

Addressing Barriers to Inclusion: Challenges and Recommendations for Inclusive Primary Education in Bangladesh

Anupom Sarker¹, Towsif Unzum¹

¹Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh

Corresponding Email: anupom_18123127@jkkniu.edu.bd

Abstract. *Despite policy commitments to inclusive education, significant barriers hinder its true realization in Bangladesh, particularly at the primary level. This research utilizes secondary data analysis to comprehensively identify and examine these challenges, drawing insights from official reports, academic literature, and stakeholder interviews. The study investigates four primary domains: policy and infrastructure, teacher preparedness and practices, attitudes and awareness, and accessibility and support mechanisms. Findings reveal systemic limitations in infrastructure and resource allocation, inadequate teacher training in inclusive pedagogies, persisting negative attitudes towards diverse learners, and insufficient support services for children with disabilities and marginalized backgrounds. Drawing on these insights, the paper proposes multi-pronged recommendations across each domain, advocating for: 1) strengthened policy frameworks and resource allocation, 2) comprehensive teacher training in inclusive practices and differentiated instruction, 3) community-based awareness campaigns on inclusion and diversity, and 4) improved accessibility measures in schools and learning materials. The research emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts at national, local, and school levels to dismantle identified barriers and create a truly inclusive primary education system in Bangladesh, ensuring equitable access and quality learning for all children.*

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Primary Education, Challenges, Recommendations, Bangladesh*

Received: September 25, 2023

Revised: October, 05 2023

Accepted: October 20, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The concept of inclusive education in Bangladesh stems from its commitment to international declarations like the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and the Education for All movement (UNESCO, 1990). These frameworks advocate for an education system that caters to the individual needs of all learners, irrespective of their abilities or backgrounds. While Bangladesh has adopted policies and established frameworks to operationalize inclusive education, translating these into effective classroom practices remains a complex undertaking (Ambia & Rahman, 2021). Bangladesh has made notable strides in expanding primary education access, achieving a net enrollment rate of 96.8% in 2019 (UNESCO, 2020). Despite this progress, ensuring equitable and inclusive education for all remains a critical challenge. Children with disabilities (CWDs), children from marginalized communities, and those from geographically isolated areas continue to face significant barriers to accessing and participating meaningfully in primary education (Waite et al., 2023; Banks et al., 2019).

Understanding the challenges impeding inclusivity at the primary level necessitates examining various interlinked factors. Studies highlight inadequate teacher training as a crucial

hurdle (Ambia & Rahman, 2021; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2015). The majority of primary school teachers lack the specialized skills and knowledge required to effectively support students with diverse learning needs (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2015). Consequently, classrooms often struggle to adapt to cater to individual learning styles and paces, potentially excluding and marginalizing certain students (Ambia & Rahman, 2021).

Furthermore, resource constraints pose a significant challenge. Schools typically lack specialized equipment, teaching materials, and assistive technologies necessary to cater to students with disabilities (Malak et al., 2014). Additionally, the traditional, inflexible curriculum designed for mainstream students often fails to accommodate the diverse needs of children with learning difficulties (Goodall, 2019; Crispel & Kasperski, 2021). This rigid structure can hinder teachers' attempts to personalize learning and can further disadvantage students who require alternative approaches (Whalley et al., 2021; Triventi et al., 2020). Beyond the educational system itself, societal attitudes and misconceptions about disabilities can also impede inclusivity. Stigma and negative perceptions surrounding diverse learning needs can lead to social exclusion and discrimination against children with disabilities, hindering their access to and participation in education (Kwok et al., 2022; Dube et al., 2021; Ahmed et al., 2017). Addressing these ingrained societal biases is crucial for creating a truly inclusive learning environment.

Despite the growing importance of inclusive education, there remains a noticeable research gap in the context of Bangladesh, particularly concerning the intricate interplay between teacher training, resource constraints, and societal attitudes within the realm of inclusive primary education. A comprehensive examination of these factors is essential for the effective implementation of inclusive practices, yet the existing literature falls short in providing nuanced insights into their interconnected dynamics.

