

Perception of different stakeholders and Practice of Disability-inclusive education at secondary schools in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The paper is focused on the status of disability-inclusive education from policies to practices at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh. The paper explored the classroom teaching-learning practice and available resources in secondary schools in this regard. It also attempted to explore the perception of different stakeholders towards disability-inclusive education. 10 secondary schools were selected from Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions following a convenient sampling technique. Data were gathered from teachers, students, and parents of that level and disability-inclusive education experts using the Interview and FGD method. Data were processed and analyzed using Barun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis technique. The results have shown that participation of students with disabilities in secondary schools is nominal and the dropout rate is higher. Though teachers and parents expressed a sympathetic view toward disability, special schooling is the better option for students with a disability according to their opinion. Thus, they lack a positive attitude toward disability inclusion. Moreover, school infrastructure and teaching-learning are not very convenient. Therefore, the study recommends that training facilities, available resources, and the existing infrastructure be redesigned and enhanced; curriculum modification and adaptation in the assessment system should be introduced to successfully implement disability-inclusive education.

Keywords: Disability-Inclusive Education, Secondary school, Bangladesh, Inclusive teaching-learning Practice, Stakeholders' Attitude

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Introduction

Perception is both a strength and a constraint. Positive perception refers to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms. While despite legislative provisions, the perception of stakeholders causes lower acceptance, and lower attainment of students with disabilities in regular school settings. A person having long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, in interaction with various barriers is defined as

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person with disabilities (United Nations, 2006). Disability is viewed as a combined effect of attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers (Mitra, 2006), which may impede their full and effective participation in society compared to others and the concept is in line with the social model of disability. A study by WHO and WB found that 15 percent of people worldwide experience some form of disability (WHO; WB, 2011). In another study, WB has also reported that disabled people are more likely to face negative socioeconomic consequences, such as lower levels of education specifically, and inadequate access to education (The World Bank, 2022). The Social Welfare Ministry of Bangladesh has estimated that the number of people with disability in Bangladesh is 7% (1665708) of the total population (GOB. Ministry of Social Welfare, 2019).

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) mandates access to inclusive, high-quality, free primary and secondary education for people with disabilities in their community (United Nations, 2006). Accordingly, global momentum to achieve access to quality education for children with disabilities has gradually grown (UNESCO, 2015), and this objective has been incorporated within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (United Nations, 2015). Several targets of the SDGs are related to disability and their rights to education. SDG 4 concentrates on providing inclusive and equitable quality education and fostering possibilities for life - long learning for all. Access for all to equitable and quality primary and secondary schooling (Target 4.1), especially for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities (target 4.5); early childhood education for all (Target 4.2) are among the main objectives of SDG 4. Over and above these targets, disability disaggregation is required for all education indicators, to the extent possible, to measure progress for each target (Sprunt, Deppler, Ravulo, Tinaivunivalu, & Sharma, 2017).

UNESCO (2005) defined inclusive education as a process of focusing on and responding to the diverse needs of all learners. It aims to remove barriers toward quality education that helps to increase participation in learning and reduce exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2005). The ‘inclusive education’ agenda has been adopted to refer to the concept of including all underprivileged groups in education. The ‘inclusive education’ agenda has been adopted to refer to the inclusion of all marginalized groups in education. As such, “disability-inclusive education” is increasingly used to describe efforts that relate specifically to ensuring the inclusion of children (or adults) with disabilities in education. Additionally, “disability-inclusive education” is used to explain the efforts that specifically relate to ensuring the inclusion of children or adults with disabilities in education (Wapling, 2016).

One of the educational issues that is currently receiving the most attention worldwide is disability-inclusive education (Ahsan, 2006). The Bangladesh government took a series of activities to attain disability-inclusive SDGs. Several policies and acts have been enacted, and many development projects embraced disability-inclusive targets. For this reason, disability-inclusive education has been identified as an emerging issue in the

education sector of Bangladesh. However, inclusive education (IE) is at an early stage of development in Bangladesh (Mullick, Deppler, & Sharma, 2012) in terms of social model-based practice.

Purpose of the study

This paper explores the teaching-learning practice at secondary schools in Bangladesh from a disability-inclusive education lens. The study discussed disability-inclusion highlighting enrolment, participation and accessibility (Ainscow, 2005) issues of students with disability in secondary education. Besides, developing an Inclusive Learning Friendly Environment (ILFE) broadly depends on the relationship between teachers, parents, students, and society (UNESCO, 2005). Teachers, parents, and communities have been identified as the most valuable resource and the key to supporting the inclusive education process. Because their eagerness to accept and promote diversity and willingness to play an active role in their education, both in and out of school, are the key factors in implementing inclusive education. Teachers', students', and parents' perceptions of disability inclusion were also explored. The specific research questions of the study were:

- i. What is the present practice of teaching-learning at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh through the disability-inclusive lens?
- ii. What is the perception of different stakeholders (teachers, parents, and students) of secondary education toward disability-inclusive education?

