



FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

Transition of Students with Disabilities from Special School to Mainstream Inclusive Education in Bangladesh Context

Submitted by

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ACRONYM

ASD	<i>Autism Spectrum Disorder</i>
BMIS	<i>Baptist Mission Integrated School</i>
COVID	<i>Corona Virus Diseases</i>
CPEA	<i>Compulsory Primary Education Act</i>
DPE	<i>Directorate of Primary Education</i>
FGD	<i>Focus Group Discussion</i>
GPS	<i>Government Primary Schools</i>
HI	<i>Humanity and Inclusion</i>
IER	<i>Institute of Education and Research</i>
KII	<i>Key Informant Interview</i>
MMCH	<i>Mymensingh Medical College Hospital</i>
MoE	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
MoPME	<i>Ministry of Primary and Mass Education</i>
NAEM	<i>National Academy for Educational Management</i>
NCTB	<i>National Curriculum and Textbook Board</i>
NDD	<i>Neuro-Developmental Disabilities</i>
NEP	<i>National Education Policy</i>
PECE	<i>Primary Education Completion Examination</i>
PEDP	<i>Primary Education Development Programme</i>
PTA	<i>Parents Teacher Association</i>
PTI	<i>Primary Teachers Training institute</i>
SDG	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
SMC	<i>School Managing Committee</i>
SPSS	<i>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</i>
SWD	<i>Students with Disabilities</i>
TLP	<i>Teaching Learning Process</i>
UEO	<i>Upazila Education Office</i>
CRPD	<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>

ABSTRACT

Transition is a major ecological shift that poses considerable social, emotional, academic and organizational challenges. It is commonly assumed that the school transition is especially difficult for students with disabilities including Autism and other special needs. Thus, the transition is considered as an ongoing process where levels of support should be adjusted accordingly. In particular, students with disabilities need support to learn how to manage change and to build resilience. In this regard, teachers can help students develop a positive attitude to change by encouraging their sense of self-worth, confidence as a learner, independence, and optimism about their capabilities and potentials.

The study followed a mixed approach where both quantitative and qualitative dimensions were investigated through different tools. The respondents were selected from special school and mainstream school teachers, parents of children with disabilities, school managing committee representatives, local education officials, inclusion experts and child-educational psychologist from different parts of Bangladesh.

In this study, the existing policy, guideline, circular, documents have been reviewed in the lens of transition and inclusion of students with disabilities. In addition, current practices of transition and inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education setting was explored in line with criteria (equal access, equitable acceptance, active participation, and learning outcome achievement) set by Directorate of Primary Education through Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-III). Moreover, every aspect and dimension of functional inclusive education in the socio-economic perspective of Bangladesh has been examined throughout the study. In this procedure, the current situation, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges were presented for transition and inclusion issues. Different types of instruments were used to collect data from different respondents in the field level and various analytical frameworks for both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (in-depth interview, focus group discussion) aspects and methods (descriptive, narrative, thematic analysis, case studies) were employed to describe, analyze, extract and present the findings in accordance with the study objectives.

The factors which influence the transition process and inclusive education in mainstream education were also identified from qualitative data. Lack of relevant policy and documents, lack of teachers' preparedness and teacher training, lack of different resources and materials, lack of social and community awareness and sensitization, lack of school and administrative collaboration and support were found very significant variables for effective transition and inclusion process in Bangladesh context. It can be mentioned that the findings from this study are much aligned with the other studies related to inclusive education for students with disabilities in primary education context of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is still struggling with some issues of quality education in the basic education level those can be resolved through inclusive approach to education. Effective transition and inclusion of the students with disabilities in the mainstream primary education can play a vital and dynamic role in implementing the Rights and Protection Act for Persons with Disability 2013, Policy Guidelines for Special Education 2018, Article-24 of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Goal-4 of Sustainable Development Goals (equitable quality inclusive education for all) in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER : ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

'Transition' can be understood as the internal process in the mind which takes place when students undergo change and pass from the familiar to the unknown, responding to cultural, social, and cognitive challenges (Perry & Allard, 2003; Prescott & Hellstén, 2005). Change is something that happens to people, and they may or may not agree with it. Whereas change can happen quickly, making an effective transition when faced with change can often take longer.

Transition is a major ecological shift that poses considerable social, emotional, academic and organizational challenges. It is commonly assumed that this school transition is especially difficult for children with disabilities including Autism and other special needs. Thus, the transition is viewed as an ongoing process where levels of support should be adjusted accordingly (Jindal-Snape, 2010). In particular, students with disabilities need support to learn how to manage change and to build resilience. Teachers can help students develop a positive attitude to change by encouraging their sense of self-worth, confidence as a learner, independence, and optimism.