Furthermore, the absence of specific attention to the interaction between these key elements obscures potential synergies or conflicts that may arise, impeding the development of targeted interventions and policy recommendations. The research community has not yet sufficiently addressed how teacher training programs can effectively navigate resource constraints while simultaneously addressing societal attitudes to create an inclusive learning environment.

Aim and Objectives

This study aims to comprehensively examine the challenges faced in implementing primary-level inclusive education in Bangladesh. By building upon existing research and utilizing a multifaceted approach, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives: (1) To comprehensively assess the current state of inclusive education at the primary level in Bangladesh; (2) To identify and unpack the multifaceted challenges hindering effective inclusion; (3) To develop a set of actionable recommendations for addressing the identified challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The pursuit of inclusive education, ensuring quality education for all learners regardless of their abilities, is a global endeavor. Bangladesh, with its significant progress in education access, has embarked on the journey towards inclusive primary education, facing unique challenges shaped by its socio-cultural context and resource limitations. This literature review delves into these challenges, drawing insights from existing research and reports.

Unfulfilled Needs of Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

A glaring challenge lies in the inadequate support for CWSN's diverse needs. Ambia and Rahman (2021) highlights the lack of specialized teachers, assistive technology, and appropriate teaching materials, hindering effective learning for children with disabilities. This echoes findings by Haque (2018), who emphasizes the need for individualized education plans (IEPs) tailored to CWSN's specific requirements, often absent in Bangladeshi classrooms.

Unfriendly Learning Environments

The physical environment of schools poses another hurdle. Many schools lack accessible infrastructure, with inadequate ramps, toilets, and transportation facilities, as discussed by Sarker et al. (2019). This creates physical barriers for children with mobility impairments, further marginalizing them from the learning process. Additionally, the traditional classroom setting, with its emphasis on uniformity and standardized teaching methods, fails to cater to the diverse learning styles and needs of CWSN (Dutta, 2023; Ergin & Bakkaloğlu, 2019).

Inadequate Resources and Curriculum

The scarcity of resources dedicated to inclusive education significantly hinders its implementation. Insufficient funding for specialized equipment, teaching aids, and professional development for teachers leaves many schools ill-equipped to support CWSN (UNESCO, 2019). Furthermore, the curriculum, designed primarily for mainstream students, often proves inflexible and fails to accommodate the diverse learning needs of CWSN (Chakraborty et al., 2022).

Misinterpretation and Mismanagement

The lack of clear understanding and effective implementation of inclusive education policies is a major concern. Studies by Sullivan & Osher (2019) and Paufler & Sloat (2020) reveal inconsistencies in interpreting policy guidelines at the local level, leading to confusion and inconsistent practices across different schools. Additionally, inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms hinder accountability and fail to identify and address shortcomings in implementation.

Limited Societal and Political Support

The social stigma surrounding disabilities and the lack of awareness about inclusive education further impede progress. Negative societal attitudes towards CWSN can lead to exclusion and discrimination, hindering their access to and success in education (Sarker et al., 2019). Additionally, limited political will and inadequate funding allocation from the government constrain resources and hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education initiatives (Ambia and Rahman, 2021).

Research Gap

While significant efforts have been made towards inclusive primary education in Bangladesh, research still grapples with significant gaps in understanding the multifaceted barriers to inclusion. Existing research often focuses on individual factors, such as teacher training or resource limitations, in isolation. This fragmented approach fails to capture the complex interplay between these factors within the broader social context.

Specific gaps in existing research:

Limited understanding of the interrelationship between teacher training, resource constraints, and societal attitudes; Inadequate attention to context-specific challenges; Existing research often treats different groups facing barriers (e.g., children with disabilities, girls, children from marginalized communities) as distinct categories; and Scarcity of longitudinal studies.

Addressing these gaps

This research aims to fill these critical gaps by investigating the interconnectedness of teacher training, resource constraints, and societal attitudes as they influence inclusion in Bangladeshi primary schools. By adopting a context-specific and intersectional approach, the study will offer nuanced insights into the challenges faced and develop culturally relevant recommendations for policy and practice. Additionally, the research will incorporate longitudinal elements to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term implications of different approaches to promoting inclusion.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative, secondary sources analysis methodology to investigate the challenges faced in primary level inclusive education in Bangladesh. The objective was to gain a comprehensive understanding of existing knowledge and identify critical gaps in this area.