Conceptual framework of the study

This study observed disability-inclusive education practice in ten selected secondary schools of different districts in Bangladesh. Enrolment and participation of students with disability, accessibility to the existing school infrastructure and setting, and teaching-learning practice were explored to understand the disability-inclusive education practice. Since the influence of the beliefs affects executing inclusive classroom practices (Štemberger & Kiswarday, 2018), perceptions of the stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents) were also identified.

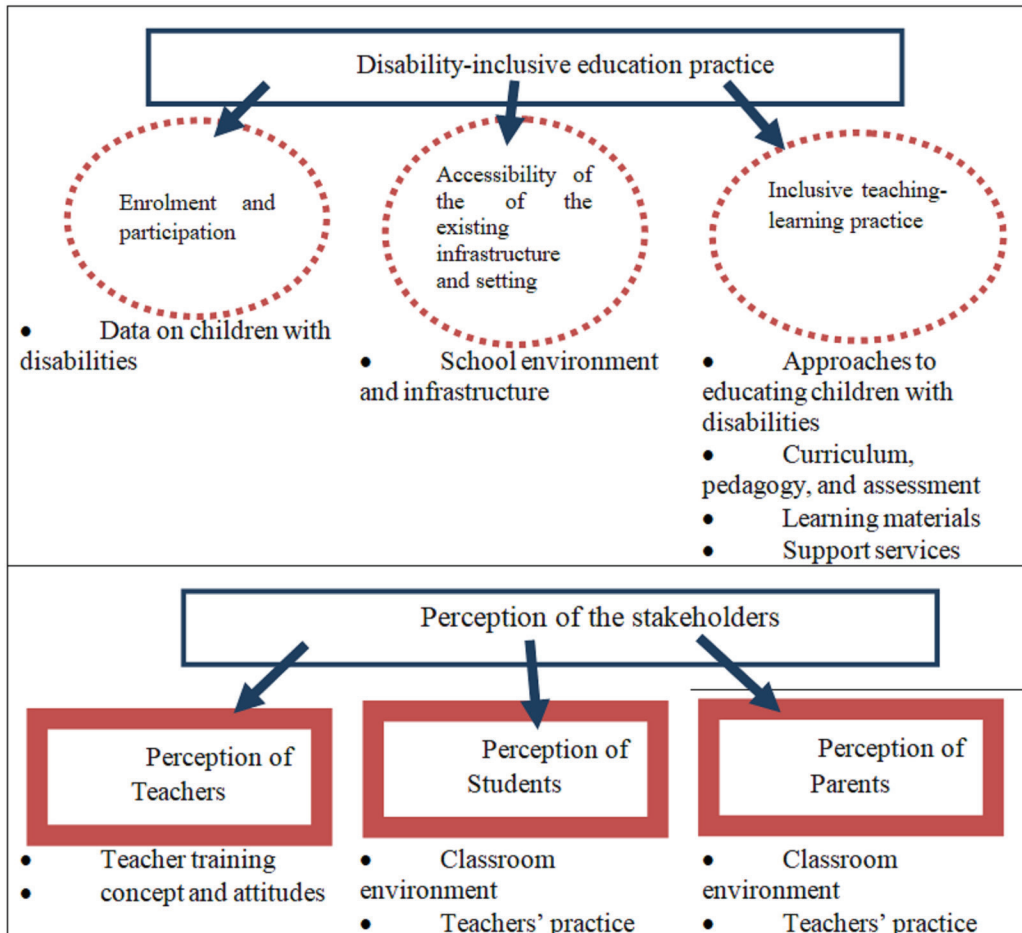


Fig 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Understanding Disability-Inclusive Education from policy documents

Bangladesh ratified many international declarations which support and promote the philosophy of disability inclusion in education. EFA (UNESCO, 1990) is the foremost contributing international declaration that first declared that all nations worldwide must ensure the equal right to education for all citizens. EFA was held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand and it is considered the founding policy framework for inclusive education. In response to EFA, Bangladesh Government enacted Compulsory Primary Education Act in 1990. Bangladesh is also a signatory country of 'The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy, and Practice in Special Needs Education, 1994', which initially considered education a crucial thing for

eradicating prejudice and enhancing social equity. (UNESCO, 1994). Bangladesh also enacted The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by the United Nations in 2006; it is also a very considerable declaration for disability-inclusive education (United Nations, 2006). Sustainable Development Goals also highlight the importance of disability inclusion for sustainable development in every sector. SDG 4 mandates equitable and inclusive quality education for all (United Nations, 2015). The government has taken several initiatives to implement inclusion in education. Several policies and acts have been enacted to implement disability inclusion in education.

