      |

Source: Yahoo Finance (2018)

## 7.4 Issues of Human Resources Development and Low Productivity

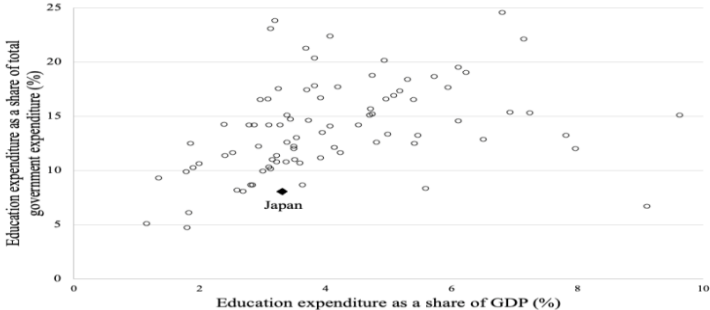
### 7.4.1 Education Expenditure

Human resources development is essential for economic growth, poverty alleviation and particularly for sustainable socio-economic development. As an international standard, the Education 2030 Framework called on countries to spend at least 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 15% of total public spending on education (Figure 7.3). According to a Global Education Monitoring Report (Global Education Monitoring Report Team,

2021), Japan did not meet both indicators, with only 3.3% of GDP and 8% of total public spending on education. Both indicators are less than the OECD average (Schleicher, 2018). We understand that the Japanese government should allocate more public financial resources to the education sector to develop human resources.

**Figure 7.3**

*Public Education Expenditure as Share of (i) Total Public Expenditure and (ii) GDP, 2019*



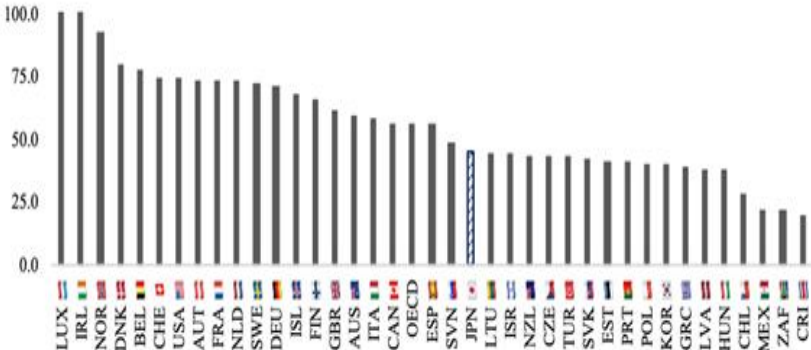
Source: Created by the authors based on UNESCO UIS Data (2019)

**7.4.2 Importance of Innovation and Slow Response**

According to Schwab (2016), the world is currently standing on the brink of a technological revolution called the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’ (4IR) that will fundamentally alter how people live. The 4IR is the outcome of the previous three similar revolutions and their core technological innovations. The First Industrial Revolution focused on the mechanization of factories using water and steam engines since the end of the 18th century; the Second Industrial Revolution was about mass production using electricity in the early 20th century, and the Third Industrial Revolution centered around further automation using electronic and information technology in the early 1970s. There are two specific characteristics of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Firstly, the Internet of things (IoT) and big data have rapidly expanded our lives. Information, including operating factory machinery, traffic, weather and personal health, is converted into data. The second characteristic is the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) because a computer cannot learn and make

certain decisions without a human giving it all the commands to analyze data in advance (Raihan, 2014). In addition, AI and conventional robot technology are becoming capable of doing more complex tasks, and the development of 3D printers makes it possible to manufacture complex workpieces in a smaller space (Cabinet Office, 2016). In such a social transition to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, innovation and increasing productivity are essential to achieve economic growth (Nguyen et al., 2020; Nagaoka, 2011). Increasing productivity uses a certain amount of resources to improve economic value. In order to do it, it is necessary to solve problems through developing and using new technologies and innovation. In terms of productivity, Japan, however, ranks 21st for labor productivity among 38 OECD countries (Figure 7.4).

**Figure 7.4**  
*Labor Productivity, 2018 (GDP Per Hour Worked, Total Economy, US\$, Current Prices, and Current PPPs)*



Source: Created by the authors based on OECD (2019)

**7.4.3 Lack of Human Resources with ICT**

Japan delayed its response to ICT adaptation from human resources and the ICT ecosystem. Japanese companies are less likely to introduce ICT systems compared to other countries. According to a Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (MIC) survey, the percentage of the respondents who introduced an ICT system was 70%. In contrast, over 30% of Japanese companies lack the human resources to introduce an ICT

system (MIC, 2018). Remarkably, the adaptation rate of European companies is over 90%. Compared to that, the adaption rate is 10% to 25% lower in Japanese companies. It should be a pivotal factor in raising the adaptation rate of ICT in Japan to the same level as that in the West. Regarding ICT adaptation, many Western companies cited security concerns. This survey reflects how Japanese companies are delaying ICT adaptation. Therefore, the lack of human resources for ICT is currently a burning issue for them (Chesbrough, 2003).

In a 2018 program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, Japanese students had the shortest time to use digital devices in classes among OECD countries. The percentage responding negatively about their use of ICT was over 80%, the highest among OECD countries. On the other hand, the amount of time spent on the internet outside of school was higher than the OECD average. The students who spent on the internet outside of school over four hours showed lower than the average score in all three subjects (Japanese, science and mathematics) in the OECD average. In other words, it is noted that ICT utilization will become more critical for students to develop in the future (Khan et al., 2012).

## **7.5 Government Policy and Practice for Human Development**

The previous sections underline several socio-economic issues Japan is facing presently. The following section focuses on education policy to address current socio-economic issues and how each educational sub-sector operates to address these issues. It pays attention to what education can do to develop a predicted new era, "Society 5.0", with new technology and innovation. Overall, the Japanese government policy for human development has mainly followed four pillars: 1) financial support for children from low-income families, 2) ICT utilization in education, 3) English education/internationalization and 4) open innovation. The following paragraph demonstrates the execution of the government education policy by sub-sector from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), primary and junior secondary education, upper secondary education and higher education (Bhatta et al., 2020).

## **7.6 Government Education Policy**

### **7.6.1 Early Childhood Care and Education**

In Japan, the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) system was established in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and MHLW in 2006 to respond to the issue of the lack of ECCE institutions. The number of private day nurseries and ECCE centers has increased in the last decade from 22,209 in 2008 to 27,961 in 2018. The OECD (2019) shows the enrollment rate of ECCE in OECD countries, where Japan has an approximately 90% enrollment rate for children aged three to five. However, for children under three, the rate is 30%, below the OECD average (36%). Many children are on the waiting list for a day nursery, especially the under-three kids, for lack of facilities and caregivers. Those issues are related to work-life balance, especially for women, and a decline in the fertility rate. The lack of ECCE institutions causes difficulty for mothers to work. In order to address the issues, the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child Care (CSSCC) was launched by Cabinet Office in 2015. The funds are resourced from an increment of consumption tax in 2014 from 5% to 8%. Based on this policy, the government partially compensates for the households' burden for public and private ECCE depending on their income. Followed by CSSCC in 2015, the free ECCE Policy was implemented in October 2019. This policy removed income conditionality for children (aged 3-5) and infants (0-2 years old) living on welfare. The funding source is from the increment of consumption tax in 2019 from 8% to 10% (World Economic Forum, 2021).

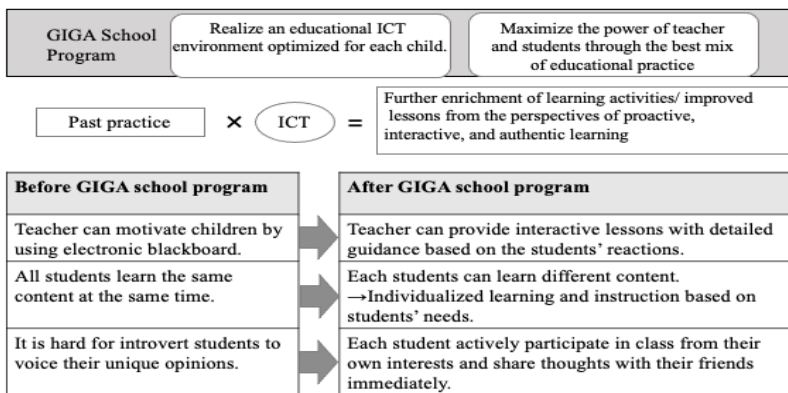
The free ECCE Policy could address financial issues for all 3-5-year-old children. However, there remain supply-side issues, with many children on the waiting list, over 16,000 in 2019 (MHLW, 2019), due to shortages of ECCE facilities and teachers. Therefore, the concern is that a decline in ECCE quality will affect children's healthy development. It is crucial to formulate a policy for the enhancement of supply-side factors to maintain the 'quality' and increase the 'quantity' of ECCE in Japan (Tabata, 2019).

## 7.6.2 Primary and Junior Secondary Education

In primary and junior secondary education, the government of Japan has launched the Global and Innovation Gateway for All (GIGA), a school program to provide learning experiences that the era of "Society 5.0" demands. Japan truly aspires to become the future-ready Society 5.0 as enshrined in the 5th Science and Technology Basic Plan. One definition of Society 5.0 is ‘a human-centered society that balances economic advancement with the resolution of social problems by a system that integrates cyberspace and physical space’ (Cabinet Office, 2020, p. 1). The GIGA school program promises one device per student with high-speed networks in schools. In order to operate this program from April 2021, school ICT ecosystem has been improved all over Japan, and the utilization of ICT in education has been promoted (MEXT, 2021a). The GIGA program is capable of monitoring the following three things so that 1) teachers can provide interactive lessons with detailed guidance based on students' reactions, 2) each student can learn different contents and have instruction based on their needs, and 3) each student actively participates in class from their interests and share thoughts with their friends immediately (Figure 7.5).