It is necessary to value the guiding principles of school transition of students with disabilities. For example, it - acknowledges a student's right to an appropriate education, is a collaborative process, is student-centered and promotes independence and self-advocacy, reflects inclusive practices, and so on. The transition plan should identify goals consistent with the student's areas of strength and needs, define the actions that are necessary, year by year, to help the students achieve the goals, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the student, family, and school staff.

Students with disabilities are increasingly being educated in the mainstream school setting, reflecting a policy of inclusion and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, in Bangladesh. Commonly students with disabilities commence their education in a segregated setting of a special school, transitioning to mainstream education either in primary or in secondary school after a process of skills development. For each student with a disability, school transition is a unique and complex process that requires in-depth study in our educational context.

Transition planning can occur at many points across the school years. Key transition points include home to school, grade to grade, school to school, and school to the community. To facilitate effective

transition planning, some issues should be considered at each of these transition points. The proposed study aims at exploring the transition of school to school, i.e. from special school to mainstream school in the current socio-educational context of Bangladesh.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The global drive for universal education has seen increasing numbers of students, including those with disabilities, attending primary through secondary education. However, in many countries including Bangladesh, the majority of students with disabilities struggle to progress to, and subsequently succeed in mainstream education (World Bank report, 2017). Most of the schools tend to deny transition, the access of students from a special school, as their readiness for inclusive pedagogical practice is far away than the requirement. The transitioning students face a range of challenges when they enter the mainstream school from their previous special setting. Often this is because they are not supported in their transition to the inclusive phases. They either cannot move to the mainstream inclusive school at all, or they drop out after the transition happens because their new teachers' negative attitudes, poor inclusive teaching skills, knowledge, and understanding impede to include them in teaching-learning activities.

In addition, while special school provision has grown, the number of inclusive schools has not always increased at the same pace. Added to this, special education is not free like primary education in our country, rather it is sometimes costly. Families of children with disabilities are often among the poorest in a community in Bangladesh, unable to afford the costs of special school (UNESCO, 2006).

Thus, all students with disabilities encounter potentially disruptive or upsetting transition periods during their education as they move from familiar surroundings to unfamiliar ones. They may experience emotional, social, behavioral, developmental, or academic challenges that can adversely affect their school life. The school also shows reluctance to ensure peer and staff support and cross-institutional administrative collaboration for the effective transition as well as a resourceful continuation in the mainstream school.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Transition is considered as a pre-requisite of inclusive education which has been a national education agenda in the last decade. National and global commitment regarding the right to education in mainstream public institutions has been envisaged for many years. Bangladesh constitutional provision (Article 27, 28, 29), Compulsory Primary Education Act 1991, Disability Welfare Act 2001, Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II and onward), Bangladesh National Education Policy 2010, Rights and Protection Act for Persons with Disability 2013, Policy Guidelines for Special Education 2018, Article-24 of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Goal-4 of Sustainable Development Goals (equitable quality inclusive education and life-long learning)- all legal documents have been taken into account to embed transition and inclusion in mainstream education. In view of that, the transition issue necessitates being methodically studied for implementing the aforesaid agendas.

Previous research has highlighted the importance of the transition to school for young students with disabilities and their families. A student's successful transition and adaptation to school are likely influenced by several factors, including academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive competencies. In particular, students with developmental and intellectual disabilities may be at heightened risk for early school difficulties, in part due to their deficits in cognitive and adaptive behaviors. Hence, the diverse range of such challenges needs to be examined.

Current Government policy in Bangladesh regarding the education of students with disabilities and other special educational needs is one of increasing emphasis on including as many of them as possible in mainstream schools (MoE, 2018). This is in line with an international trend towards increased inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2003; Tilstone, Florian & Rose, 2008). However, mainstream schools are not always disability-friendly in various aspects. Therefore, school readiness for this purpose requires systematic investigation.

In order to support independence and full participation into the community, young children with disabilities, and in particular children with complex additional support requirements need to be appropriately included into the national education system with each student provided with individual support and teaching intervention during periods of school transition which should be considered as a social process. In this regard, school transitions

are also influenced by the different social contexts and ecological systems that are experienced by the child. Then the potential factors regarding the issue can be explored through the lens of inclusive pedagogy.

If the transition cannot be happened appropriately the students with disabilities will remain in the segregated setting that can be a barrier of achieving the educational rights and hinder their full development of potentials. Therefore, the overall transition process of students with disabilities, from special school to mainstream school, including students' and family's preferences and interest, school readiness, cross-institutional professional relationship and collaboration, teachers' preparedness in terms of teaching-learning strategies, learning assessment, supply and use of resources and so forth should be explored from the view point of right-based equitable quality inclusive education and student-centered lifelong learning. In addition, the proposed study can be a great resource for future policy direction for special and inclusive education in Bangladesh as there is a scarcity of such significant study on transition to date.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The overall objective of this study was to explore the transition process of the students with disabilities from special school to mainstream inclusive school in Bangladesh context.