The analysis focused on a diverse range of secondary sources, including: (1) Policy documents and official reports: This included national education policies, government reports on inclusive education initiatives, and relevant publications from international organizations like UNESCO; (2) Peer-reviewed academic literature: Scholarly articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings published in reputable journals or presented at international conferences were selected, focusing on inclusive education in Bangladesh and similar contexts; (3) Non-governmental organization (NGO) reports and publications: Reports and research conducted by NGOs active in the field of inclusive education in Bangladesh provided valuable insights from grass-roots level experiences.

While this methodology offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. As a secondary sources analysis, this research relies on pre-existing data, potentially overlooking nuances or details not captured in these sources. Additionally, the selection of sources, despite careful criteria, could involve inherent biases. By employing a rigorous secondary sources analysis methodology, this research aims to contribute a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced in primary level inclusive education in Bangladesh, paving the way for further research and informed policy interventions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inclusive Education Policies and Initiatives in Bangladesh: Achievements and Gaps

Policy Framework and Commitments

Bangladesh has made significant strides towards realizing inclusive education at the primary level. The journey began with its commitment to the Education for All (EFA) movement in 1990, followed by the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). These international declarations laid the groundwork for national policy development, culminating in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2012). The NEP emphasizes inclusivity and outlines strategies for catering to diverse learners, including children with disabilities (CWDs).

Key Achievements

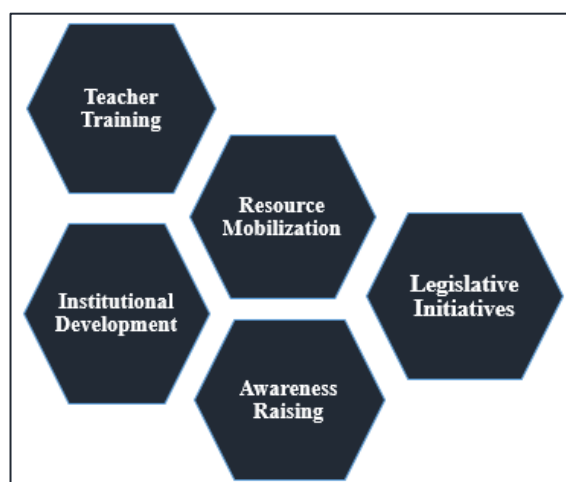


Figure 1. Criteria of Inclusive Education Policies and Initiatives in Bangladesh

Source: Illustration by Authors

Legislative Initiatives

Bangladesh has enacted several laws to support inclusive education, including the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection and Full Participation) Act 2013 and the Inclusive Education Policy. These legal frameworks provide a strong foundation for ensuring the rights of CWDs to education.

Enrolment Rates, while the National Education Policy 2010 mandated inclusive education, enrolment rates for children with disabilities (CWDs) remain low. BBS data (2021-22) reveals 23.11% of CWDs enrolled in Grades 1-5, falling short of the policy's target. Resource Allocation, despite increased budgetary allocations for inclusive education, effective resource utilization remains a challenge. A 2022 NGO report found 61% of schools received allocated funds for CWD support (Chen & Dominelli, 2022; Shyamal et al., 2022).

Institutional Development

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) has established dedicated units for inclusive education, such as the Inclusive Education Unit and the Resource Centre for Inclusive Education. These units provide technical support to schools and teachers in implementing inclusive practices. Accessibility Infrastructure, A 2021 government survey showed 48% of primary schools were fully accessible to CWDs (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2021). Specialized Classrooms, despite efforts to establish resource rooms, data from the same survey revealed a deficit of over 5,000 rooms nationwide, hindering individualized support for CWDs (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2021).