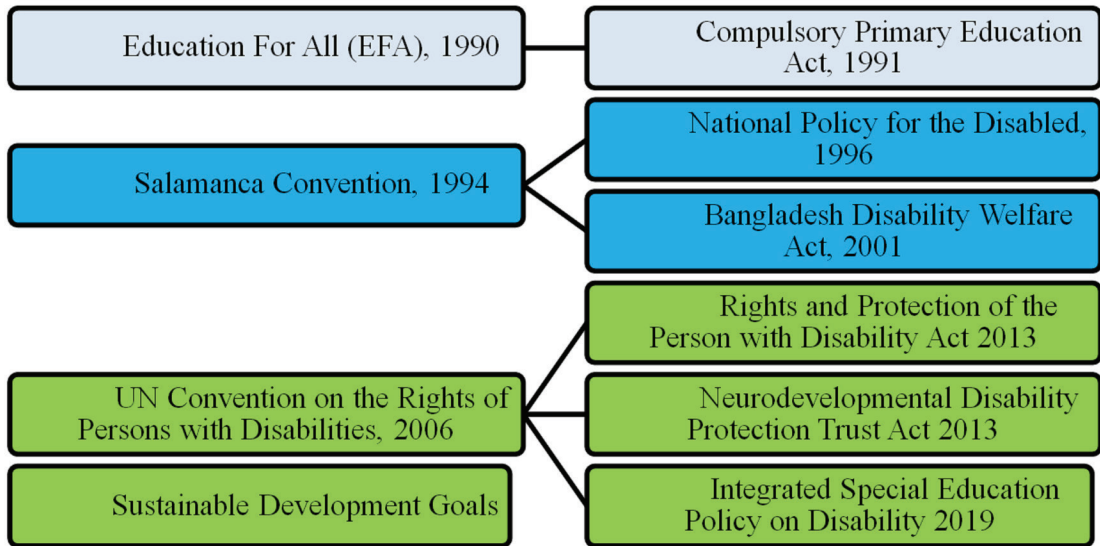


Figure 2: Legislative and Policy Framework for Disability-Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

National Education Policy 2010, Rights and Protection Act of persons with Disabilities 2013, Neuro-developmental disability trust Act 2013, and Integrated Special Education Policy on Disability 2019 are aforementioned among these policies and acts. From the constitution of Bangladesh to all these policies and acts have unambiguously mentioned that all children irrespective of gender, religion, caste, birthplace, economic condition, or disability, have the right to education in mainstream schools.

National Education Policy 2010 identified the rights of education of people with disability as one of its general aims and objectives. The policy emphasizes including children with disability in mainstream education according to the types and severity of the disability. Also, the policy planned to train at least one teacher in every school on teaching strategies for children with disability (GOB. Ministry of Education, 2010, pp. 42).

‘Rights and Protection of the Persons with Disability Act 2013’ replaces the Disability Welfare Act 1996. This act of 2013 spelled out the rights of people with disability to fully and effectively participate in social, economic, and national perspectives. The act declares that access to education either in inclusive or special settings according to their needs is also their right. Moreover, getting a convenient and friendly environment in educational institutions so that they can be benefited from it is also their right (Rights and Protection of Persons With Disability Act., 2013).

‘Neurodevelopmental Disability Protection Trust Act 2013’ is another useful act for people with neurodevelopmental disabilities. This act emphasized mainstreaming and providing proper facilities in an inclusive setting (Protection of Persons with Neuro-developmental Disability Trust Act. Bangladesh Gazette; 2013.).

Integrated Special Education Policy on Disability 2019 was formulated to prohibit establishment of substandard special schools throughout the country. The policy mandates some criteria or indicators for special schools with the purpose of providing effective and quality service for students with disability (GOB. Ministry of Social Welfare, 2019).

From the above discussion, we understood that-

1. Students have the right to get benefit from a convenient and welcoming atmosphere in mainstream educational institutions, regardless of their gender, religion, caste, place of birth, socioeconomic status, or disability.
2. The legal framework of Bangladesh recognizes inclusive education as a priority and promised to ensure disability inclusion at all level of education.
3. In order to provide effective learning environment for students with disabilities, special school requirements should be applicable in mainstream schools.