Specific objectives

- To review the current trends and issues of inclusion of the students with disabilities in our mainstream education system of Bangladesh.
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses in existing transition process of the students with disabilities in educational context of Bangladesh.
- To investigate the factors which influence successful transition for effective inclusion in present mainstream education of Bangladesh.
- To document a few cases of remarkable transition stories of the students with disabilities in school education of Bangladesh.

1.5 Scope and limitations of the Study

The proposed study aimed at reviewing the transition process of the students with disabilities from special educational setting to mainstream inclusive school setting in Bangladesh. For the study the following scopes of work were designated-

- ✓ Review of current policies, acts, guidelines, circulars regarding inclusive education and transition for students with disabilities in Bangladesh
- ✓ Assessment of curricular activities including class participation, examination, evaluation etc. of schools for effective transition and its continuity
- ✓ Observation of the required and existing facilities of school for welcoming the transitioning students from special settings
- ✓ Being acquainted with the perceptions of different stakeholders such as parents, teachers of both special and inclusive schools, local education officials, special educationists, educational psychologists and the students themselves
- ✓ Finding out the gaps in different points of attention such as communication, collaboration, teaching and other curricular practices, attitudes, administrative supports and resources and so on

The study came across some pre-determined limitations such as lack of literature and no research findings on the issue in Bangladesh context, time constraint to carry out a longitudinal study, challenges of data collection through interview of some respondent students as they had difficulties in expressive language due to hearing or intellectual or developmental disorder.

Apart from the limitations, the proposed study delimited from the various aspect as below-

- ✓ It could not be generalized for all the schools and stakeholders as the study sample were not collected from all over the country. Data were gathered only five districts from five divisions of Bangladesh.
- ✓ Not all categories of disabilities were considered while collecting sample students. In particular, students with sensory disabilities (Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment) and Neuro-Developmental Disabilities (Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disabilities) were considered for data collection.

CHAPTER : TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a brief literature review is provided for the understanding of existing literature on transition of special need children from special schools to mainstream schools. Different research articles were reviewed by the researchers to gain an understanding of the topic. The researcher organized the literature review in the following categories: 1) Definition of SEL, 2) Scope of SEL, 3) Background of SEL, 4) Benefits of SEL, 5) Disadvantages of SEL, 6) Teacher's role in SEL, 7) Teachers' perception of SEL and 8) SEL practices in Bangladesh.

2.2 Literature review

Transition from a special education classroom to a mainstream school classroom is a complex, socially and culturally mediated process that involves students, their families, special education teachers, mainstream classroom teachers, school learning support officers (SLSOs) and school executives (Martin et al., 2019). The recent move towards inclusive education for students with ASD reflects a rights-based approach to disability (UNESCO, 1994). In accordance with international frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this approach stresses that students should not be denied equal opportunity to education.

Inclusive educational practices offer students with ASD multiple advantages, such as access to more academically advanced learning than they would likely receive in segregated classrooms and the development of stronger social skills through interaction with their classmates (Keane et al., 2012). The inclusion of children with autism can also be advantageous for all students if it is done in an appropriate manner with adequate professional support (Goodall, 2015; Robertson, Chamberlain & Kasari, 2003). However, the mainstream classroom may be associated with substantial difficulties for students with ASD. Research has found that students with ASD are twenty times more likely to be

excluded and three times more likely to experience bullying than any other group of children (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008).

Deciding on the ‘best’ placement for a particular autistic child or young person is no straightforward task (Lilley, 2014; McNerney et al., 2015). It will likely depend on his or her individual skills and needs, the advice and support parents receive from professionals during the decision-making process (McNerney et al., 2015; Parsons et al., 2011) and on the provision available in their school district, which can vary widely (Lindsay et al., 2005).

Placement decisions can also depend on the family’s situation and preferences. Parents often report wanting a nurturing, flexible and inclusive school environment, with high educational aspirations, emphasizing both academic and life skills, and whose staff have some understanding of autism (Charman et al., 2011). For many parents, such a school is a mainstream school, which allows their child ‘to be integrated with the rest of society, and not to be excluded’ (McNerney et al., 2015; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008).

Parents and educators also underscore the importance of having typical role models, which are thought to foster autistic children’s social development and social relationships (Lord & Hopkins, 1986; Rotheram-Fuller et al., 2010). Autistic children also report the importance of having friends and being accepted by their peers (Williams, Gleeson, & Jones, 2019).