**Figure 7.5**

*Concept of the GIGA School Program*



Source: Created by the authors based on MEXT (2021)

One of the challenges of the GIGA school program is making the teachers and parents ready for ICT utilization in education. Previous research shows that the teachers who are aware of their weakness in ICT are significantly less enthusiastic about acknowledging and utilizing ICT (Sakurai et al., 2011). Teachers are not used to teaching subjects with the help of ICT. Moreover, many are not used to using ICT itself. Therefore, only 42% of municipalities have completed the placement of ICT supporters in schools.

On the other hand, the establishment of ICT was completed 98% by the end of 2021 (MEXT, 2021). Thus, providing ICT training for teachers and parents is essential to improving their ICT skills (Noborimoto & Takahashi, 2022). Also, they revealed that mental and physical health problems were no small matter for students. Consequently, the government needs a further understanding of balancing ICT utilization and students' health and making a safe learning environment without students getting involved with online troubles.

Along with the GIGA school program, the Japanese government also introduced programming education in primary schools to foster human resources with ICT. Japan had been a technology-developed country until now. As a result of technology transmission to Korea and China, Japanese companies faced a decline in computer market share due to cost competition. Thus, as a developed country, programming education was reconsidered and added to accompany the modifications of the core curriculum (Tasuta, 2017).

As for programming education in primary schools, the curriculum indicates that learning activities are to be implemented systematically to acquire the logical thinking skills necessary to command computers, through programming experiences. The purpose of programming education in elementary school is to nurture computational thinking and develop problem-solving skills by learning computers and other information technology (MEXT, 2020c).

The general requirements for the courses of study for junior secondary education curricula are organized from cross-curricular perspectives,



taking advantage of the unique characteristics of each subject so that students can develop the ability to use information, including programming-oriented thinking (MEXT, 2020c). Through programming education, students are expected to foster problem-solving skills and practical attitudes to adapt to information society appropriately and sincerely to build a better life and a sustainable society (Itoyama, 2017).

However, many teachers are bemused about how to teach programming. Firstly, programming education is not conducted through a year or other subjects, and it is unclear how much students need to learn in a year. Secondly, research revealed that more than half of the teachers lack understanding and knowledge (Kuroda & Moriyama, 2018). Tarumi et al. (2020) demonstrated that teachers' confidence in ICT is significantly associated with high expectations for programming education. Therefore, there is an urgent need to introduce how to teach programming to potential teachers in universities' training courses (Tatsuta, 2017) or/and to develop educational materials that teachers can deliver in classes without specific programming skills (Tarumi et al., 2020).

With the rapid march of globalization, the ability to communicate in foreign languages is expected to be required not only in some industries and occupations, as it has been in the past, but also in various situations throughout one's life, and improving this ability has become an essential issue (MEXT, 2014). English education used to start in the fifth grade at the primary education level, but since 2020, it starts in the third grade. Third and fourth-grade students have 35 "foreign language activities" sessions per year to learn English. The objective of English education is that students become familiar with English sounds through songs, rhythms and quizzes in the class. The lessons focus on learning greetings, gratitude and simple questions about daily life (MEXT, 2017a). English education also starts as a "subject" in the fifth grade of the primary school in 2020. Seventy classes per year are set and graded. The goal is to listen to information about dates, times and daily life. Moreover, to answer questions more practically in fifth and sixth grades, they use what they have become familiar with throughout primary school (MEXT, 2017a).

English classes in junior secondary schools are being conducted in

English since 2021. More emphasis is placed on interactive communication in junior high school than in primary school. Students will learn to comprehensively achieve four English skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in a junior high school. The number of words has dramatically increased from 1,300 to 1600~1800 words (MEXT, 2017b).

Many primary schoolteachers are anxious about the early introduction of English education and treat it as one of the subjects. Teachers' English ability has been pointed out as an issue since the introduction of English in primary schools 20 years ago, but this issue remains unresolved (Yonezaki et al., 2016). Regarding this elementary English, many teachers do not understand why it is necessary to learn English so early, say in third grade in primary schools (Yonezaki et al., 2016). In the neighboring countries like China and South Korea, English education starts in third grade, and also in Europe, the lessons start earlier; for example, in first grade in France and ECCE in Spain (Uematsu, 2019). Compared to other countries, the Japanese policy of introducing English in third grade is not exceptional but closer to international standards. But Uematsu (2019) pointed out that teachers who are fluent in English tend to quit teaching if they find other jobs with better conditions. Therefore, it is crucial to secure teachers with high English skills and qualifications in Japan through attractive treatments and conditions for highly qualified teachers.

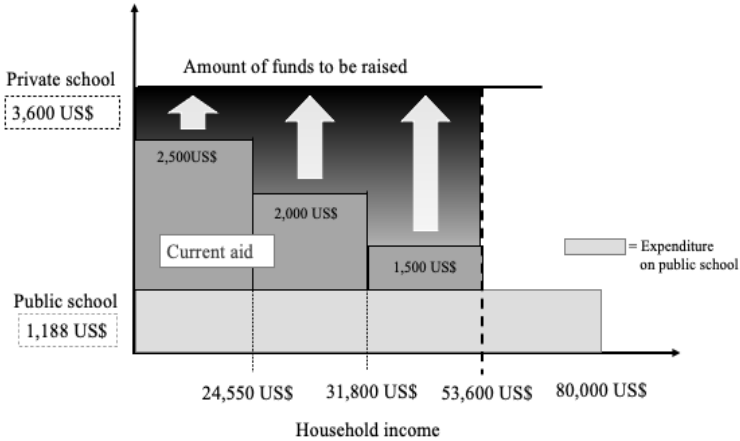
### **7.6.3 Upper Secondary Education**

The new high school enrollment subsidy system aims to reduce households' economic burden of education by providing subsidies to cover tuition fees, thereby contributing to substantially equal educational opportunities. The government provides schooling subsidies to students from households meeting the income requirements who attend public and private schools to cover tuition fees (Figure 7.6). Before implementing the free fee high school system, governmental support was added for attending a private school on three levels depending on the income. However, the additional support could not cover the full tuition of private school fees, which are more expensive than public schools. Since April 2020, the system had to undergo a significant change, and households with an annual income of less than US\$53,600 will be able to receive the

maximum amount of aid for high school, which is equivalent to the tuition of a private high school (MEXT, 2020b).

**Figure 7.6**

*Financial Support for Upper Secondary Education Tuition Fees*



Source: Created by the authors based on MEXT (2020)

Nearly 100 percent of junior secondary school graduates attend senior high schools in Japan. It indicates that equal opportunity in education has been achieved to some extent and this ratio is very high internationally, except in South Korea. Around 70% of students go to public schools. Thus, rather than promoting students' enrollment in senior high schools, we need to focus on improving the quality of education and preventing students from dropping out of schools through lifestyle and career guidance (Iida, 2020). Iida (2020) also found that the effect of free high school policy on college enrollment and dropout rates was limited. According to Tanaka (2018), as long as it is necessary to invest a substantial amount of money, it is critical to set specific targets, evaluate the effects, and make policies that benefit more students and households with proprieties.

The MEXT funded the Super Global High (SGH) School Program started in 2014, and it aims to nurture global leaders who can play an active part

at international level and who require high communication ability, problem-solving skills and deep understanding of social issues through education to foster global leaders. SGH sets ideal global characteristics, collaborates with universities, companies and industries, and integrates cross-sectional themes related to global social and market issues (MEXT, 2018).

An integrated reform of university entrance examinations was scheduled for 2020. The reforms include abolishing the National Test for University Admissions and introducing the International English Examination. However, regarding equality, the introduction of the examination was deferred to 2024. It was planned to introduce explanatory questions, but 5,000,000 people take the test every year, and there were problems with scoring criteria, so the plan was dropped. This new university entrance examination expects students to analyze and solve the current situation. Therefore, it is necessary to acquire the ability to think and create solutions to problems, the ability to make judgments about policies and the future, and the ability to express one's opinions.

#### **7.6.4 Higher Education**

Students' aid program for higher education supports undergraduate/graduate students who suffer financial issues. Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO), the independent administrative institution, offers scholarship loan programs. However, students have to reimburse the loans after graduation. Although the overall budget of those financial programs has gradually increased since 2009, the reimbursement of that loan has become a burden for some graduates over decades. Therefore, the government established the new student aid program in 2020 through the JASSO scholarship. Under this program, students do not have to repay after graduation. This new scholarship is expected to guarantee the opportunity to study at university for outstanding students who have difficulty attending school for financial reasons.

Since 2014, the MEXT has been carrying out the Super Global University (SGU) Project to support universities that pursue internationalization, reform the personal and education systems, and promote interactions and partnerships with the world's top universities. Under the Top Global

University Project, 13 universities were selected as Type A, which are categorized into Top Type universities with the potential to rank in the world's 100 top universities. Twenty-four universities were selected as Type B, which are categorized into Global Traction Type (GTT) universities that lead the globalization of Japanese society (MEXT, 2021). GTT universities are expected to lead universities to the internationalization of Japanese society through innovative programs based on their records. Its initiatives are to foster educational partnerships with foreign universities to build a model for the globalization of university education and provide a world-class education.

There are several outcomes of super global universities. For example, participating universities increase the number of foreign teachers and teaching staff with degrees from a foreign university, increase the number of joint research with foreign universities and improve universities' ranking scores related to internationalization (Super Global High School, 2018). For instance, Kyoto University opened Joint Degree Program in Transcultural Studies with Heidelberg University in Germany and Kyoto-McGill International Collaborative School of Genomic Medicine. Kyoto University, Tsukuba University, Kyusyu University and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University started building relationships with top universities worldwide. The SGU project promotes the international competitiveness of Japanese higher education and provides a world-class education.

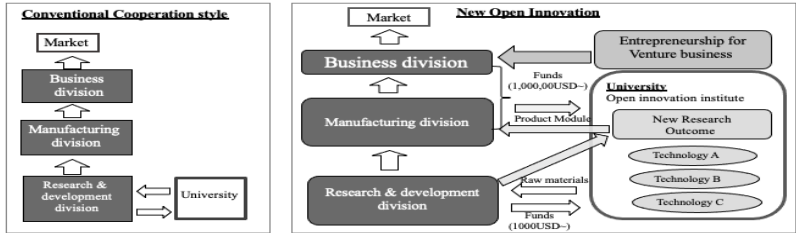
Moreover, major institutional reform—university-industry collaboration—was undertaken in Japan from the 1990s to the 2000s. The term university-industry collaboration was frequently used in the media and became a trend. This collaboration in Japan has conventionally taken the form of "small-scale, short-term, individual" contracts. However, this did not last long, and it shifted to a new type of collaboration called 'open innovation'.