Methodology

Study design

A qualitative methodology was followed to gain a deeper understanding of the practice and perception of three types of secondary-level education stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents). Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were done with the teachers to understand their views and perception of disability-inclusive education and explore their classroom practice. Data were also collected from the students and parents using the FGD technique for triangulation. Opinions of inclusive education experts were also collected following the interview method.

Data source and participants

Bangladesh has eight administrative divisions (Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal, Khulna, Rangpur, and Mymensingh). Among these divisions, Dhaka and Rajshahi were selected conveniently as sampling areas. Five schools from each of these two divisions were selected based on the locality of the school and the presence of students with disability. 10 Teachers, 50 students of classes VI to X, and 27 parents of these schools were selected to participate in this study. Among ten teachers (one from each of the selected schools), six were female, and four were male; their teaching experience varied from two to 22 years, and none of them received training on inclusive education. 50 students were invited purposively to attend FGDs from class VI to X, considering their class, age, gender, and peers with disability. 27 parents were also identified purposively based on their availability, having children with disability, and/or having children who have peers with disability. Two national-level inclusive education experts were also interviewed as key informants.

Instruments and data collection process

Interview and FGD techniques were chosen for data collection to allow a deeper insight into views and perceptions about disability-inclusive education and disability-friendly classroom practice. An interview protocol was prepared for the school teachers. Two different FGD guidelines were used to collect data from students and parents. A KPI schedule was used to interview the KIIs. The consent was obtained from all participants.

Data analysis

Alphanumeric code is used for coding the collected data. Alphabets represent respondent groups, and the numeric value represents individual respondents where T 01 is for teacher respondent one; Exp 01 is for inclusive education expert one; PFGD 01 is for Parents FGD one, and SFGD 01 is for student FGD. Data from the FGD and interviews were directly recorded in Bangla. All transcripts were examined to find the themes for this study. The initial analysis was done to pinpoint the main topics. The Bangla analysis was translated into English using a conceptual translation procedure once themes had been determined. Themes were developed using the six-step analysis process explained by Braun and Clarke (2006).

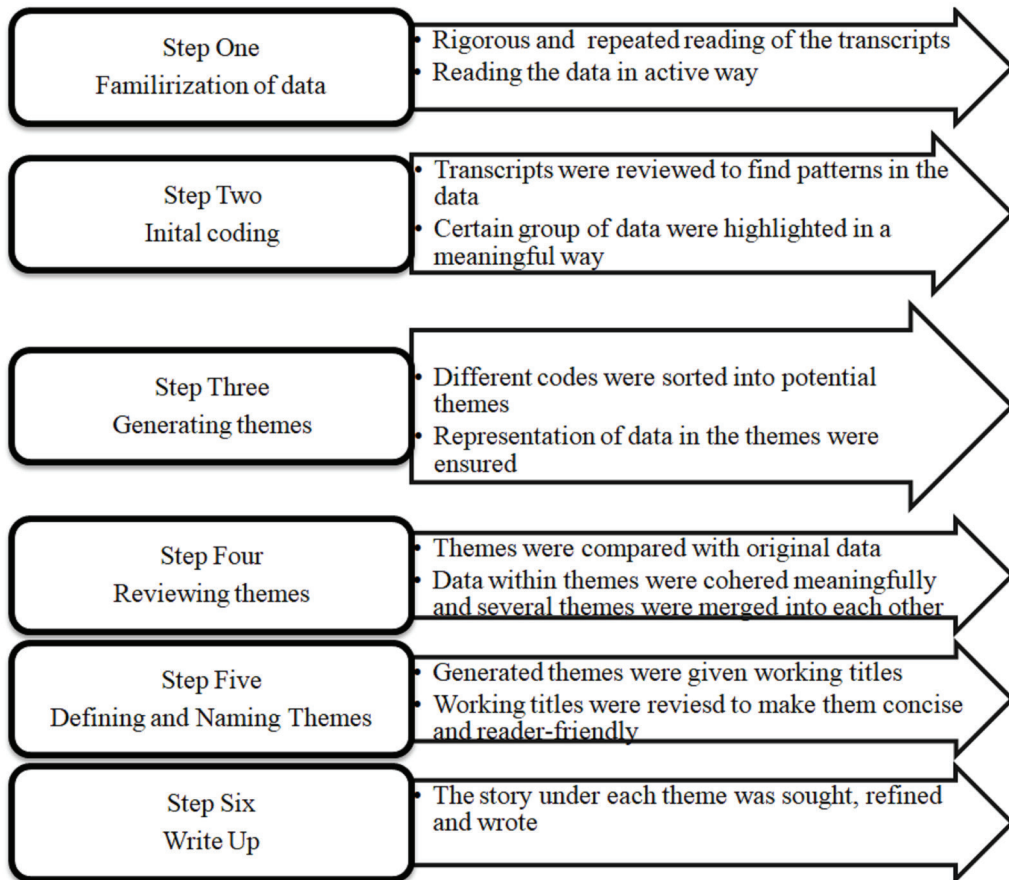


Fig 3: Thematic analysis process adapted from Barun and Clarke (2006)