Facilitating successful inclusion is a challenge for education systems worldwide (Strnadová & Cumming, 2015). Inclusive policies and initiatives have been developed internationally but research suggests that even so, placing students with ASD in mainstream school settings does not guarantee inclusion (Lynch & Irvine, 2009; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Rather, there are multiple factors that either facilitate or act as barriers to successful transition and inclusion. Teachers who are supportive of inclusion and have sufficient training can play critical role in facilitating authentic inclusion (Cassady, 2011).

Research indicates that many children with disabilities, even those with severe disabilities, can have some success socially and academically in mainstream settings as long as they have support in the regular class. However, Tobin et al. (2012) interviewed seven parents before and after their child with ASD completed the school transition. These parents reported high levels of anxiety about their child’s capacity to meet the social and academic demands of secondary education and generally believed that support for their child during the transition had been inadequate.

Experience as clinicians, and evidence from the empirical literature, suggests that most children with ASD encounter considerable challenges in mainstream school settings. For example, children with ASD are at elevated risk of being bullied at school (Sterzing et al., 2012), of having teacher-reported emotional and behavior problems (Kaat et al., 2013), of school exclusion (Donno et al., 2010) and of showing lower-than-expected academic attainment given their IQ (Jones et al., 2009). There appear to be substantial barriers to the successful integration of people with ASD into mainstream schools, and a better understanding of these barriers is needed to promote inclusion.

For that matter, the use of flexible and individually tailored educational approaches is crucial. This requires that teachers have an array of adjustments and resource options which can be implemented both in and outside of the classroom environment (Darretxe & Sepúlveda, 2011; Frederickson, Jones & Lang, 2010).

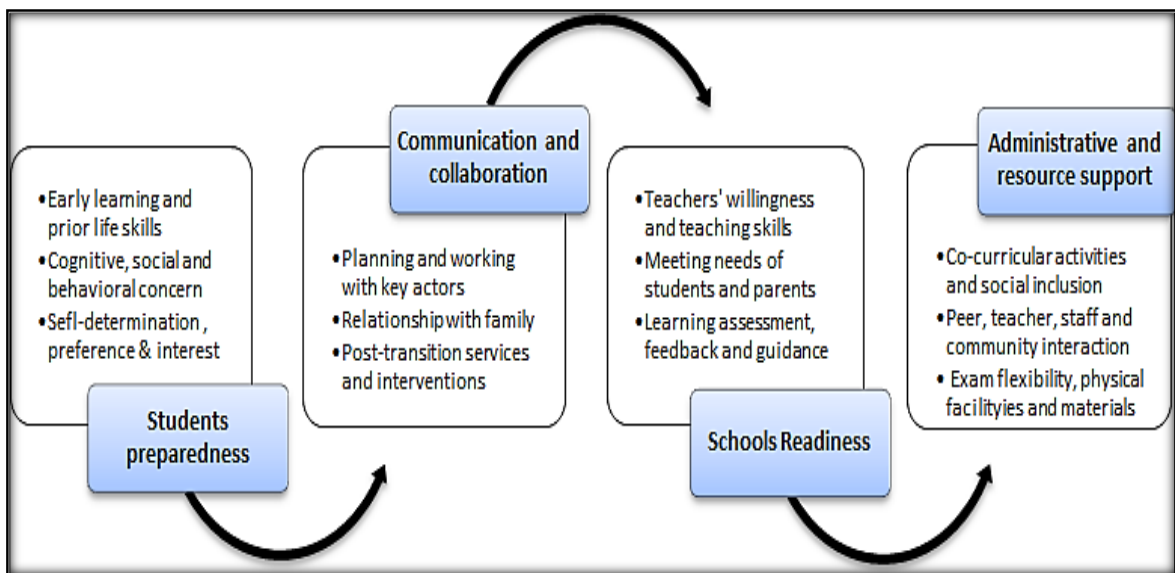
Pupils are taught by different teachers in different rooms for each lesson, moving around the school campus throughout the day. Thus, the transition from primary to secondary school involves a major ecological shift, which makes a number of demands on a child's social, intellectual and organisational capacities (Coffey, 2013). It can be considered one of the most challenging periods in a student's educational career (Zeedyk et al., 2003).

Teachers also benefit from additional training by specialist staff, with respect to specific classroom strategies that can aid in meeting the needs of students with ASD (Costley et al., 2012). These include tactics such as breaking complex tasks into small components; providing additional information/visual supports; having a quiet area for students to withdraw to for anxiety management; and providing a stable/predictable environment and regular short breaks (Darretxe & Sepúlveda, 2011; Frederickson, Jones & Lang, 2010). However, if teachers do not accommodate for characteristics of students with ASD and particularly how they are manifested in school, difficulties with inclusion might arise (Carter, 2014). Supportive parents also facilitate successful inclusion (Carter et al., 2014).