This new type of collaboration features "large-scale, long-term, comprehensive" contracts." (Kuwashima, 2018). In the conventional cooperation, the link between university and company was only part of fundamental research. A new type of university-industry collaboration is more interactive, from doing fundamental research to developing product modules. Adding to engagement with fundamental research, a company

shares new knowledge and modules with a particular university, while the latter can also develop new product modules and share them with the former (Figure 7). Responding to changes in industrial structure, technological development and global economy, open innovation is expected to lead Japan's research by enabling joint research among institutions and effectively utilizing a university's superior knowledge, technology and human resources.

Comparing open innovation between Japanese and Western companies, according to Yoneyama et al. (2017), Western companies have increased their financial resources, while only one-third of Japanese companies have increased investment. A large part of Western companies collaborates with entrepreneurs and start-up companies in both problem-solving and problem-setting stages, while the percentage of Japanese companies is significantly lower. As an example of open innovation, The University of Tokyo, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and SONY announced the development of a satellite equipped with SONY's camera kit. The project, named "STAR SPHERE", is a joint creation of three organizations—the University of Tokyo, which has adequate experience in developing nano-satellite systems; JAXA, which has satellite operation technology and space business expertise and knowledge; and SONY, which has strengths in imaging and sensing technology (Super Global High School, 2018). Cooperation among institutions enables each institution to utilize its strengths, cover weaknesses and achieve innovative development.

**Figure 7.7**  
*Open Innovation*



Source: Created by the authors based on MEXT (2020)

## **7.7 Lessons for Japanologists in Bangladesh**

To tackle current Japanese socio-economic issues, including a decline in the working population, long-term economic stagnation due to low productivity and lack of human resources with ICT, the Japanese government has implemented several education policies from early childhood education level to higher education level: 1) financial support for poor households to achieve equal opportunity in education; 2) acceleration of high-quality ICT education to nurture human resources with high ICT skills; 3) internationalization, and 4) open innovation.

The Japanese government has implemented a free ECCE policy and free upper secondary education by providing financial support depending on family income and systematically achieving equal access to education. In particular, financial support for the ECCE is a vital policy response to social issues such as low birth rate and a declining working population. Nevertheless, the declining rate of population in Japan is relatively high. Japan has thereby invested in many South Asian countries for the working population. It is helping Bangladesh by providing official development assistance (ODA) for the development of the country and its human resources. Therefore, Bangladesh should take inspiration from Japan for several policy reforms in different sectors, and education is one of them. So, the ECCE can be a lesson for Bangladesh as it will help the country decrease its illiteracy rate and pave the way for development more efficiently. An increase in consumption tax in Japan to secure the government budget for the ECCE can also be a lesson for Bangladesh in implementing a new education policy. However, Japanologists of Bangladesh particularly the faculty members of the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka can play a critical role in this regard by researching ECCE implementation process as well as tax increase strategy of Japan and help Bangladesh replicate Japanese strategies efficiently.

Japan has accelerated ICT utilization through a primary and junior secondary education policy called the “GIGA” school program. This is a dynamic strategy to address its socio-economic issues such as inadequate response to digitalization at companies, low productivity and lack of resources with high ICT skills. From this standpoint, Bangladesh can also

craft such a strategy to provide an enabling learning environment for students to develop their ICT skills in schools and foster human resources with ICT skills with an aim to achieve sustainable economic development and the Japanologists of Bangladesh help the government in applying Japanese policies.

The Japanese government has emphasized English education and internationalization. In the new curriculum, students will start to learn English in primary grades and focus more on communication. Moreover, Japan has introduced super global high school (SGH) in upper secondary education and super global university (SGU) in higher education. While ensuring equal opportunity for all, Japan provides unique opportunities for highly motivated and outstanding students and educational institutions. These programs contribute to fostering international human resources and supporting internationally top-ranking universities. Japan is committed to fostering students and ensuring a high-quality higher education necessary to survive the global market and achieve sustainable economic development. Like its long-time friend Japan, Bangladesh can also implement these programs for its students to gain more international exposure and ensure quality education. The Department of Japanese Studies can play a pivotal role in interpreting Japanese context for the government of Bangladesh.

In sum, the Japanese government promotes “Open Innovation,” a joint research initiative between universities and the private sector. To use limited resources efficiently, collaborative research that leverages each other’s strengths will be the driving force behind innovation. In the case of Bangladesh, it would be valuable for higher educational institutions to work closely with the private sector and manufacture innovative products for sustainable socio-economic development.

## **7.8 Conclusion**

The pace of variation in knowledge, information and technology has accelerated, and social changes such as automation and globalization have progressed beyond human prediction. In particular, rapid development of AI, big data, IoT and robotics, also known as Fourth Industrial Revolution, is taking place. These advanced technologies are becoming more



sophisticated and incorporated into all industries and social life. The arrival of the "Society 5.0" era is anticipated (MEXT, 2020a). Currently, Japan has several socio-economic issues such as the aging population, the declining working population and stagnation of GDP growth due to low productivity caused by slow growth of ICT. In response to the current socio-economic issues, education policies have tackled them through four pillars: 1) financial support, 2) use of ICT in education, 3) internationalization, and 4) open innovation. The educational policy in ECCE emphasized financial support for poor households. Single-mother households are more likely to be under the poverty line. These policies can support the healthy development of children and mothers working in companies in the daytime. A gradually increased consumption tax is used to address the lack of ECCE institutions and provide free ECCE. Government expenditure has shifted from older people to all generations to achieve sustainable socio-economic development in Japan. As for primary and junior secondary education, mainly three education policies have been implemented:

1. The GIGA school program aims to provide one student with one computer;
2. Learning English in earlier grades; and
3. Introducing programming education at primary and junior secondary education level.

These approaches will help build the fundamental ability to use ICT in the future and familiarize children with the new era. As for upper secondary education and higher education, the government ensures that all students learn despite financial barriers through supplying monetary support. Japan provides a unique opportunity to support highly motivated and outstanding students through SGH and Top Global University projects. These opportunities are helpful for students to open their eyes to the world. At the last stage of the educational institution, the university leads innovation and cooperates with the company. Through these current education policies, Japan is tackling socio-economic issues and trying to achieve economic growth with innovation in harness with rich human resources with ICT. Bangladesh can consider these policy measures and integrate the ideas to improve its education system and development.

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# 8 Japanese Studies towards Excellence

**Abdullah-Al-Mamun**

**Summary:** Japanese Studies has a glorious past and arguably a satisfactory present. But it needs updated and effective curriculum to align with constant changes in Japanese society, culture, economy and politics. This chapter examines the evolution of Japanese Studies in different regions over time, discusses current debate and issues that influence the future direction of this discipline. An extensive review of literature and documents shows hundreds of universities offering degrees in Japanese Studies. Some focus on language and culture while others take a multidisciplinary approach focusing on society, economy, business, politics, demography and international relations. Japanologists still harbor orthodox thoughts of ‘Japan Making’, ‘Miraculous Japan’ or ‘Cool Japan’ discounting development models and cultures like China or Korea. This chapter touches on key issues, including Covid-19, rise of China, tension in the Indo-Pacific and QUAD, Russia-Ukraine war and aging problem. To reach the optimum level of excellence, Japanese Studies as a discipline needs research to reinvigorate its curriculum to meet the needs of students and interest groups. Finally, this chapter outlines an action plan for materializing the vision.

## 8.1 Introduction

Japanese Studies as a discipline is over 150 years old but it has experienced a breakneck pace after the miraculous economic success of Japan in the post-World War II era. Eventually, Japanese Studies has been taught as a distinctive academic discipline in many universities around the world. The notable universities are Harvard University, University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, University of London, Ohio State University, University of California, University of Hawaii, University of Michigan, University of Manchester and University of Birmingham, University of Sheffield, Monash University and University of Sydney. Likewise, a number of Asian universities introduced undergraduate and post-graduate degrees in Japanese Studies. The universities include

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National University of Singapore, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, AUT University, Visva-Bharati University, Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University. Understanding the importance of the subject, University of Dhaka established the Department of Japanese Studies in the year 2017 after 12 years of successful offering of the Masters in Japanese Studies program under the Japan Study Centre. The scope for Japanese Studies has streamlined from art, language, literature, history, religion and culture to multidisciplinary area studies over the years. Area studies fundamentally aims at knowing, analyzing and interpreting a particular nation, country or region through a multidisciplinary approach. The current multidisciplinary outlook of Japanese Studies across the world includes courses such as sociology, economy, business, politics, history, philosophy, international relations, science and technology, art and culture, language, linguistics and literature of Japan. Nonetheless, proclivity of replication of Japan's economic development doctrine by both developed and developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s triggered prevalent and deeper investigation of Japan by the academia. That zeal subsequently unfolded the micro scope of Japanese Studies, for instance economic reform, development policy formulation and implementation, business management, human resources development, business communication, corporate culture, financial management and banking. Furthermore, the scope for Japanese Studies has encompassed academic areas such as public policy, political thoughts, philosophical thoughts, intellectual history, archeology, law, gender, human rights, demography, education, environment, tourism, migration, food and cuisine, film, animation and performing arts.