Findings

Findings from the aspects of disability-inclusive education (enrolment and participation of students with disability, accessibility of the existing infrastructure and setting, concept and attitude of the stakeholders, and inclusive teaching-learning practice) from the view of different stakeholders of secondary education in Bangladesh are presented in this section.

Disability-inclusive education practice in Secondary Schools

The findings support understanding the challenges of inclusive education practice in the secondary schools of Bangladesh.

Enrolment and participation of Students with Disability

Each sampled observed school has two to six students with disabilities in classes VI to X. Teachers have informed that one or two students come for enrolment every year. Whenever they come, the students with disabilities get admission under the quota provision.

The present study noticed dropout rate among students with disabilities is higher. Therefore, it attempted to understand the causes of non-completion from the opinions of inclusive education experts and teachers. Not getting the required exceptional support, disabled students' family reasons, lack of social cooperation, students' lack of motivation and unwillingness, and school failure are the main reasons for these students' dropout. As Exp 01 explained,

Inclusive education is not very accessible in urban schools, especially in the schools of Dhaka. All students can't attend the same school in the urban areas for high costs, rigid rules-regulations, and non-friendly educational practice.

Teachers have also acknowledged that students with disabilities show lower interest in and outside classroom activities. As T 06 stated, "In most of the cases, students with disability are irregular. Absenteeism, giving less attention in classroom activities, and rising excuses are very common among them". Similarly, another teacher (T 05) added, "Among the students with disability lower classroom participation is seen especially in math, science and practical work-based subjects.

One of the teachers (T 03) focused on the role of the school and administration in disabled students' participation. In his voice, "Schools do not provide any specialized support (Assistive devices, individual support, etc.) to the students with disability. There is no scope for extra time or help to enhance their school performance".

Findings from SFGDs found that students with disabilities usually have limited friends; they are introverts and not regular in playgrounds. Schools or teachers don't provide them with psychological and emotional support to increase their participation. Additionally, non-disabled peers do not receive any information or guideline on how to respond to their disabled peers and accept them as their friends.

Accessibility of the existing infrastructure and setting

It is evident from the study that the infrastructure of the observed school buildings was not accessible for the independent movement of students with a disability except on the ground floors. Classroom facilities, including seating arrangement, teacher's desk, position of whiteboard/blackboard, space, facilities for using teaching aids, electricity, ICT and other facilities, and light and ventilation system, were also highlighted as barriers in the teacher perceptions. Respondent teachers were not happy with these facilities. As T 02 illustrated, "Special need students need specialized facilities like a ramp, lift, and special desk. We don't have these facilities in our school".

It was also revealed in the students' discussion that school infrastructure, especially the classroom, corridor, lab, and toilets, are not accessible for students with disability. Many students agreed that the classroom, seating facilities, and following board instructions are challenging due to the large class size. As students in SFGD 1 stated, "Most of the time, it is difficult to manage a comfortable seat, there it is very challenging for students with disability to find the appropriate seat for themselves. Sometimes it becomes impossible to follow the blackboard".

The study found unsupportive infrastructures as a significant challenge to implementing disability-inclusive education. Respondents suggested the schools need further infrastructural support and support for disability-inclusive education-focused instruction technology design. Thus, the schools need to be supported with further financial resources. As Exp 01 commented,

Presently, school settings are not so supportive of implementing disability-inclusive education. Catchment area selection, biased admission, and teachers' teaching quality are the major barriers to implementing inclusive education. The salary is proportional to the teachers' quality and both need to be enhanced.

Inclusive teaching-learning practice

Just over half of the teachers feel that it is very hard to teach all types of children in the same class. Concerns were expressed about class size, time, and work pressure in the teacher interviews. Reasons for these concerns were described as follows:

We have to work more than 40 hours per week. For the huge class load, it is impossible to give extra time and care for the students with disabilities. (T 09)

Disabled students need intensive care, which is impossible in a regular classroom. Because here we do not have adequate time to specially deal with them. (T 05)

Another reported problem is the unavailability of teaching-learning aids, assistive devices, and support materials in the classroom. Many of the teachers complained: '*the authority is not supportive*', '*school don't provide resource*', and '*they (students with disability) need specialized equipment (assistive device) that we don't have.*' Very few secondary schools have some equipment like posters, charts, and flashcards as teaching-learning materials.