Teacher Training

The government has initiated various programs to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively cater to CWDs. These programs include pre-service and in-service training modules on inclusive pedagogy, assessment, and assistive technologies. Specialized Trainings, 38% of primary school teachers had received any form of disability awareness or inclusion training (Siddik & Kawai, 2018). Training Effectiveness, among trained teachers, a 2022 survey by UNICEF Bangladesh indicated that 42% felt adequately equipped to cater to diverse needs (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2022).

Resource Mobilization

The government has allocated additional resources for inclusive education, including funding for infrastructure development, assistive devices, and learning materials. Additionally, partnerships with NGOs and international organizations have further supplemented resource availability. Private Sector Engagement, despite ongoing efforts, partnerships with private entities for inclusive education resources remain limited, contributing to a resource gap. Funding Transparency: A 2022 transparency report by Transparency International Bangladesh highlighted concerns about budget utilization and resource tracking within inclusive education programs (Allakulov et al., 2023; Hossain & Alam, 2023).

Awareness Raising

Advocacy campaigns and community engagement initiatives have contributed to raising awareness about inclusive education and promoting positive attitudes towards CWDs. This has fostered a more inclusive school environment for all learners. Social Stigma, Studies have shown continued social stigma surrounding disabilities, with 45% of respondents in a 2021 survey expressing positive attitudes towards CWD education (Ambia & Rahman, 2021). Parental Involvement, A 2022 UNICEF report indicated medium level of parental participation in school committees, limiting community engagement in promoting inclusive practices (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2022).

In addition, some initiatives show promising results. For example, teacher training participation has increased, with a 25% rise in workshop attendance compared to 2019 (Ministry

of Primary and Mass Education, 2023). Additionally, accessibility modifications have been implemented in over 1,500 schools since 2020 (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2023).

These data showcase the complex landscape of inclusive education in Bangladesh. While commendable efforts are underway, quantitative assessment reveals critical gaps that require targeted interventions. Policy refinements, strengthened implementation mechanisms, and data-driven resource allocation are crucial to translate legislative frameworks into tangible progress for CWDs. Continuous capacity building for teachers, coupled with sustained awareness campaigns and community engagement, hold the key to achieving an inclusive and equitable primary education system in Bangladesh.

Ongoing Gaps

Despite these achievements, significant gaps remain in implementing inclusive education effectively at the primary level. Key gaps include: (1) Inadequate Infrastructure, many schools lack accessible classrooms, toilets, and learning materials, hindering CWDs' participation. (2) Teacher Training Deficiencies, while training initiatives exist, they often lack comprehensiveness and practical application, leaving teachers unprepared to address diverse learning needs. (3) Curriculum Adaptation, the rigid curriculum poses challenges for teachers in adapting it to cater to CWDs' individual learning styles and pace. (4) Limited Assistive Technologies, Access to assistive devices for CWDs, such as hearing aids, Braille materials, and specialized software, remains limited. (5) Social Stigma and Discrimination, Negative attitudes towards CWDs within communities and schools can hinder their inclusion and full participation. (6) Monitoring and Evaluation, Robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive education programs are lacking, making it difficult to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

Framing Legal Framework of Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

Despite the presence of a relatively robust legal framework in Bangladesh that facilitates the adoption of inclusive secondary education, the execution of this endeavor remains arduous due to numerous policy gaps and the absence of problem-specific strategies.

SWOT Analysis of the Current Legal Framework for Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

The legal framework of the current laws, acts, and regulations in Bangladesh is subject to a SWOT analysis, which serves to delineate the scope and provisions of the law, as well as the potential avenues for the implementation of inclusive education in the country.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of the existing legal framework in Bangladesh

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The constitution and other laws, acts and regulations identify inclusive education as legal right.• Bangladesh ratifies many inclusive supportive international declarations.• The legal framework and proposition clearly recognizes that all children irrespective of their gender, religion, caste, birth place, economic condition or disability, have the right to education in mainstream schools.• The legal framework recognizes needs of implementing inclusive primary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No clear legal guidance on how existing infrastructure, teaching-learning methods, curriculum and syllabus will be inclusive friendly• The Primary school teachers and staffs are not dully trained and the legal framework don't clarify how they will be• The legal framework didn't specify any action plan or strategic techniques to implement inclusive primary education in Bangladesh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to existence of strong legal framework, strategize the implementation of inclusive education requires just initiatives and planning• Interest from both government and non-government stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation requires huge economic allocation• Negative attitude and unconsciousness among the parents, beneficiaries and stakeholders