However, continued support and patronage of the government of Japan to promote Japanese Studies through the Japan Foundation as part of its soft power strategy has played the role of a catalyst in expanding Japanese Studies in Bangladesh and the world over. Japan Foundation's programs, particularly language, art and culture, cultural exchange and Japanese Studies, have significantly contributed to the growth of this discipline. This growth was not limited to research, publication and scholarship only, it was also networking of the academics in the form of visits, seminars

and conferences. Nonetheless, an agonizing feeling has coalesced in Japanologists in recent years that despite a myriad of findings from a series of studies and research in the area of Japanese Studies for decades, progress has still remained relatively stagnant. Apart from the onslaught of Covid-19, rapid changes in Japanese society and culture, gradual openness and tolerance to other languages and culture, changes in very rigid ‘Japanese Mind’, economy and economic policy, organizational management, policy towards ODA distribution and FDI, and changes in bilateral and multilateral relations because of a shift of the center of gravity of world politics, new regionalism, emerging Chinese influence, U.S.-China trade war and the outbreak of Russia-Ukraine war, there is growing awareness among Japanologists to look at Japan differently as the old definitions of Japan and its features available in the lexicon of Japanese Studies cannot be fully accepted. Therefore, the need to explore new definitions has been felt to be explored and included in the lexicon of Japanese Studies.

This chapter, therefore, primarily but briefly examines the evolution of Japanese Studies in different regions of the world, discusses the factors that will influence the future direction of the discipline, argues a recent debate in the area and finally outlines an action plan of the Department of Japanese Studies to become a center of excellence. It is worthwhile to mention that this action plan has been approved by the academic committee of the department in a meeting on 29 September 2022 at the latest.

## **8.2 Evolution of Japanese Studies in Different Regions**

Before discussing the factors that may influence the future direction of Japanese Studies and a recent debate on the need for the discipline, a brief overview on the evaluation of Japanese Studies in different regions of the world is required to provide a context to the readers and basis to outline the future action plan for the Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Dhaka.

Dating centuries back, visits of the western Jesuits, academics, researchers and inquisitors to Japan underwent before the seclusion of the Tokugawa period and it continued afterwards. The first-ever Jesuit Mission, led by

Spanish citizen Francis Xavier, went to Japan from Europe in 1549. By the early 17th century, more than 760,000 Japanese were converted as Christians in spite of cultural differences and language barriers (Hiroaka, 2020). Because of the success of the Christian missions over the period, mission members were enthusiastic to learn the Japanese language and became more familiar with the culture. Hence, Japanese Language Grammar Books were available in the western countries at the end of 16th century and books on Japanese culture were also published in the early 17th century. However, the centrepiece 'History of Japan' published in 1727 written by German physician and explorer Engelbert Kaempfer was the main source of western knowledge about Japan for centuries, particularly when the country was closed to foreigners in 18th and 19th centuries under the Tokugawa regime. In the early 17th century, Peter the Great of Russia showed his keen interest to learn about Japan and patronized learning Japanese language and culture with the support of the shipwrecked sailors Dembei and Vladimir Atlasov (Gorge, 2010). However, over the centuries, Japanese Studies in the west had been expanded through the work of William George Aston, George Bailey Sansom and Sir Rutherford Alcock who focused mostly on history, art and culture.

The study of Japan in the U.S. was first led by trade representatives, visiting professors, school teachers and diplomats who were interested in culture, religion, history and language. The study of Japan by American scholars increased after the opening of Japan by American emissary Matthew Perry in 1854 and significantly after the opening of the border because of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. European scholars particularly French, Austria, Germany, Netherlands and Russia put more attention to Japan after the Meiji Restoration and diverse areas such as linguistic, traditional culture, archaeology, history, art, music, photography, religion, folklore, ethnology had been studied extensively. Interestingly, the American perspective of Japanese Studies before World War II (WWII) was to understand the enemy. After WWII, it was the study of ally (Gorge, 2021). Over the years, Japanese Studies grew in the west in size, scale and scope. This single discipline has become multidisciplinary and offered as a subject for degree programs at the tertiary-level academic

institutions. People working in NGOs, research institutions and consulting firms have shown keen interest in Japan. Seemingly, the US as a country hosts the highest number of Japanologists, books in the library and academic institutions to offer degree programmes in Japanese Studies (Makino, 2000). Universities in other North American countries like Canada also offer academic degrees in Japanese Studies and Canadian representation in Japan-based associations, for example the Association for Asian Studies, is quite high.

This literature does not provide clear evidence about the advent of Japanese Studies in the African continent. However, the African Association for Japanese Studies (AAJ) has taken the responsibility to reignite interest in Japanese Studies across the continent through hosting conferences, seminars and suchlike. As the first organization of its kind in Africa, it aims to foster the growth of similar regional and national associations in both Africa and Japan. The AAJ is also keen to support the organizations dedicated to the study of Japan in terms of cultural, educational, anthropological, technological and economic issues (Association for Japanese Studies in Africa, 2020). However, to promote Japanese language and culture, there are a good number of language schools in Africa countries. South Africa, for example, hosts two Japanese language schools—Cape Town Nihongo Kai and Continuing Education at the University of Pretoria (Embassy of Japan in South Africa, n.d.). There are also numerous schools and colleges in Kenya which promote Japanese language and culture education there such as A.C.K. Language and Orientation School and Adaptive Business School, Carlile College, Center of Professional Language, Confucius Institute, Nairobi (Kenyanlife.com, 2022).

A few educational institutions in Nigeria also provide Japanese language education, they are Lextorah School of Languages, Graceville School of Languages, World of Languages, Patrick Speech and Languages Center and so on (NgEx, 2022). Aiming to promote Japanese Studies in Africa, in recent times, many international conferences, seminars and lectures are being arranged by different organizations. For instance, the Association

for Japanese Studies in Africa has so far arranged five international conferences. The 4th international conference was held in Nigeria last year under the theme “*Japanese Studies in Africa: Protest, Communication and Performance: Pre-Covid, Covid and Post-Covid Tempers*” (Olaoluwa, 2021) and the 5th international conferences is due for 03 October 2022 in Ethiopia with the motto “*Africa and Japan in the Quest for a New World Order*” (The committee of Vice-chancellors of Nigerian Universities, 2022). Japanese Language Education in Kenya also organized a conference towards the development of Japanese language education in East Africa (Wochi Kochi, n.d.). Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has also arranged JICA chair lecture at different institutions in a number of countries such as Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya, University of Juba, South Sudan; and University of Antananarivo, Madagascar (JICA, 2022). Although few literature is available on the progress of Japanese Studies in African continent, this discussion provides an idea about the recent exercise of Japanese Studies in the region which is apparently very promising.

More than 20 universities in Australia now offer courses in Japanese language and culture. While some schools only offer one or two language courses, others, such as the University of Sydney, University of Melbourne and Monash University, provide full-fledged degree programs in Japanese Studies. Enrollment in Japanese language and culture courses in Australia has remained steady or increased over the past 20 years. This expansion can be attributed in large part to the growing popularity of Japanese popular culture and the increasing number of Asian students enrolling in Australian universities (Suter, 2020). On the other hand, in New Zealand, more students studied Japanese than any other language in the 1980s and 1990s, although this trend has since seemingly decreased (McGee et al., 2013). However, in recent years, with the growth of New Zealand’s economic and cultural links to Japan, there has been a consistent increase in the need for university graduates’ proficiency in Japanese (The Matariki Network of Universities, n.d). Currently, seven universities in New Zealand provide Japanese language degrees and

courses. For example, Auckland University of Technology, Massey University, University of Canterbury, University of Otago, Victoria University of Wellington etc. (IDP Connect Limited, 2022). The past 15-20 years has seen a substantial increase in research in the field of cultural studies, whereas the previous 20 years saw consistent strength in the study of Japanese history, literature, and languages. Although the country's social science community is smaller than its Chinese and Southeast Asian counterparts, Japan has, nonetheless, produced a steady stream of high-quality research in the fields like politics, economics and law (Suter, 2020).

The study of Japan in Asian countries has also started 100 years before predominantly in the East and South East Asian countries. Like, at the beginning the study of Japan in Asia was focused on language, culture and history. However, an extensive study began after WWII with the miraculous success of Japan. Countries like China and Korea extensively studied Japan to replicate its economic success as the countries have many similarities with Japan due to their close geographic proximity. According to the Japan Foundation Survey of 2018, in China, the numbers of academic associations and scholars related to Japanese Studies are 118 and 1,609 respectively. Although the Republic of Korea had anti-Japan sentiment from the 1970s, this attitude started changing and the nation experienced the third-largest number of Japanese language learners in 2010. Because of the expansion of Japanese Studies, Korea has enjoyed vibrant research activities with more than 1,000 researchers and 30 Japan-related research associations. Researchers are either trained in Japan or in Korea, publishing their research works in Japanese or Korean language. This has been possible because of their very profound command of Japanese language (Lee, 2017). Japanese Studies has gained wider currency in the Southeast Asian countries for the last few decades when they started resuming bilateral relations with Japan after WWII. The actual growth of Japanese Studies in Southeast Asian countries started with the financial support of the Japan Foundation (Okano, 2017). However, the study of Japan started during the 16th century when Japan established bilateral ties with Southeast countries. Japanese language and

culture were practiced formally or informally in a very limited manner, but under the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (GEACPS) in the 1940s, universities opened Japanese language courses for their students. Japanese studies took rebirth in South East Asian countries after the restoration of Japan's relations with Thailand in 1952, Cambodia in 1953, Myanmar in 1954, Laos in 1955, the Philippines in 1956, Indonesia in 1958, Singapore in 1966, Vietnam in 1973 and Brunei in 1984. The study of Japan at national universities in this region also formally resumed after the restoration of the relationship (Chua, 2017).