Concerns regarding teacher training are more widespread. Respondent teachers knew the legal provision of Bangladesh that mandates including all children in the same quality educational opportunities, but they neither understand how that can be mainstreamed nor are aware of who-when-how that should happen. As T 04 mentioned, "Teachers of special schools are trained to teach students with disability, we don't know how to manage them".

Respondent teachers of the study suggested that *'training is mandatory'*, *'authorities should provide education materials'*, *'improving classroom infrastructure is crucial'*, and *'existing policies need to reinforce'* for implementing disability-inclusive education.

SFGDs reported special care, psychological and emotional counselling and guidance to students with disability were not common. But they found positive behaviour from teachers most of the time. They explained: *'teachers behave well'*, *'show no discrimination'*, and *'support them (students with disability) in the classroom'*.

The general curriculum produced by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is followed in each of the selected schools. All three stakeholders informed that curriculum modification or flexibility was never practised. It was also found that the use of braille, abacus, tactile aid, auditory aid, ICT support, or any other types of specialized equipment were absent in classroom teaching. All students including students with disability experience uniform assessment techniques. As one of the students with disability in SFGD 04 mentioned, "Question papers are printed and reading a printed document is impossible for me. For this reason, I miss some information, and my results fall"

Perception of the stakeholders

For a successful implementation of disability inclusion, positive attitudes seem to be a vital issue (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Aligning with this concept teachers, students, and parents' attitudes toward the selected secondary schools are elaborated on in this paper as an important factor.

Perception of Teachers

Most of the interviewed teachers regarded, bringing students with disability into the mainstream classroom as disability-inclusion. Opinions about disability-inclusion were: *'a system which brought students with disability under the same roof,' 'teaching them in the same class' and 'same teacher teach them (students with disability).'*

Several teachers argued regular classroom is not the right place for students with disability. They believe *'Inclusive Education is not for those who severely need special care'*, *'normal students' progress slowed down for their (students with disability) presence'*, *'in the current teacher-student ratio, it is not possible'*, *'Students with disability can do better in special school.'* Teachers' negative attitude was apparent in the following comments:

Total classroom teaching-learning process will be hampered and become slower for these types of students (students with disability). I will be unable to complete lessons within the class time, even the syllabus cannot be completed within time. (T05)

There are 3 types of students in the classroom: quick learners, slow learners, and mixed ability learners. Students with disabilities can be categorized as slow learners and sometimes slower than general slow learners. So, if I spend more time with them the other students will not get learning benefits. (T10)

A small number of teachers felt differently. They viewed disability-inclusion from the right-based approach. They emphasized ‘teachers’ unwillingness’, ‘flexible rules’, ‘poor salary structure’ and ‘lack of consciousness are the major causes of a non-friendly and less welcoming environments in the classroom

Perception of Students

All the students who participated in the six SFGDs reported that they ‘*maintain a friendly relationship*’ with their peers with a disability, and they have ‘*sympathy for their disabled mates*’. Their cooperative attitude reflected in the following opinions:

We help our friends with disability. We read printed documents to them, helped in lesson recording, shared important information and played together. (SFGD 01)

Still, we are connected with our classmates who have a disability, who dropped out from school. (SFGD 04)

But they never experienced initiatives taken by school authorities to raise awareness and increase acceptance levels among students and parents about disability. They mentioned ‘teachers are positive’ about disability inclusion, but the ‘*classroom teaching-learning was never modified*’ for accommodating students with disability. Respondents also reported parents positively as ‘*they (parents) did not discourage them*’ from making friendship with disabled peers.