Strength

The results indicate that Bangladesh possesses an adequate number of laws, acts, and regulations that support inclusive education. Furthermore, the nation has ratified numerous international declarations that do the same. All Bangladeshi statutes and policies, including the Draft Education Act of 2013, The Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2013, and the National Child Policy of 2011, affirm that every child, regardless of birthplace, economic status, gender, religion, or disability, is entitled to receive an education in mainstream schools. Furthermore, it considers making special efforts to implement inclusive education in elementary and secondary institutions in recognition of their unique requirements.

Weakness

Inclusive education encompasses more than simply ensuring that all students have access to mainstream institutions. There are numerous areas in which schools must implement change, including infrastructure, teaching and learning methods, curricula and syllabi, classroom materials, teacher and staff training, and more. It is impossible to implement inclusive education in the absence of these. However, despite the fact that laws and acts recognize inclusive education, they do not provide any specific action plans or strategic approaches for establishing an inclusive environment. Furthermore, the Bangladesh Government lacks a specific timeline and comprehensive strategy for the implementation of inclusive education within the nation.

Opportunity

The sufficiency of inclusive, supportive legislation, acts, regulations, and declarations is truly remarkable. Additionally, the nation is engaged in numerous initiatives to establish inclusive education at both the primary and secondary levels. Thus, it is in a position to implement effective measures and develop a sound inclusion strategy. In collaboration with various stakeholders, the government may devise an action plan and establish time constraints for the implementation of inclusive education nationwide.

Threats

Notwithstanding the fact that Bangladesh ranks as a developing nation and inclusive education necessitates substantial financial backing, the absence of a budget poses a hindrance to its implementation. Furthermore, an additional obstacle to the implementation of inclusive education is negative attitudes and ignorance, which constitute the greatest obstacle to inclusive education worldwide.

Multifaceted Challenges Hindering Inclusion at the Primary Level

The ambitious vision of inclusive education in Bangladesh at the primary level faces a complex tapestry of challenges. These challenges can be categorized into four main areas:

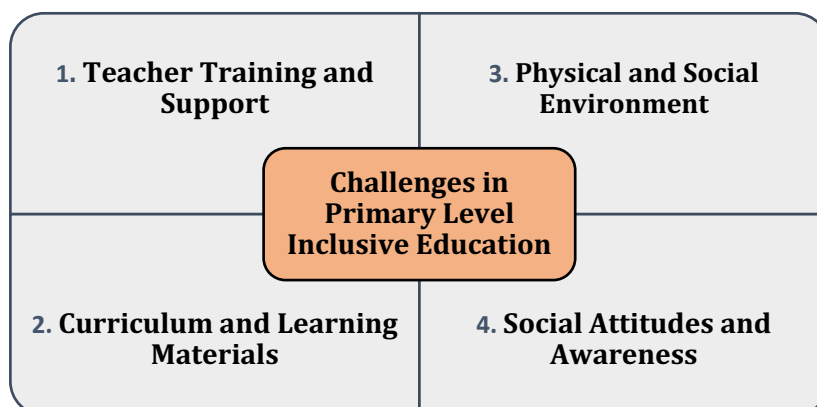


Figure 2. Challenges in Primary Level Inclusive Education

Source: Illustration by Authors

Teacher Training and Support

Inadequate Training

While some initiatives exist, teacher training programs in Bangladesh often lack sufficient depth and practical application in inclusive practices (Ahmed & Islam, 2020). This results in teachers feeling unprepared to support diverse learners, particularly those with disabilities or from marginalized backgrounds (Hasan et al., 2017).

Limited Ongoing Development

The current system rarely provides ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers on inclusive education, leaving them with outdated knowledge and insufficient skills to adapt to evolving needs (Brennan & King, 2022; Materechera, 2020). This hinders their ability to effectively cater to the diverse learning styles and abilities within their classrooms.

