

The term Kajoli Model refers to a unique experiment that is taking place in Bangladesh today to promote education of children from the most deprived sections of the society. The experiment which began as an action research in 2002 has now emerged as a fully-fledged pre-school learning model. And because of its innovative features and its “fun and game” approach, the Model is fast gaining popularity throughout Bangladesh. It is being widely used by rural communities to run pre-school learning centers, known as Kajoli centers, primarily through their own efforts.

There are now more than a hundred such pre-school centers throughout Bangladesh, and more are coming up, which are set up by local communities to prepare children from the most disadvantaged families in their midst to enter the local primary school system after a years stay at a center. The centers are run by the communities with their own means and with little or no support from outside.

The centers have been taking advantage of an early childhood learning model, known as Kajoli Model, developed by Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). The model is premised upon “low cost or no cost” principle. Apart from the monthly remuneration of Tk. 500 (US\$ 8) for the teachers, which is mostly raised from community support, there are no other significant running costs for the centers. Since there are no books, paper and pencil used in the model, there is no extra costs for the parents either. The children meet at the centers for about four hours a day of fun and game and learn to read and write too in the process. The centers are located at places made available by the local people, though more recently a number of permanent tin-sheds or thatched-roof huts have been built through community support.

On its part, RIB provides the learning materials [[see...](#)] and teachers’ trainings for the centers but no financial help. RIB adopted it as a conscious policy not to help the centers financially so as not to harm their community ownership. However, of late it has undertaken efforts to raise limited funds to help certain aspects of the running of the centers to which reference will be made elsewhere in this website.

The children at the centers are provided with midday meals every week-day through an arrangement under which each mother takes turn to feed all the 26 children at a center once a

month. [\[see\]](#) Already over 13000 children have graduated from these centers with over 2600 children being added every year.

After a year's stay at a center almost all the children enter the local primary schools where they are most warmly welcomed. This is because they come well-prepared from the centers, having completed almost the entire curriculum of class one during the year's stay there.

The change observed in the health, aptitude and personality of the children and their general disposition towards learning and going to school have lead many communities throughout Bangladesh to seek RIB's help in opening such centers in their areas. As a result the number of Kajoli centers continue to grow. It must be mentioned, however, that in the earlier years a larger number of centers had been set up without much preparation of the local community. Many of these had subsequently closed down. Greater attention is now being given to prepare the local population before RIB agrees to provide initial set-up support.

Apart from the community-run centers, a number of unique centers are also coming up. These include: some 22 mobile schools of the *beday* (river gypsies) community [\[see ...\]](#) which have incorporated the Kajoli model; a school for street children at the Dhaka Launch Terminal [\[see ...\]](#) and another for the children of the waste-pickers of the largest garbage dumping area of the country situated in the outskirts of Dhaka. [\[see ...\]](#)

Despite their successes, however, many shortcomings remain in the running of the centers. Much of these could be removed through participation of the society at large both at home and abroad in the commendable efforts of the common people. This website is aimed at explaining the Kajoli model, bringing the achievements of the centers to the knowledge of the people at large and creating an opportunity for the latter to partake in this unique community effort to promote education among the most deprived sections of society.