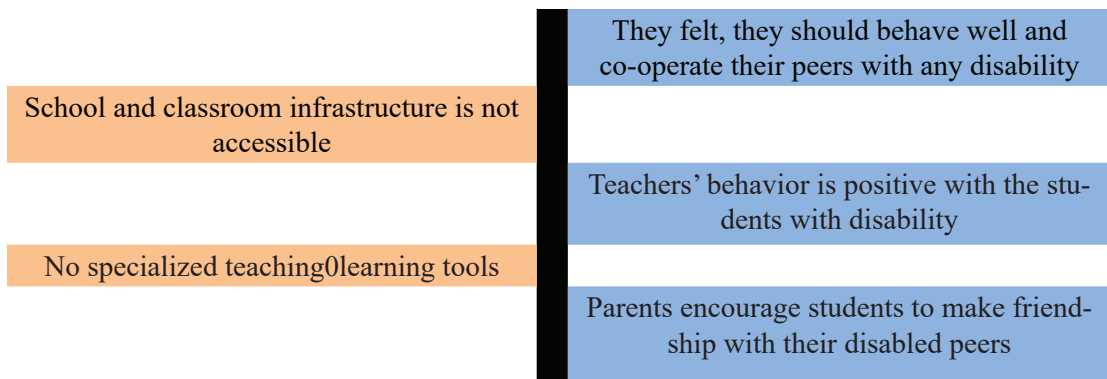


Figure 4: Perception of the students about disability-inclusion

Perception of Parents

The majority of the parents don't have a clear idea regarding disability-inclusive education and its implications. Very few of them have limited understanding. The significant ideas about inclusive education derived from the PFGDs are – ‘*Presence and participation of all types of students in the same class*’, ‘*giving importance to the special needs children in the classroom*’, and ‘*creating a learning environment in the school for the students with disability*’.

Regarding parents' attitudes towards students with disability, one of the parents reported, “A student with a disability studied in the same class with my daughter. That student was excluded from the school due to other parents' complaints” (PFGD 02).

Parents of students with a disability complained they face various problems in the school admission process. They face additional challenges in the later phases of schooling.

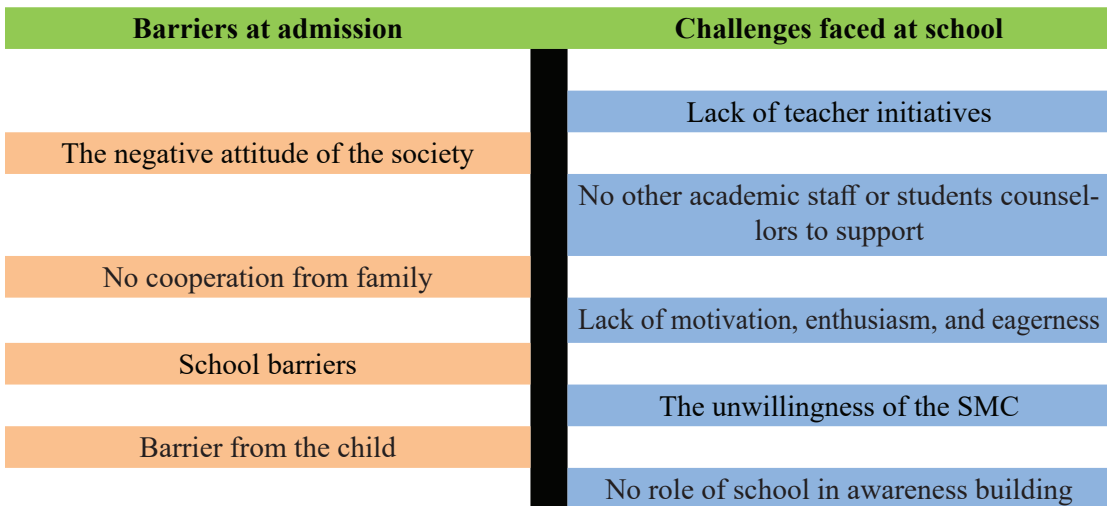


Figure 5: Barriers and challenges students with disabilities faced during school admission

Discussion

This study aimed to understand teachers' classroom practice and perception regarding disability-inclusive education. The study found a nominal enrolment and higher dropout rate among the students with disability at the secondary level. Although a study done by CAMPE (2011) found the rate of enrolment of children with disabilities in primary schools had increased in the past few years because of policies and commitment of the Government of Bangladesh, they found very few students with disabilities in secondary schools. Our study concludes with similar findings. Worldwide it is accepted that People who are disabled frequently face participation barriers and need assistance to participate fully. (Eriksson, 2006).

A CAMPE study identified some reasons for dropping out students with disability from school; the causes include inaccessible school environment, absence of trained teachers, absence of accessible toilets, negative attitude of parents, teachers, and peer groups, inaccessible transportation, and absence of specific policy. The present study noticed not getting the required special support, family factors (unconsciousness and negligence), lack of social cooperation, lack of self-motivation (lower interest in and outside classroom activities) and awareness, failure in exams, and inaccessible school infrastructure are the main reasons for disabled students' dropout. Another study indicated existing infrastructure of the observed schools was found inadequate and not supportive to disability-inclusive education (Choudhury, 2011). None of the school buildings was found designed considering Universal Design for Learning (Lang, 1995).