Whilst there is a significant body of literature on transition which has examined the move of students from elementary to high school, there is relatively little scholarship examining the transition from a segregated setting to a mainstream setting for primary age students with ASD (Dixon & Tanner, 2013; Strnadová & Cumming, 2015).

There is also limited research evidence as to the most appropriate model for positive transition experiences for these students (Keane et al., 2012; Costley et al., 2012). The research that is available highlights that many of the factors associated with outcomes for students with ASD in mainstream educational settings are malleable. Moreover, it identifies opportunities for interventions that can take place prior to students transitioning to mainstream education that can have a demonstrable impact on the prospects of successful transition (Keane et al., 2012).

2.3 Conceptual framework



Transition of students with disabilities from special school to mainstream school can be conceptualized by different critical components. Both students and teachers, school and community are integral part of this complex transition process. In the study on transition each associated components should be addressed from the view point of inclusive education. Needless to mention that the components of transition are strongly connected with each other components. Undeniably, the components are very crucial for better understanding of transition that is why all these will be importantly considered in tools development and data collection procedure.

CHAPTER : THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The proposed study employed the mixed method research design- Convergent Parallel Method. The mixed method can be an efficient approach in achieving the set objectives of the study. Mixed method research systematically combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches by including both quantitative and qualitative data in a single research study (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). A convergent parallel design entails that the researcher concurrently conducts the quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research process, weighs the methods equally, analyzes the two components independently, and interprets the results together (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The basic premise of this methodology was that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than doing separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

3.2 Sampling and sampling techniques

Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize the study results back to the population from which they were chosen. In this study, sample schools (both special school and mainstream school) and sample respondents (teachers, parents, students) were determined by purposive sampling method. As transition of students with disabilities is not frequently happened in mainstream primary and secondary schools, the criteria of considering the sample institutions were evidence or experience of transition and inclusive education. Furthermore, the diverse respondents chosen on the same principle based on the issue of interest, availability, and level of engagement with the transition program. Students with disabilities having experience of being transitioned selected as sample for interview, FGD and case study purposes. In this regard, students with different categories of disabilities addressed in this study.

Purposeful sampling is a popular technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of

individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). Among various types of purposive sampling, criterion purposive sampling employed particularly for qualitative part. Criterion purposive sampling involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001). Criterion sampling can be useful for identifying and understanding cases that are information rich. Criterion sampling can provide an important qualitative component to quantitative data. Apart from purposive sampling, convenience sampling technique also employed for quantitative portion of the study. However, in this regard, the study parameters were maintained effectively.

It is well known that qualitative sample size depends on the 'saturation' principle which was considered in the study. Researchers collected data from number of different categories of respondents until the required information are collected for the qualitative portion of this study.

3.3 Sources of data and methods of data collection

Data collection is a standout amongst the most essential stages in carrying on a research. For the proposed study, required data and other information will be collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources include information collected and processed directly by the researcher, such as observations, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Secondary data sources include information retrieved through preexisting sources: research articles, Internet or library searches, etc.

Primary sources of data

To ensure scientific validity of the study parameters and the identified indicators generated from study objectives, special schools (segregated setting) for students with disabilities, mainstream inclusive schools (both Govt. and non-Govt. primary and secondary schools), students with and without disabilities, parents of students with disabilities, teachers of both types of schools, related stakeholders (special educator, inclusive education expert, education psychologist, Govt. officials, SMC members) were the primary sources of data for this study.

Details of data collection plan from primary sources and the methods:

Study Location	Numbers of sample schools			Methods of data collection								FGD	Case study
				Survey		Interview							
	Special school	Mainstream school		Number of respondents (T-Teachers, P-Parents, O-Officials, E-Experts)									
		Primary	Secondary	T-Special	T-Mainstream	T	P	O	E				
Dhaka	03	02	01	3X5=15	3X6=18	3	3	1	3	1	1		
Mymensingh	03	02	01	3X5=15	3X6=18	3	3	1	1	1	1		
Rajshahi	03	02	01	3X5=15	3X6=18	3	3	1	1	1	1		
Khulna	03	02	01	3X5=15	3X6=18	3	3	1			1		
Rangpur	03	02	01	3X5=15	3X6=18	3	3	1			1		
<i>Total</i>	15	10	5	75	90	15	15	5	5	3	5		
	30			165		40							

Secondary sources of data

Secondary sources of data can be the existing different acts, policy, reports, studies, guideline and framework regarding disability, inclusive education, and equitable quality education. National curriculum and teacher education curriculum can also provide essential information.