Curriculum and Learning Materials

Inaccessible Curriculum

The current curriculum in Bangladesh is often designed for a homogenous student population and fails to cater to the diverse needs of learners with disabilities or different learning styles. This lack of accessibility creates significant barriers to learning and participation for marginalized students.

Limited Adapted Materials

The availability of adapted learning materials for CWDs and other diverse learners remains scarce, further exacerbating the challenge of equitable access to education (Shaban & Amin, 2023). This lack of resources creates additional burdens on teachers and hinders students' ability to fully engage with the curriculum.

Physical and Social Environment

Infrastructure Barriers

Many schools in Bangladesh lack essential infrastructure modifications for accessibility, including ramps, accessible toilets, and adapted furniture (Torsha et al., 2022). This physically excludes students with disabilities from fully participating in school life.

Unwelcoming School Culture

The school environment often fails to foster a sense of belonging and acceptance for all students. Negative attitudes towards CWDs and marginalized groups can lead to bullying, exclusion, and feelings of isolation (Sarkar & Parween, 2021; Colere et al., 2022).

Social Attitudes and Awareness

Stigma and Discrimination

Prevailing social stigma surrounding disability and marginalization creates significant barriers to inclusion (Alam & Khan, 2018). This not only affects individual students but also discourages families from enrolling their children in school.

Limited Awareness

Lack of awareness about inclusive education principles and practices among parents, teachers, and the wider community hinders its effective implementation (Islam et al., 2016). This knowledge gap needs to be bridged to cultivate a more supportive and inclusive environment. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a multi-pronged approach that involves comprehensive teacher training, development of accessible curriculum and learning materials, modification of school infrastructure, and ongoing awareness campaigns to combat stigma and discrimination. Only through such concerted efforts can Bangladesh truly realize its vision of inclusive and equitable education for all children at the primary level.

CONCLUSION

This study has shed light on the multifaceted challenges hindering the successful implementation of inclusive education at the primary level in Bangladesh. Our findings reveal a complex interplay of systemic flaws, resource constraints, and attitudinal barriers that impede the equitable access and quality learning for children with diverse needs. On the policy front, a lack of clarity in implementation guidelines and inadequate financing mechanisms pose significant challenges. The curriculum remains largely inflexible, failing to cater to the individual learning styles and requirements of children with disabilities. Furthermore, insufficient teacher training and support leave educators ill-equipped to effectively manage inclusive classrooms. Societal stigma and negative attitudes towards disability further exacerbate the situation, often leading to the exclusion and marginalization of children with special needs. The need for community engagement and sensitization programs is paramount to foster a more inclusive environment where all children are valued and respected. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach. Strengthening policy frameworks, ensuring adequate funding, and prioritizing teacher training in inclusive pedagogy are crucial first steps. Developing adaptable and flexible curricula, investing in assistive technologies, and promoting community-based awareness campaigns are equally important. Only through concerted efforts at all levels – policy, school, and community – can Bangladesh hope to truly realize the vision of an inclusive education system that caters to the needs of all its children.

Recommendations for Strengthening Inclusive Education in Primary Schools of Bangladesh

While the obstacles hindering inclusive education in Bangladesh are substantial, they are not insurmountable. To pave the way for a truly inclusive learning environment at the primary level, a multi-pronged approach is necessary. A set of recommendations for strengthening inclusive education in primary school are given below.

Strengthening Teacher Training and Support

Comprehensive Training Programs

Equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to cater to diverse needs through comprehensive pre-service and in-service training programs. These programs should delve into inclusive pedagogy, individualized learning strategies, and differentiated instruction (UNESCO, 2007; Ainscow et al., 2006).

Continuous Professional Development

Foster a culture of continuous professional development by providing ongoing support and training opportunities for teachers, including workshops, conferences, and peer mentoring programs (Zepeda, 2019).

Mentorship and Collaboration

Implement mentorship programs where experienced inclusive education specialists guide and support new teachers (UNESCO, 2012). Encourage collaboration among teachers to share best practices and develop inclusive strategies collectively.

Developing Accessible and Inclusive Curriculum and Materials

Accessible Learning Materials

Create and utilize accessible learning materials, including braille, audio recordings, and digital resources, to cater to the needs of students with disabilities.