In the mid-1960s, Japanese Studies flourished in Thailand and scholars attempted to research the Japanese economy, including Japan's modernization during the Meiji period, power status before WWII and how they overcame the devastation of WWII. Japan was considered as an 'engine of development' in many developing countries due to its huge foreign investments, aid and cooperation in the 1960s and it became the highest investor to Thailand in terms of aid and investment (Chinwanno, 1990). On the other hand, the relationship between Japan and Indonesia strengthened from 1958 and it did not take long to start extensive teaching of Japanese language in Indonesia (Pratama & Purnomo, 2020). During the 1960s, several public universities of Indonesia offered degrees in Japanese Studies and by 2017, this number of universities reached 65, which offer bachelor and master's degrees of three or four years. Curricula were designed in such a way so that graduates can play an important role in enhancing mutual cooperation between the two countries (Pratama & Purnomo, 2020). Indonesia became the second-highest Japanese language learning country after China in 2010 as Japanese trade, aid and investment in the country was growing significantly. Besides Indonesia, Vietnam is another country where Japanese Studies has registered significant growth. There are many national associations of Japanese Studies in Southeast Asia, for example Japanese Studies Association of Thailand (JSAT), Malaysian Association of Japanese Studies (MAJAS), and Japanese Studies Association of Indonesia (ASJI). Japanese Studies Association (JAS) is a networking organization among Japanese Studies scholars of South-East Asia which was established in

2005 with a view to promoting Japanese studies in this region. However, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 with intent to promoting peace and stability and strengthening economic cooperation among its member states. The first bilateral dialogue between Japan and ASEAN was held in 1973 but the Fukuda Doctrine of 1977 worked as the catalyst in developing close relationships between Japan and ASEAN countries. Since then, ASEAN nations have been a major investment hub for Japan. Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines are atop the priority list in terms of trade and investment. ASEAN countries have played an enormously important role for the Japanese economy (Prabhakar, 2014). However, Japanese Studies in ASEAN countries is mostly language and culture focused with little multidisciplinary approach.

Journey of Japanese Studies in South Asia began dates back to the earlier 19th century when poet Rabindranath Tagore established a relationship with Tensin Okakura. Tagore was very much fascinated about Japan and he visited the country three times—1916, 1924 and 1929. Although, before Tagore, some people from the Indian subcontinent visited Japan and wrote on different aspects of the country, Tagore's visit became a milestone in the timeline of Japan-India relations (Das, 2008). His Japan tour also has historical significance in the Japan-Bangladesh relations. The relationship between Japan and the Indian subcontinent, especially with Bangladesh, is centuries-old. The ties are based initially on cultural and then political aspects. Cultural relationship between Japan and India, and Japan and Bangladesh are bridged by Tagore and Hariprova Takeda while political relations are deepened by Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and Justice Radhabinod Pal (Mamun, 2018). In the early 20th century, mutual communication between Rabindranath Tagore and Japanese poet Tensin Okakura was carried out through exchanges of their literary and art works. Tagore was very much fond of Japanese fine art, especially to the artworks of Okakura Tenshin (1862-1913) and literary works of Yone Noguchi (Sengupta, 2009). Nonetheless, Tagore invited Japanese scholars to the Indian subcontinent for exchanging art and culture. Popular Japanese poets, researchers, fine artists and novelists came to Indian



subcontinent at that time. Poet Yone Noguchi visited the subcontinent three times. The letters Tagore exchanged with Yone Noguchi illustrate significant glimpses of his high political philosophy.

Japanese artists Kamppō Aari, Namppō Katayama, Koye Ishizuka, Kyosetsu Nōsu, Senrin Kiriya and Imamura Shiko also came to India. Due to Tagore's will, the School of Martial Art and Dance was established in Nippon Building, Santiniketan. Tagore was interested about Judo and other Japanese culture. Afterwards, he introduced Judo in Santiniketan. Because of his request Sano Jinnoshike came to India in 1905. Sano translated Tagore's novel 'Gora' in 1924 which was published in 1925. To introduce Ikebana and tea-ceremony, Maki Hoshi came to India. Tagore was the first person to emphasize the 'look east policy' as he believed that it was mandatory to build a nation before development (Sarker, 2017). Eventually, cultural exchanges and practicing Japanese language and culture in this region gradually increased but it was never like the U.S. or ASEAN.

The current relationship between Japan and South Asia is closer than ever before. However, this region has never been attractive to Japan because of poor governance, economy and low purchasing capacities of the people. In the previous decades, Japan had focused more on the South East Asian and East Asian countries. Respectively in the 1970s and 1980s, Japan went to China and ASEAN countries for business with the assurance of cheap labor and an investment-friendly environment. In the 1990s, Japan explored investment in other regions adopting the 'China-Plus Policy' as the business environment started changing in China particularly because of the increase of labor cost, energy price and hostile attitude of the Chinese people. From the 2000s, overall development of South Asia encouraged Japanese government and companies to engage more with South Asian countries as the region was developing in terms of bureaucratic system, good governance, political stability, infrastructural development, increased literacy rate, cheap and skilled labor, and investment-friendly environment. Owing to the steady progress of South Asia after the 2000s, Japan pondered investing in South Asia under the

‘China-plus One Policy’. Currently, under the emerging Chinese influence, Japan is trying to become the closest development partner of this region focusing on the idea of integration rather than cooperation due to geopolitical and economic interests. The country has adopted numerous initiatives like ‘Comprehensive Partnership Japan-Bangladesh’, ‘Special Strategic and Global Partnership’ with India, and ‘A New Partnership between Maritime Countries’ with Sri Lanka. As a result, academic institutions in the region that offer Japanese Studies degrees are taking a renewed approach to design their curriculum focusing more on economy, bilateral relations, international business, FDI, project management and so on. Being the newest department of the region, the DJS at Dhaka University takes a forward-looking multidisciplinary approach in organizing its curriculum. The courses of the DJS Honours and Master’s programs include economics, political science, sociology, statistics, business management, research methodology and subjects with particular reference to Japan such as Japanese history, literature, society and culture, social anthropology, philosophy and thoughts, religion, Japan and international affairs, modernization and economic development, economy, politics, environment, architecture, disaster management, tourism, business communication, law and public policy, demography and others. The programmers also have language components.

### **8.3 A Recent Debate in the Area of Japanese Studies**

The meta-narrative Japanologists are trying to spread Japan’s economic miracle, uniqueness of culture, its rise from the ashes and so on and so forth which are now questioned by the academia. Since the development of China and Korea has portrayed, to some extent, a similar picture of development and success stories are of similar pattern, instead of comparing with other development models and success stories, the monopolistic view to prove Japan unique has been in practice until the recent past. Now, the question arises whether overlooking the Chinese case or the Korean success has been a deliberate one or unintentional ignorance. Moreover, the popular cultures of various countries are immensely followed and studied by the youth and academia across the globe. So, the statement put forward by the Japanese Studies experts

terming Japan's culture 'uniquely unique' or 'Japan making' or 'Chrysanthemum and the Sword' style have some grave counter-arguments (Facijs, 2022; NIAS, 2020). Therefore, the question is whether Japanology is confined in the nationalistic paradigm or not. It is high time Japanologists adopted a changed modus vivendi of a comparative study of Japan in lieu of Japanese lens.

Apparently, Japanese Studies scholars agree that one of the most significant gaps in the study of Japan is the scarcity of interdisciplinary research. Convergence of different fields in Japanese Studies has now become essential for finding out the real circumstances and challenges of Japan nationally and internationally. Most of the Japanologists attempt to identify problems through the Japanese lens due to the heavy influence of successful Japan and unique culture. It becomes difficult to be a nonchalant observer. The rhetoric of 'cool Japan' and 'uniquely unique Japan' does not reveal the critical perspectives of Japan and Japanese models (NIAS, 2020). Some underrated issues in Japan, i.e. inequality, exclusion, women's subjugation, minority, gay and transgender rights and labor rights have always been the other side for the investigators of Japan. Without understanding Japan from a wider angle, adopting the Japanese model would never be effective. In addition, to understand Japan appropriately, inter-Asia studies, i.e. comparative studies of Chinese and Japanese studies or Korean and Japanese studies or even Chinese-Japanese-Singaporean-Malaysian-Korean studies might be helpful to bring the best insight of Japanese Studies while adoption or rejection of any model for the growing economies like Bangladesh. Among many determinants of effective policy adaptation, the socio-cultural context and psycho-social crafting of the people of any geography are highly significant. So, the convergence of disciplines, critical examinations and constructive explanation might show a different horizon in academia, the discipline then would grow.

In Asia, Japan is still attractive and the significance of Japanese Studies is still high. Inclination towards Japan is pretty high even in Bangladesh. But in the West, the relevance and significance of Japanese Studies is now

being replaced by Chinese Studies for growing dominance of China in the global economy and politics. ‘Yes to anything from Japan’ might not last long even in South Asian countries where prevalence of ‘cool Japan’ seems pretty high. Studying Japan, therefore, requires a combined, collaborative and comparative approach for finding out the facts and loopholes for remodeling or customizing Japanese Studies (NIAS, 2020). In this regard, University of Dhaka adopts a multidisciplinary approach with models for the respective countries’ development, keeping in mind their socio-cultural and socio-economic reality, instead of replicating.

Whether anyone is interested in Japan or not, Japanese Studies, because of its grave international relevance in terms of theoretical contribution hitherto, has become a significant discipline across borders. Environmental issues and concern, concentration of wealth and power as well as inequality in the neo-liberal global order, revival of historical legacies of rivalries among countries, high-prevalence aging people in society induced crises, automation and artificial intelligence (AI), transnational mobility, high-tech social norms and AI are some of the most pertinent global issues which can be explained by Japanese Studies’ theoretical frameworks. It has two phases to be studied—pre- and post-WWII where 1945 makes the demarcation. The first phase laid down the foundation while the second made it an area of extensive research.

We can summarize a set of inquiries motivated by the perfect vision for Japanese Studies. The inquiries include what are the theories and concepts developed in Japan merit discussion on a global scale? How many institutional and structural barriers to the international exchange of Japanese social scientific knowledge are overcome? How can marginal and regional scholars of Japanese Studies work together to challenge the predominance of the Euro-America-centric perspective? However, Japanese Studies is evolving into a field that is increasingly multilingual, multicultural, interdisciplinary and global in scope (Ogawa & Seaton, 2020). However, due to the increased individual and institutional research and sometimes because of the patronization of the Japan Foundation, Asian scholars are increasingly contributing to the literature of Japanese Studies which adds a different perspective to the subject area

beyond predominant European and American viewpoints. This is an admirable trend, particularly from the perspective of the developing countries of Asia, many of which can immensely benefit replicating the Japanese development miracle. In learning lessons, from these home-grown research findings would surely create more impact than the western interpretations of Japan, quicken the de-westernization of Japanese Studies.