Large classrooms, fixed class duration, the workload of the teachers, and unavailability of teaching-learning aids, assistive devices and support materials in the classroom were the most common reasons for not including students with disability identified by teachers. Many of them complained: *'do not have adequate time'*, *'the authority is not supportive'*, *'school doesn't provide resources'*, and *'they (students with disability) need specialized equipment (assistive device), they need intensive care.'* A study performed by Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found similar findings. That study reported that variables associated with the educational environment have a significant impact on teachers' attitudes. Accessibility to both physical and human assistance is consistently linked with perceptions towards including students with disabilities in the classroom (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

The practice of curriculum modification and assessment adaptations was not found in the observed schools. Mullick et al. (2012) stated, the nature of the primary education curriculum in Bangladesh is traditional and inflexible Malak (2013) recognized, the examination-based assessment system and absence of functional assessment procedures are the vital factors that influence or develop unfavourable attitudes towards disability-inclusion. However, studies suggested that if curriculum changes are made, students respond more in academic ways. As a result, teachers' engagement decreases in classroom managing activities (Lee, Wehmeyer, & Palmer, 2010).

The findings of the study indicate that most teachers have narrow and negative views about disability-inclusive education. Their conception centred on the access and enrolment issues for students with disability; while lacking other significant areas of disability-inclusion, i.e. acceptance, active participation, and achievement (Ainscow, 2005).

Teachers negative views towards disability inclusion echoed in some of their opinions, *'inclusive classroom is not for students with severe disability,'* *'they need intensive care,'* and *'whole class will hamper their presence.'* A study showed teachers were moderately concerned about including students with disabilities in their classrooms (Shah et al., 2016). In this study, the observed teachers prefer segregated and special education settings for students with disability.

Their perception has been revealed in some of their comments: '*Students with disability can do better in special school*', '*in the current teacher-student ratio, it is not possible*', and '*normal students' progress slowed down for their (students with disability) presence*'. Teachers reported being pessimist about the learning ability of children with disabilities or difficulties in learning even though they received training on inclusive education (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014). Another study found most of the headteachers in Bangladesh having a negative approach toward the inclusion of students with disability (Raqib, 2009).

Malak (2013) identified three potential causes behind teachers' negative views. According the him, the examination-focused assessment system and the absence of functional assessments are the primary causes. Heavy workload is the third factor of demotivation of the teachers. Malak concluded that considering these challenges, teachers supported special settings for students with SEN (Malak, 2013).

The awareness level among the parents of non-disabled students has been found at the nominal level. Even parents of special needs children are unaware of their children's needs. Most of them (parents) prefer special schools for their children (Raqib, 2009). The parents of students with a disability felt that the awareness level among the community members and other parents is required. That could be only possible with the devoted initiatives of the school managing committee or the governing body of the schools. Fair enough that parents of non-disabled students showed their concern about their children's education at least equally to children with disabilities (Antoinette, 2002).

One limitation of this study is that it is a small-scale qualitative research where interpretations are limited and often observations and conclusions are influenced by unconscious biases of personal knowledge and experience. Although the present research cannot rule out these explanations, it contributes to a growing body of evidence in understanding understand the perception and classroom practice of teachers regarding inclusive education. According to a study, teachers more supportive to inclusive education tended to be male, under 40 years old, with less experience (less than ten years), and postgraduate (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014). A study on teachers' perceptions and attitudes can be studied to measure if there are differences in sex, age, experience, academic qualifications and backgrounds.

Conclusion

Stakeholders' perceptions of inclusive teaching practices (Subban & Sharma, 2005) and resources are important factors (Paseka & Schwab, 2020). Perceptions of teachers, parents, and non-disabled peers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular settings have influences on school wide practice. The rate of enrolment of children with disabilities in the secondary schools has increased in the past few years. However, absence of required special support causing dropout of students with disabilities. Teachers narrow and negative

views about disability-inclusive education centred on access and enrolment issues only. Stakeholders including teachers, both the parents of non-disabled and special needs children are unaware of the *right-based approach* to achieving equity and quality. Despite holding a strong legal base for disability-inclusive education in Bangladesh, the field-level practice showing the evidence brought a different perspective. Classroom facilities and teacher training activities need to be enhanced to create an Inclusive Learning Friendly Environment (ILFE), which can be successfully implemented by the joint venture of teachers, students, parents, and society. Since it is crucial to identify strategies for implementing disability-inclusive education, it is imperative to consider inclusive education as a process rather than a product or outcome (Griffith, Cooper, & Ringlaben, 2002) in all the working documents and planning of education in Bangladesh.

Disclosure statement

The authors reported no potential conflict of interest.

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