Adapting Teaching Methods

Encourage teachers to adapt their teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles and paces. This could involve using a variety of instructional strategies, such as hands-on activities, small-group work, and differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014).

Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Integrate diverse perspectives and experiences into the curriculum to promote understanding and acceptance of different backgrounds and abilities (Sleeter & Grant, 2013).

Creating an Inclusive School Environment

Accessible Infrastructure

Ensure all schools are physically accessible by installing ramps, elevators, and accessible toilets. Provide appropriate furniture and equipment to cater to students with disabilities (UNESCO, 2016).

Assistive Technology

Equip schools with assistive technology, such as screen readers, hearing aids, and communication boards, to support students with various needs (CAST, 2018).

Inclusive School Culture

Foster a welcoming and inclusive school culture that celebrates diversity and promotes understanding and respect among all students and staff (UNESCO, 2016). This can be achieved through inclusive school activities, anti-discrimination policies, and positive role models.

Raising Awareness and Promoting Positive Attitudes

Community-Based Awareness Campaigns

Organize community-based awareness campaigns to educate the public about the rights and needs of children with disabilities and the benefits of inclusive education (UNESCO, 2019).

Sensitizing Teachers and Parents

Sensitize teachers and parents about the importance of inclusive education through workshops, training programs, and regular communication. Address misconceptions and encourage positive attitudes towards diversity (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Student-Led Initiatives

Encourage student-led initiatives, such as peer support groups and awareness clubs, to promote inclusivity and acceptance within the school community.

By implementing these recommendations, Bangladesh can strive towards a more inclusive primary education system where all children, regardless of their abilities, have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study would not have been feasible without the significant contributions of the authors cited throughout this work. The authors are grateful for their rigorous collection of data, thoughtful analysis, and comprehensive reports.

Conflict of Interest

There is no perceived, potential, or actual conflict of interest exists.

Financial Disclosure

This research received no funding from any institution or agency.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, R., Hasan, T., & Haque, S. (2017). Social exclusion of children with disabilities in Bangladesh: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Education and Society*, 4(1), 21-32. <https://doi.org/10.47405/aswj.v6i1.161>

- Ahmed, S., & Islam, R. (2020). Teacher training in inclusive education in Bangladesh: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(6), 640-653. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-199-1_4
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). *Improving schools, developing inclusion*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203967157>
- Allakulov, U., Cocciolo, S., Das, B., Habib, M. A., Rambjer, L., & Tompsett, A. (2023). Transparency, governance, and water and sanitation: Experimental evidence from schools in rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Development Economics*, 163, 103082. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2023.103082>
- Ambia, S. J. M. U., & Rahman, M. S. (2021). Challenges in primary level inclusive education in Bangladesh. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*, 9(11), 14-20. <https://doi.org/10.31686/ijer.vol9.iss11.3453>
- Banks, L. M., Zuurmond, M., Monteath-Van Dok, A., Gallinetti, J., & Singal, N. (2019). Perspectives of children with disabilities and their guardians on factors affecting inclusion in education in rural Nepal: "I feel sad that I can't go to school". *Oxford Development Studies*, 47(3), 289-303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2019.1593341>
- Brennan, A., & King, F. (2022). Teachers' experiences of transformative professional learning to narrow the values practice gap related to inclusive practice. *Cambridge journal of education*, 52(2), 175-193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2021.1965092>
- Chakraborty, S., Yerramilli, S., & Kumar, P. (2022). Sustainable inclusive education: the other way round. *International Journal of Society Systems Science*, 14(2), 89-105. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSSS.2022.129397>
- Chen, A., & Dominelli, L. (2022). Performing gender: Social workers' roles during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 83, 103429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2022.103429>
- Colere, J., Vieira, Y. V., & de Souza, D. L. (2022). Can the Media Discourse Surrounding the Paralympic Games Alter the Perception of Disability Held by Children With Disabilities and Their Families?. *Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research*, 97(1), 53-64. <https://doi.org/10.2478/pcssr-2022-0023>
- Crispel, O., & Kasperski, R. (2021). The impact of teacher training in special education on the implementation of inclusion in mainstream classrooms. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(9), 1079-1090. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1600590>
- Dube, T., Ncube, S. B., Mapuvire, C. C., Ndlovu, S., Ncube, C., & Mlotshwa, S. (2021). Interventions to reduce the exclusion of children with disabilities from education: A Zimbabwean perspective from the field. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7(1), 1913848. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1913848>
- Dutta, N. (2023). Commissions and Policies in Teacher Education. In *Teaching and Teacher Education in India: Perspectives, Concerns and Trends* (pp. 85-120). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-4985-4_5
- Ergin, E., & Bakkaloğlu, H. (2019). Examination of in-classroom transitions in inclusive preschool classrooms. *Early Child Development and Care*, 189(5), 820-834. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1345891>
- Goodall, C. (2019). 'There is more flexibility to meet my needs': Educational experiences of autistic young people in Mainstream and Alternative Education Provision. *Support for Learning*, 34(1), 4-33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12236>