It is anticipated that in the coming decades, the questions raised above will largely reverse the current emphasis on history, literature or pop culture and create a new paradigm of Japanese Studies. Japan as a nation has to confront a number of internal and external issues such as global warming, aging society and human mobility. By outlining answers for burning issues within the society, networks, communities and organizations through extensive research will defy Japanese policymakers. Collaborative research in this regard would be critical to address 'real-world' changes. Studies have been undertaken to deal with the rising issues and more studies have to be conducted to shape up the new boundaries of Japanese studies (Ogawa & Seaton, 2020).

#### **8.4 The Future Direction of Japanese Studies**

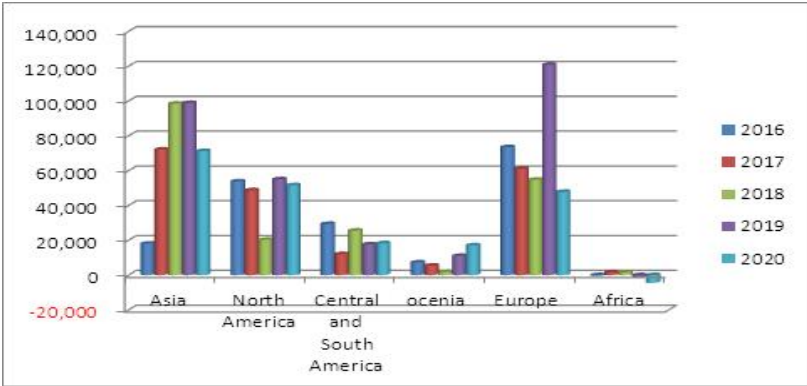
Writing the draft of the future direction of Japanese Studies is a daunting task under the existing debate and a number of issues which have been identified as the stumbling blocks if not researched well going beyond the nationalistic unique Japan thoughts or Euro-American paradigm. Japanese Studies, nonetheless, as distinctive and multidisciplinary area study, is becoming popular mainly where Japan has influences due to ODA disbursement, project implementation or FDI. However, current world realities such as Covid-19 pandemic, raise of China, tension in the Indo-Pacific, U.S.-China trade war, sea lines of communication, multilingual sphere of influence, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and Ukraine-Russia war and internal changes such as rapid transformation of Japanese society, openness to other language and culture and border opening for skilled workers would influence the future direction of the Japanese Studies. A myriad of challenges ahead of Japanese Studies as a

discipline and for Japanologists which includes shaping and reshaping the curriculum, identifying the research gaps and conducting research and contributing to the existing literature so that the discipline remains updated for students and readers.

The pandemic Covid-19 has shaken personal and social life and economic activity of the countries. The world economy has experienced a dramatic drop down due to the pandemic. Covid-19 would cause a remarkable fall in foreign direct investment (FDI). Global FDI flow forecasts a decrease up to 40% in 2020 from 2019 of \$1.54 trillion resulting in a further drop in 2021 (Wir, 2020), this is a sharp decline since 2005. This decline would put immediate, short, medium and long-term effects on global finances forecasted to be continued up to 2030. In this context, Japan's economy is experiencing a sharp fall too. This would impact Japan Studies around the world as FDI and ODA has a correlation between expansion and operation of the area studies. According to data of the Japan Foundation, for instance, in Asia, there are 32 institutions offering courses in Japanese Studies, there might be some impact due to Covid-19 as FDI flow changes.

**Figure 8.1**

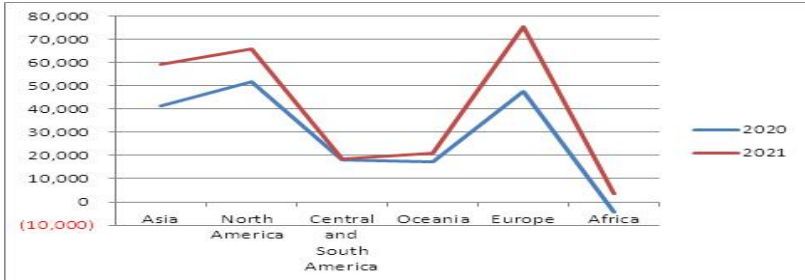
*Japan's FDI outflow in various regions from 2016-2020, shown in US dollar (billion)*



Source: Ministry of Finance, Japan

**Figure 8.2**

*Japan's FDI outflow in various regions, comparison of 2020 and mid 2021, shown in US dollar (billion)*



*Source:* Ministry of Finance, Japan

Due to economic, political, geo-strategic and cultural reasons, Japan is keenly interested in certain regions in terms of the promotion of Japanese Studies. Economic downturn caused by the Covid-19 pestilence would influence the future direction of Japanese Studies.

Multilingual domain in the current world leads to the notion of area studies where the impact of a particular language controls the sphere of influence as language works as a soft power. The term 'soft power' was first cited in a 1990 publication by Joseph Nye of Harvard University which is defined as the country's expected outcome that would carry out not through intimidation rather through its attractiveness (Chandra, 2014). Historically, the Japanese language has been used as a tool for Japan's soft power diplomacy, particularly for its ODA-recipient countries and FDI partners to strengthen relationship. With the growing demands and opportunities of languages such as Chinese, Japanese, German, Spanish along with English, it is always appreciated by host countries to introduce languages to the target countries due to economic advantages. In recent years, the importance of Japanese and Chinese has significantly increased because of global settings and these two languages have become very attractive for the global citizens. For example, ASEAN citizens are giving equal importance to learning English, Chinese and Japanese languages (Rose & Carson, 2014).

Importantly, what would be the future direction of any area studies depends on how much influence it can create regionally and internationally in strengthening relationship with other countries. Besides, the number of language speakers ranked nationally or internationally has a significance to make people interested in another language for various purposes. In the context of the current world, as English is the international language, non-natives' priority of language proficiencies of other languages are followed by English. As China has emerged as one of the most gigantic economic powers, the world experiences a mammoth rise of Chinese language learners. The scenario in Asia in relation to foreign language learners is the same as the rest of the world where Chinese language learners are increasing. However, both China and Japan are trying to be the major development partners of Asian countries and promotion of their respective culture and language are clearly visible. However, Sugimoto (2017) argues that in relation to the issues such as anglophocentrism (dominance of English written literature over the literature written in other languages) in the Japanese context, exploring potentials of the Japanese language research and cultural nationalism should be taken into account in developing multiversal rather than universal approaches. Multilingual situation always asks for superstratum and substratum condition for its language users. Therefore, in the present co-existence of languages namely English-Japanese-Chinese, the further track would be defined accordingly based on holistic parameters. The evolution of the multi-lingual paradigm and cultural expansion would certainly pose a challenge to Japanese Studies as the discipline has enjoyed a significant amount of privilege in absence of the recent growth of Chinese Studies. China, as a new economic superpower, is promoting its business and expanding the horizon of aid diplomacy around the world. For example, through rail, road and maritime connectivity, China seeks proper implementation of its Belt and Road Initiative, which has been adopted very recently, along with promoting Chinese language in partner countries. Huge market opportunities and easier access to China also have a positive impact on the promotion of Chinese language around the world. Chinese culture along with its language gained people's attention due to trade and business opportunities. Chinese influence over countries might show way how Japanese Studies would carry out its progress as a



discipline overcoming challenges. Moreover, China remained more successful in vaccine diplomacy than Japan which impacts the outlook of two countries’ diplomatic relations and in the area of Japanese and Chinese Studies.

Japan is lagging behind in pursuing Covid-19 vaccine diplomacy. In fact, as data reveals, compared to China, Japan is ‘no match’ in vaccine diplomacy competition worldwide. For example, Japanese has provided vaccine assistance to only 32 countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022) while China supplied vaccines to 114 countries (BRIDGE Consulting, 2022). A majority of the countries mentioned in the table below have received more vaccines from China than Japan.

**Table 8.1**

*Japanese and Chinese Covid-19 vaccine donation to a number of countries (in million)*

| No. | Country Name | Vaccine Donated by China | Vaccine Donated by Japan |
|-----|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1   | Bangladesh   | 5.60                     | 4.60                     |
| 2   | Nepal        | 7.80                     | 1.60                     |
| 3   | Sri Lanka    | 3.00                     | 1.50                     |
| 4   | Indonesia    | 3.00                     | 6.88                     |
| 5   | Vietnam      | 5.30                     | 7.35                     |
| 6   | Cambodia     | 13.303                   | 1.30                     |
| 7   | Thailand     | 3.30                     | 2.00                     |
| 8   | Nigeria      | 0.47                     | 0.86                     |
| 9   | Egypt        | 12.6                     | 0.70                     |
| 10  | Kenya        | 0.40                     | 0.20                     |

Source: BRIDGE Consulting 2022; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2022

A dispute between Japan and China in terms of Senkaku Island is an issue which would receive significant attention by the Japanese Studies scholars. Interestingly, Japanese FDI not only in China but also in other regions is significantly shaken by this issue. Japan has already announced the 'China-Plus One' policy to relocate Japanese companies from China. Therefore, a good number of Japanese companies have already moved to AEAN and South Asian countries. Due to this mega shift, Japan is required to develop and strengthen relationship with a number of countries. Japanese government initiatives in this regard will also expand the horizon of Japanese language and culture that too include renewed engagement of Japan Foundation. Henceforth, future direction of Japanese Studies would also be re-arranged because of this.

Because of the rise of China, geo-political or geo-strategic concerns of Japan have increased significantly more than ever before as the issues are closely connected to trade and commerce. Therefore, Japan is giving renewed importance to South Asia and Southeast Asia regions. The geographical location of South Asia is strategically very important for Japan. This portion of Asia enjoys Himalayan range to Asia Pacific which is the vital route for global trade and commerce. Both Japan and China depend on the southern seas for their sea-based trade and communications. Oil, energy and other materials for industries are transported through the Malacca Strait of Sri Lanka. Historically, Japan has strived and enhanced mutual cooperation with the USA for securing its lands, water, sky and sea line communications. However, it would be interesting to see how Japan shapes up its geo-political or geo-strategic policies to secure its interest in the emerging Chinese influence in the South-East Asian region. Surely, Japan's geo-political or geo-strategic policies will influence the further direction of Japanese Studies.