Collected documents reviewed and analyzed through content and interpretative framework. A set of benchmarks complying with study objectives will be drawn to guide need-base categorical review. The review will also focus on the underlying contexts of a particular statement or fact. When necessary, methodological issue will be critically reviewed in connection of a particular statement or fact being represented in proposed study. The analyzed information will be feed out into the study findings to assess overall status to date with reasons.

3.4 Tools of data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established system, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes. Data collection tools refer to the instruments used to collect data and insights from a targeted and selected group of people to assess pre-defined parameters of a study. Different types of tools developed for data collection purpose in this study. Both conventional and participatory tools of data collection, namely Survey Questionnaire, In-

depth Interview (one to one) Schedule, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guideline, and Case study outline. As Self-, parent- and teacher-report data were the main concern of the data collection, study tools reflected these respondents' diverse range of active and spontaneous participation.

It is worth mentioning that all the tools were prepared in English first and then translated into Bengali for better comprehension of both users and respondents during field research.

i. Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire is a technique for gathering statistical information about the attributes, attitudes, or actions of a population by a structured set of questions. A medium scale survey study part was conducted to generate quantitative information, in particular the statistical status of transition and stakeholders perception, to support the qualitative data. Two survey questionnaires were designed on YES/NO scale (dichotomous type) and positive wording format in this regard. They are-

- One for special school teachers, to catch their insights about transition plan and motivation for inclusion in mainstream
- One for mainstream school teachers, to ascertain their perceptions of sustainable transition in the context of Bangladesh

ii. In-depth Interview Schedule

An interview schedule is basically a list containing a set of structured or semi-structured questions that is prepared to serve as a guide for interviewers, researchers and investigators in collecting information or data about a specific topic or issue. In-depth interview was conducted with diverse type of stakeholders (e.g. students with and without disabilities, teachers including institute head, parents, Govt. officials, educationists, inclusion experts, SMC members etc.) by using semi-structured interview schedule.

Respondent specific semi-structured schedule was followed during interview. The respondents were asked through general opinions to her/his personal viewpoint of a particular theme with reasoning. No leading questions were asked. Interviews were taken in place convenient for the respondent. The interviewer did not judge respondent's opinion in both verbal and non-verbal way and use any reference of previous respondents' answer. To

get adequate response, the researchers used different types of probe, such as silent, overt encouragement, elaboration, ask for clarification and repetition.

iii. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guideline

researchers and a moderator would A focus group discussion involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss on a specific topic of interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions are asked about their perceptions attitudes, beliefs, opinion or ideas on a semi-structured group discussion manner.

The participants in each FGD session ranged 8-10 persons. In past research experience demonstrate that this would be the standard size to maintain group dynamics during session. It is preferred to arrange session in a venue into community which is convenient to the respondents.

Similar to face-to-face interview, the same modalities were applied, adding to that the researcher encouraged equal participation of the respondents through gentle pointing to the non-responsive participants. Two conduct a single FGD session. The FGD session was guided by a written guideline/checklist covering indicators of interest for the transition issues. At the same time variation of response on contextual aspects regarding their statements was allowed.

iv. Case Study (Documentation of Notable Transition Stories) Outline

In general, case study is conceived as an approach of research rather than on particular method of data collection. Few case studies were documented which would be carried out following an approach that allows multiple data collection tools to be undertaken based on the context and need of the information.

In this study, mainly in-depth interview was used to collect their narratives of a particular issue of interest. So, rather than selecting a respondent purposively, the case determined who would be appropriate respondent.

3.5 Methods of data analysis and presentation

The proposed research employed the convergent parallel design, i.e. both quantitative and qualitative approach. Thus, quantitative analyses and qualitative analysis conducted in order to support each other in data analyses and findings presentation. Data analyses and findings presentation were done with regard to the specific objectives of study.

Presentation of data refers to the organization of data into tables, graphs or charts, so that logical and statistical conclusions can be derived from the calculated measurements. Data was systematically presented in several methods - Textual (data are gathered and presented in written and paragraph form including quotation), Tabular (data are organized in statistical table in columns and rows) and Graphical (data are structured and visualized in various graph or diagrams, e.g. bar chart, pie chart, area chart etc). In this purpose, latest version of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23) was used to produce and illustrate the findings.