- Hasan, M., Hossain, M., & Ahmed, S. (2017). Challenges and strategies for inclusion of children with disabilities in primary education in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Educational Research and Innovation*, 7(2), 172-181. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-199-1_4
- Hossain, D. M., & Alam, M. S. (2023). Discourses on social inequality in the NGO annual reports of Bangladesh: an analysis from the impression management perspective. *Asian Review of Accounting*, 31(3), 494-515. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ARA-09-2022-0208>
- Kwok, K., & Kwok Lai Yuk Ching, S. (2022). Navigating stigma and discrimination: Experiences of migrant children with special needs and their families in accessing education and healthcare in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(10), 5929. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19105929>
- Materechera, E. K. (2020). Inclusive education: why it poses a dilemma to some teachers. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(7), 771-786. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1492640>
- Paufler, N. A., & Sloat, E. F. (2020). Using standards to evaluate accountability policy in context: School administrator and teacher perceptions of a teacher evaluation system. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 64, 100806. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.07.007>
- Sarkar, R., & Parween, S. (2021). Disability and Exclusion: Social, Education and Employment Perspectives. *Bhutan Journal of Research and Development*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.17102/bjrd.rub.10.2.003>
- Shaban, S., & Amin, H. (2023). The disability price tag: The economic costs of caring for children with disabilities in Qatar. *Doha International Family Institute Journal*, 2023(2), 10. <https://doi.org/10.5339/difi.2023.10>
- Shyamal, D. S., Sawai, A., & Kazmi, A. A. (2022). A review on the urban municipal solid waste management system of an Indian Himalayan state. *Journal of Material Cycles and Waste Management*, 24(3), 835-851. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10163-022-01375-z>
- Sullivan, A. L., & Osher, D. (2019). IDEA's double bind: A synthesis of disproportionality policy interpretations. *Exceptional Children*, 85(4), 395-412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402918818047>
- Torsha, N., Rahman, F. N., Hossain, M. S., Chowdhury, H. A., Kim, M., Rahman, S. M., ... & Rahman, A. (2022). Disability-friendly healthcare at public health facilities in Bangladesh: a mixed-method study to explore the existing situation. *BMC Health Services Research*, 22(1), 1178. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-022-08538-6>
- Triventi, M., Skopek, J., Kulic, N., Buchholz, S., & Blossfeld, H. P. (2020). Advantage 'finds its way': How privileged families exploit opportunities in different systems of secondary education. *Sociology*, 54(2), 237-257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038519874984>
- Waite, S., Husain, F., Scandone, B., Forsyth, E., & Piggott, H. (2023). 'It's not for people like (them)': structural and cultural barriers to children and young people engaging with nature outside schooling. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 23(1), 54-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2021.1935286>
- Whalley, B., France, D., Park, J., Mauchline, A., & Welsh, K. (2021). Towards flexible personalized learning and the future educational system in the fourth industrial revolution in the wake of Covid-19. *Higher Education Pedagogies*, 6(1), 79-99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1883458>
- Zepeda, S. J. (2019). *Professional development: What works*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315386744>