Sea lines of communication encompass the umbilical cord of a state's economy and the arteries of a region's economic health (Sakhuja, 2001). The sea line of communication is a vital issue for the economy of island country Japan as it is considered as its backbone. Being an island country, Japan had to focus on waterway communication like building oceangoing

ships for the transformation of goods and services. The Meiji period largely experienced maritime communication as the goods had to be imported from Indian subcontinent and Middle East. Meanwhile, Japan exported products to its neighboring countries like China and Korea. At the end of WWII, when Japan followed the Yoshida Doctrine, the sea line of communication became more important for economic rebuilding. Japan is dependent on energy imports, a total of 99.6% oil, 100% coal and 96.4% natural gas from the Middle East through the Indian Ocean of the Malacca strait of Sri Lanka. Because of the contending interest of a number of nations, for example China, India, the U.S.A. in the sea line communication areas, Japan's strategy to find a strong position would affect Japanese Studies profoundly.

The QUAD is also related to the sea line issue of Japan. It is a strategic dialogue platform between the United States, India, Japan and Australia in 2007 which was proposed and agreed by the then enthusiastic Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe. QUAD aims to see the Indo-Pacific free from all kinds of military or political influences. QUAD takes into account the Chinese increased economic and military power. The objectives of QUAD include securing a rules-based global order, freedom of navigation and a liberal trading system also aiming to offer alternative debt financing for nations in the Indo-Pacific region. However, the main objective of the platform is to reduce Chinese dominance in the Indo-Pacific region. QUAD leaders occasionally meet and exchange views on contemporary global affairs with particular focus on the Indo-Pacific issues. In recent dialogues, multiple issues have been focused and prioritized by QUAD leaders, including deepening ties among QUAD countries, advancing practical cooperation on areas such as combating Covid-19, addressing the climate crisis, partnering on emerging technologies and cyberspace, and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific along with China's rapid military buildup to establish its control over vital sea lanes (VOA, 2021).

Strategic position and policy of the QUAD countries are expected to ensure maritime freedom over the Indo-Pacific region which would lead

free and horizontal economic activities with other partner countries resulting of coexistence and cooperation relations with China that would minimize tensions of QUAD countries over Chinese influences on various trade-commerce and cultural issues. Japan would be privileged largely as it is heavily dependent on sea lines of communication over the Indo-Pacific region. Chance of huge export and import with west and Middle-Eastern countries would experience on a rise along with Japan's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, mainly the Southeast and South Asian countries, would be more strengthened. Hence, the future foreign policy of Japan is expected to be seriously driven by the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy. Therefore, FOIP would work as the future driving force for the direction of Japanese Studies. However, if Japan intends to look at South Asian countries within the purview of its QUAD standing, that may cause injury to the long-standing relationships with South Asian countries because a number of countries of South Asia have border disputes, water sharing and other major issues with the QUAD member India. Moreover, these countries have huge economic engagements with China. Thus, any QUAD-related expectations of Japan from the South Asian country would create discomfort to the existing close relationships.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's 'three pillars' policy, unconventional monetary policy, expansionary fiscal policy and economic growth strategies policy to boost Japanese private investment, is popularly known as the Abenomics (Fukuda, 2015). The term 'Abenomics' simply means, producing products with low cost and then marketing for large profit as well as searching for an investment friendly environment to nearby countries with secured production places and big market zones. In the late 1980s Japan reached the top of its bubble economic era and a bubble burst happened in the early 1990s and as a result Japan experienced recession. Therefore, it was needed to seek for more investment and money making from other countries through economic production zones and market places. After the 2012 election, Shinzo Abe prioritized recovery from the economic recession with more emphasis than ever. As Japan has strong

economic relations with its next-door neighbors like China, Korea and largely with ASEAN countries, it also focused on near neighbors like South Asian countries which remained as the best option to implementation of the idea of Abenomics where countries like India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries favored look east policy over the west for the economic growth. Under the umbrella of Abenomics, Japan and its development partners went under mutual understanding and promised to understand each other more clearly and conditionally, requiring profound knowledge about each other's cultures, language, society, politics and economy which deeply influenced Japanese Studies. However, future progress of Abenomics will largely depend on the policy decision of Shizo Abe's successors. If they like to change their business with South Asian or countries of other regions which came close to Japan due to the introduction of Abenomics, the curriculum of Japanese Studies has to be rewritten considerably.

Japan as a G7 member has shown its strong reaction against the Russian invasion of Ukraine by imposing sections, freezing Russian assets and expulsion of Russian diplomats from Japan. The party in power, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), has requested the Prime Minister to increase the defense budget spending over the next five years to reach 2% of GDP that is equivalent to NATO countries. The Japanese economy is also shaken by the war, and the immediate impacts are sharp fall of Yen in value, change in manufacturing process and FDI relocation, just in time production, no stock and devaluation of Japanese labor and so on. Japanese Studies experts admit that war in Ukraine would have an earth-shattering impact on Japanese society, economy and international relations. Moreover, Japan is deeply concerned about North Korea's nuclear weapons and Taiwan-China issues as these are serious security threats not only for Japan, but also for all the East Asian nations (Ishizuka & Kolås, 2022). Therefore, Japanologists have to closely monitor and examine how Japanese government and the society reflect these issues; and they update the syllabus of Japanese Studies accordingly.

## **8.5 The Action Plan of the Department of Japanese Studies**

The curriculum of the Department of Japanese Studies (DJS) accommodates language and literature, politics, sociology, economics, international relations, archaeology, anthropology, business and so on. It engages comparative studies and amalgamates diverse approaches leading to a new horizon of knowledge generation. Sections 3 and 4 of the chapter highlighted the recent debate in the area of Japanese Studies and future challenges. Although the DJS syllabus extensively includes many courses in Japan, to address the recent debate in the area and future challenges, DJS needs to review its syllabus to include topics in the offered courses so that it remains up-to-date and conducts research.

Putting great emphasis on the academia-industry relationship for collaborative research, policy contribution and students' employment, the department has already developed close relationships with Japanese organizations in Bangladesh as well as in Japan. The DJS has established a praiseworthy relationship with the Japan foundation and Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh. It has also established a network with the Japanese Universities and the universities around the world which offer Japanese degree programs, particularly universities in the U.S., U.K., India, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Nepal for joint research and student exchange. Chapter 5 of this book elaborates department's endeavors to promote academia-industry relationships and networking with academic institutions. It is an immense honor to mention here that the Department of Japanese Studies has received Japanese Foreign Minister's Award 2022 in recognition of its distinguished services in contributing to promoting friendly relations, academic exchange between Japan and Bangladesh, and the expansion of Japanese Studies in Bangladesh and the development of Japanese Studies scholars in Bangladesh.

However, as a new department, the efforts of DJS should be ticking along to establish further collaboration with universities, organizations and industries for research, academic events, students' scholarships, internship and employment. Nonetheless, the following action plan has been

approved by the DJS academic committee in its meeting on 29 September 2022 with a vision to become a center of excellence at the earliest opportunity.

**Table 8.2**

*Action Plan of the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka*

| Sl                | Action   | Responsible Person                                 | Accomplishment Year | Source of Finance  |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------|--|
| <b>Short term</b> |  |  |                     |  |
| 1                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching students by more native Japanese speakers to overcome the language learning barrier.</li> <li>• Arranging skill development events for the students.</li> <li>• Increasing placement opportunity for Japanese Studies graduates.</li> <li>• Organizing job fair</li> <li>• Arranging seminars, workshops and conferences to keep abreast with the recent developments of Japan.</li> <li>• Regular meetings with stakeholders to accommodate feedbacks for improving curriculum.</li> <li>• Reviewing the syllabus to address recent debate and future challenges of Japanese Studies.</li> <li>• Inviting professionals to meet the students.</li> <li>• Organizing extracurricular activities for the students.</li> </ul> | Faculty Members/<br>Specific Programme Coordinator | 2022-2023           | Japan Foundation, JICA, Faculty, University Authority/ Japanese companies/ organizations |
| <b>Midterm</b>    |  |  |                     |  |

|                  |   |  |           |  |
|------------------|---|--|-----------|--|
| 2                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including Advance Research Methodology course in the syllabus</li> <li>• Outcome based education (OBE) training for faculty members.</li> <li>• Curriculum Development Training for the faculty members.</li> <li>• Capacity enhancement training for the faculty members.</li> <li>• Workshops for students to enhance capacity of the graduates.</li> <li>• Arranging job fair for the students.</li> <li>• Organizing International Conferences on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Publishing policy papers regularly with particular emphasis to Japan-Bangladesh development cooperation and investments.</li> <li>• Exploring more opportunities for students for higher education in Japan.</li> <li>• Encouraging joint research schemes in collaborations with Bangladeshi and Japanese scholars.</li> <li>• Organizing cultures exchange event in Japan as well as in Bangladesh.</li> <li>• Publishing major translation works of Japanese history, heritage, economy and social aspects in Bangla.</li> <li>• Establishing research collaboration with the other departments of Dhaka University and beyond.</li> <li>• Involving policy makers for promoting and disseminating Japanese Studies. Policy decisions on this new issue can be properly disseminated to students.</li> <li>• Liaison with partner universities for sending their faculties and students to DJS for study and research.</li> <li>• Joint degree program with Japanese universities.</li> </ul> | Faculty Members/<br>Specific Programme Coordinator | 2022-2025 | Japan Foundation, JICA, Faculty, University Authority/ Japanese companies/ organizations |
| <b>Long term</b> |   |  |           |  |



|   |  |  |           |  |
|---|--|--|-----------|--|
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two regular master's degree program- one in Japanese Studies and another one in Japanese Language.</li> <li>• Establishing collaboration with Japanese Universities for joint degrees.</li> <li>• Exchange of faculties to ascertain global standard.</li> <li>• Extended collaboration with Japanese government and universities for ensuring desired growth of Japanese Studies.</li> <li>• Human Capital Development for meeting the demand of the country and global need.</li> <li>• Partnership with non-Japanese universities offer Japanese Studies program.</li> <li>• Developing close relationship with Japanese organizations for research and policy support.</li> <li>• Increasing e-books in the library.</li> </ul> | Faculty Members/<br>Specific Programme Coordinator | 2022-2030 | Japan Foundation, JICA, Faculty, University Authority/ Japanese companies/ organizations |
|---|--|--|-----------|--|