Study objectives	Sample respondents	Data collection technique	Data collection tools	Data analyses method
i) to review the current trends and issues of inclusion of the students with disabilities in our mainstream education	Teachers Parents Officials	In-depth interview	Interview schedule	Narrative Thematic analysis
ii) to identify the strengths and weaknesses in existing transition process of the students with disabilities in educational context of Bangladesh	Teachers	Survey	Survey questionnaire	Quantitative analysis Descriptive statistics

iii) to investigate the factors which influence successful transition for effective inclusion in present mainstream education of Bangladesh	Students Teachers Parents Officials Experts	In-depth interview Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Interview schedule and FGD Guideline	Qualitative analysis Thematic analysis Triangulation
iv) to document a few cases of remarkable transition stories of the students with disabilities in school education of Bangladesh	Student Teacher Parent	Case study	Case study outline	Qualitative analysis

Analysis and interpretation were done by the core research team coordinated by Team Leader by applying individual expertise. At field, the research assistants wrote transcripts in Bengali from the recorded interview and focus group discussion after completing each day's assigned tasks. Then, the transcription was written as it would be recorded so that none of the information and expressions with particular statement might not missed out. Adding to that, interview and discussion situation were transferred in each transcript for future reference.

The data analysis procedure followed the outline below:

Step 1: Organizing the data

The purpose of the step-1 was to make data more manageable and easy to look and navigate responses to each topic and specific question individually to pick out concepts and themes.

Process

The data consisted of interview transcripts. We have read and re-read the transcripts until we had a general understanding of the content. During reviewing, we wrote notes of our first impressions of data; these initial response became useful later as we interpret the data

The answer was tried to identify and differentiate answer/responses between and across the questions/topics. In the first place, we thought inside the box. Alternatively, we focused focus on relevant response relating specific question. Then we thought outside of the box, in other way we looked at other ideas and themes that have emerged from data. We identified responses in terms of how they are related to questions and in terms of future research consideration.

Step 2: Finding and organizing ideas and concepts

We looked for the following issues:

- Words/phrases used frequently- When looking at the various responses for one particular question, we may find specific words or ideas keep coming up. We made note of the different ideas as different responses were read thoroughly.
- Finding meaning in language- sometimes we can learn about a person's perceptions, attitudes, and feelings about something simply by noticing the words they use to express themselves. Every language and culture has expressions with meanings different than the obvious.
- Watch for the unexpected- This is where we could learn new things we did not expect to hear. It is important to always follow up when a participant seems to be going in a new or unexpected direction. These situations are called "rich points" and are often very valuable.
- Hearing stories- Stories are a way for the interviewee to communicate the point of ideas or symbols indirectly. Many events, themes and meanings can come out of a story. It is important to pay close attention to them and to their meaning.
- Coding and Categorizing Ideas and Concepts-Coding are the process of identifying and labeling themes within data that correspond with the research question we want to answer. Themes are common trends or ideas that appear repeatedly throughout the data. We may have to read through our data several times before we identify all of the themes within them. In each specific interview question there may be multiple codes.

Step 3: Building over-arching themes in the data

Each of the response categories has one or more associated themes that give a deeper meaning to the data. Different categories can be collapsed under one main over-arching theme.

Step 4: Ensuring reliability and validity in the data analysis and in the findings

Validity- The accuracy with which a method measures what it is intended to measure and yield data really represents reality. Validity does not belong in some separate stage of the investigation, but instead as an ongoing principle throughout the entire research process.

Reliability- The consistency of research findings. Ensuring reliability, requires diligent efforts and commitment to consistency throughout interviewing, transcribing and analyzing the findings.

Testing emergent Findings and Hypothesis- As themes and patterns emerge from the data, it is important to go through the data, carefully searching for negative instances of the patterns. These are called “Outliers” (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It is often too easy to discard these since they don’t fit into the patterns and themes of the data, however it is just as important that these are carefully examined and that possible explanations for these outliers are thought out.

Validating/Confirming Findings

Triangulation- Findings are more dependable when they can be confirmed from several independent sources. Their validity is enhanced when they are confirmed by more than one “instrument” measuring the same thing.

Different types of triangulation

- ***Triangulation from different sources:*** for example, interviewing different members of the community who can give different perspectives on a specific question or topic.
- ***Triangulation from different methods:*** looking at the same questions/topics but trying to answer them using different research methods, such as surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews.