### 8.6 Conclusion

Japanese Studies as a discipline deals with the holistic aspects of Japan ranging from its history, culture and language to economic, political and sociological settings. As one of the major area studies offered by the many leading universities of the world, Japanese Studies over the years has been transformed as a multidisciplinary subject that encompassed all branches of knowledge. Growth and value of Japanese Studies as a more-than-a-century-old discipline is remarkable. Regardless of public or private, the number of universities offering diploma/degree programs is increasing day by day. Theoretical subjects frequently cite the example of Japan as the idea case. The list of notable subjects is very long that include economics, political science, business studies, management, finance, public administration, physics, chemistry, computer science and engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, medical and pharmaceutical science, and environmental science and disaster management. However, there is a debate whether Japanologists have a positive bias to Japan with a rigid view 'Japan is the best in all aspects'. Therefore, the facts remain

unmasked. Hence, the debate is becoming stronger to look at Japan through a critical lens. Recently, Japan is aspiring to develop relationships with other countries based on its economic and trade policies that focus more on integration rather than cooperation. Furthermore, the country is engaging more with regional and international bodies due to the paradigm shift of the world power structure particularly because of Chinese influence. Currently, Japan's foreign policy is very much Free and Open Indo-Pacific centric. Due to the aging problem, the country is opening its borders for international skilled workers that are expected to transform Japan from a homogenous society to a multicultural society eventually.

Japan is also showing openness to other languages and cultures which is a great alteration of a society which always considered itself as a society with 'uniquely unique culture'. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, Japan has taken a number of decisions which no one ever expected. The decision includes 'soft lockdown' or sanctions against Russia. Therefore, an improved approach is required to examine the changing trend of social, economic and international policies of Japan. In this milieu, future endeavors of Japanologists should minimize knowledge gaps examining Japan and Japanese society comprehensively and contribute to the existing literature. But there is a need to go beyond through crystallizing theories, findings and ideas and make policy recommendations to achieve lofty goals of Japanese Studies. On the other hand, the DJS should continuously upgrade its curriculum and research undertaking to keep pace with the changing trend of Japanese Studies. Moreover, to study Japan and apply the best practices for the development of Bangladesh, the DJS needs to conduct research and make policy contributions to deepening Japan-Bangladesh relations predominantly in the area of trade, aid and investment and cultural exchange. Likewise, the department's efforts should continue in increasing collaboration with Japanese organizations and universities with an aim to providing scholarship, placement and employment opportunities to the students. Henceforth, Japanese Studies as a discipline and the DJS are on the road towards excellence.

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# Index

|                                   | Page No. |   | Page No. |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---|----------|
| Ahmed, Kamal                      | 5        | Debt-trap                               | 121      |
| Alam, Md. Jahangir                | 121      | Delta Plan                              | 3        |
| Bhuiyan, Saifullah                | 5        | Demographic crisis                      | 117-118  |
| Rahman, Aatur                     | 5,7      | Department of Japanese Studies (DJS)    | 3        |
| A new model                       | 144      | Depauw University                       | 83       |
| Abdullah-Al-Mamun                 | 5, 177   | Diplomatic relation                     | 121-122  |
| Abernomics                        | 197      | DJS and other centers                   | 92       |
| Academia- industry relations      | 15       | Earlham College                         | 81       |
| Academic climate                  | 119      | Early childhood care & education        | 159      |
| Academic collaboration            | 99, 104  | Education expenditure                   | 155      |
| Academic excellence               | 16       | Employment of the graduates             | 114      |
| Academic management               | 16       | English and Foreign Language University | 65       |
| Action plan DJS                   | 199      | Evolution of JS                         | 124, 179 |
| Akon, Md. Saifullah               | 99       | Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)         | 132      |
| AoCs                              | 102-103  | Financial constraints                   | 45       |
| ASEAN                             | 185-186  | Forward-looking view                    | 46       |
| Ateneo de Manila University       | 67       | Fourth Industrial Revolution            | 169      |
| Auckland University of Technology | 80       | Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)         | 3        |
| Bangladesh development process    | 144      | Fukuzawa Memorial Center                | 91       |
| Barakat, Abul                     | 1, 7, 53 | Furman University                       | 85       |
| Belmond University                | 66       | Future direction of JS                  | 190-198  |
| Bilateral relations               | 121-146  | Generational change                     | 34       |
| Bubble economy                    | 118      | Gettysburg College                      | 83       |
| Calligraphy course                | 96       | GIGA                                    | 160      |
| Career related programs           | 111      | GIGA school programs                    | 160-161  |
| Career talk                       | 15       | Global opportunity                      | 141      |
| Classification of JS              | 127      | Government policy and practices         | 158      |
| Collaboration                     | 99, 100  | High educational standards              | 140      |
| Collaboration research            | 109      | Higher education                        | 165-167  |
| Community service and support     | 21       | Hope College                            | 82       |
| Cool Japan                        | 1        | Human centered society                  | 160      |
| Covid vaccin diplomacy            | 194      | Human resources development             | 155      |
| CSSCC                             | 159      | Human resources with ICT                | 157      |
| Cultural prevalence               | 44       | Iftikhar-ul-Awwal                       | 35       |
| Current economic issues           | 152      | Illinois College                        | 85       |
| Current social issues             | 150      |   |          |
| Debate of JS                      | 187-189  |   |          |



# Index

|                                      | Page No.     |                                       | Page No.     |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Implication of JS                    | 133-138      | MoUs                                  | 102-103      |
| Importance of JS                     | 122          | National University of Singapore      | 78           |
| Improving employability              | 139          | Networking beyond asia                | 14           |
| Innovation and slow response         | 156          | New employment opportunities          | 116          |
| Institute of Modern Language         | 39           | Newsletter                            | 20           |
| International Research Center        | 91           | Nihongo                               | 30           |
| Japan embassy                        | 21           | Nihonjinron                           | 30           |
| Japan foundation                     | 21           | Node pathways                         | 128          |
| Japan Study Centre (JSC)             | 5            | Noman, Shiblee                        | 1            |
| Japan-Bangladesh relationship        | 20           | NTT                                   | 153          |
| Japanese academia and universities   | 18           | Oakland University                    | 86           |
| Japanese cinema                      | 95           | ODA funded project                    | 135          |
| Japanese development assistance      | 143          | Official development assistance (ODA) | 168          |
| Japanese economy                     | 12, 26, 28   | Ogawa, Keiichi                        | 149          |
| Japanese language learning           | 113          | Open innovation                       | 166,168      |
| Japanese language program            | 38           | Opportunity in japan                  | 117          |
| Japanese strategies                  | 131          | Partnership                           | 99           |
| Japanese studies                     | 32, 177, 179 | Pedagogical theories                  | 59           |
| Japanese studies curriculum          | 32           | Problems of JSC                       | 8            |
| Japanese studies program             | 54, 86       | Rabindra Bharati University           | 64, 78       |
| Japanologists                        | 36           | Recommendations                       | 47, 95       |
| Japanology                           | 2, 122,145   | Reducing poverty                      | 139          |
| JASSO                                | 43           | Relations with Japanese companies     | 18           |
| Jawaharlal Nehru University          | 64, 78, 165  | SAARC                                 | 27, 138, 139 |
| JICA                                 |              | SDGs                                  | 142          |
| JUAAB                                | 78           | Secondary education                   | 160          |
| Large-scale, long-term comprehensive | 3, 42        | Seminars and webinars                 | 106          |
| Learning theories                    | 41           | Sharmin, Dilruba                      | 25           |
| Lecture series                       | 166          | Shiro, Sadoshimo                      | 7,9          |
| Malek, Lopamudra                     | 61           | Shortage of developmental planning    | 45           |
| Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)             | 104          | Siddique, A A M S Arefin              | 6, 9         |
| Methodological cosmopolitanism       | 53           | Sister Nivedita University            | 64           |
| Methodological nationalism           | 133          | Skill development training            | 112          |
| MEXT                                 | 126          | Small-scale, short-term individual    | 166          |
| Mohsin, K. M.                        | 35           | SOAS Japan research                   | 91           |
| Monash University                    | 79           | Society 5.0                           | 149,160,170  |
| Monumenta nipponica                  | 29           | Soft power                            | 192          |

# Index

---

|                                     | Page No.      |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Special Economic Zones (SEZs)       | 132           |
| Specified skills-1                  | 118           |
| Specified skills-2                  | 118           |
| Star sphere                         | 167           |
| Student supporter                   | 15            |
| Students' skills development        | 17, 110       |
| Super global high school            | 169           |
| Super global university             | 165-166       |
| Super-aging society                 | 150           |
| Teaching and research               | 104           |
| Teaching pedagogy                   | 55            |
| Technical training                  | 140           |
| The University of Sydney            | 79            |
| Theoretical framework               | 129-130       |
| Theory of pedagogy                  | 58            |
| Tokyo University of Foreign Studies | 68            |
| Universitas Andalas                 | 68            |
| University industry collaboration   | 115           |
| University of California            | 79            |
| University of Delaware              | 82            |
| University of Delhi                 | 76            |
| University of Hawaii                | 85            |
| University of San Francisco         | 80            |
| Uno, Kohei                          | 149           |
| University of Wisconsin             | 86            |
| Upper secondary education           | 163-164       |
| Vision 2041                         | 3             |
| Visva-Baharati University           | 63            |
| Willamette University               | 84            |
| William and Mary College            | 79            |
| World War II (WW II)                | 180, 183, 184 |
| Worldwide teaching practices        | 62            |
| Zaman, Nashia                       | 75            |



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