- **Triangulation from different researchers:** having two different researchers conduct the same interview, for example, or analyze the same data is a good way to test validity.
- Corroboration of the findings: they are both valid and reliable or
- Inconsistent or conflicting findings: These can elaborate the findings and often lead to more complex and context-respective explanations.
- **Obtaining feedback from participants:** The best way to examine the validity of the research findings and of the researcher's interpretation of them is for the researcher to go back and ask those individuals who participated in the study or who can speak on behalf of them.
- **External validation of coding strategies:** Not only is it important to ensure validity in the research process and findings, but also in the data analysis process. One way to do this is to compare how the researcher have categorized and coded the results into themes with how a colleague would have done it. Randomly select a few passages from questions/topics that the researcher have already coded and analyzed. Acknowledging factors (beyond the interviewer's control at the time) which may have influenced the participant's response
 - Time of day the interview was conducted
 - Were there other people (family members, friends, co-worker) present or within ear shot while the interview was being conducted?
 - These factors, and other like them, can be taken into consideration when going over possible explanations for the findings. They can and often should be included in the section on limitations of the study (in the final report)

Step 5: Finding possible and plausible explanation of the findings

So, what did we find? Start by making a summary of findings and themes

- **Interpretation of data**

Interpretations involve attaching meaning and significance of data. Starting by making a list of key themes and revisiting review notes to factor in initial responses to the data.

Each theme that arose during the coding process was reviewed and similarities and differences in responses from participants with differing characteristics were identified. Also, the relationships among themes were considered to determine how they may be connected. Then the new lessons that have learned about the transition and how those lessons can be applied to different situation of other schools were determined .

- **Analytical frame**

As per requirement of the study report, we considered both aggregate and disaggregate analysis with necessary correlation presented in table or/and diagram format. The interpretation was done as accordingly to factual data on each particular theme.

Comparison between study findings and existing reports have been done in according to the particular issue of interest and followed by log-frame. Changes and underlying contexts was counted with and was interpreted according in order to show progress to date with contexts and assist future direction.

3.6 Managing data validity, reliability, and quality control

Through combination of conventional and argument of dynamics of social research, we maintained data validity, reliability and quality controls. Reliability of information was maintained through creditability, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Collecting data from respondent's perspective, alternatively seeing respondent as key driver of generating information, was adequately met the credibility criteria. Transferability was maintained through collecting contextual data on each specific statement. The statement, i.e. generalization, having adequate contextual information led to generalization of the information might be true for other similar settings.

Dependability actually shows the reliability of the data. This means, when we interview twice, we might get the same information, but in reality it is not possible due nature of short time data collection. Rather we will try to build assumption and get around this fact to across respondent. Falsifying the assumption by respondents will allow the face to be true in similar social contexts.

Finally, since there is debate around subjectivity issue around qualitative research, so we will collect data from inter-subjective position. Member check i.e. asking same issue to

across respondent and continuous cross checking have reduced subjective biased of the research. Besides, triangulation helped to cross check the issue of interest.

For secondary source of information strategic procedure allowed the valid data to be fed into the study parameters. The indicator specific review directed forward contextual explanation of the findings and in relation to the findings of other relevant indicators. If both the information was conformed, then we treated the information as valid. The validity of information was cross checked through reviewing compatibility of the methods and tools in relation to specific information. Use of information from secondary sources was taken in reference and methods where necessary.

3.7 Ethical consideration for dealing with human subject

Conventional research ethical guideline was followed throughout the study.

Consent Prior to interview conduction and recording, written informed consent must be taken for interview, recording, any visual documentation, i.e. photo or video from stakeholder, care giver if child. Interview note was taken in alternative way if disagree for recording. Also prior to interview, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and what thematic issue to be asked.

Anonymity, Deidentification, and confidentiality Information risk was minimized in a standard manner. De-identification data will be done through pseudonymization of two main identity markers, respondent's name and organizational identity was replaced by numeric code and alphabetic code respectively during transcription process. Our disaggregate analysis did not require to re-identify data. Moreover, right to privacy of the respondent's personal information was maintained through seeking consent for interviewing and being a provision of respondent's opportunity to exercise control over information. Issues of confidentiality have been upheld by safeguarding entrusted information. During the research process, we did not share one's information to other except research team for critical discussion over the information. After submission of the report to NAEM, they will be the sole authority to disclosure of information under their rules and regulation. Finally, we will preserve all the raw data-hard copy to locked closet and soft copy will be kept under folder locked system in the computer.

CHAPTER : FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

Required data were collected by using the developed tools. As the overall situation of educational settings and student-teachers' condition has been disrupted due to COVID-19 pandemic, the expected number of respondents could not be reached. The following table is a snapshot of overall data collection for the study. Data analysis has been performed in accordance with the study objectives by employing appropriate data analysis techniques and tools. The findings of the study are presented as descriptive and graphical mode.

Data collection techniques and number of respondents			
Survey <i>(Teachers)</i>	Interview <i>(Teachers, Parents, Officials & Experts)</i>	FGD <i>(Teacher & SMC)</i>	Case Study <i>(SWDs)</i>
34 + 68 = 102	13 + 8 + 7 + 3 = 31	01	05
Special teachers - 34 (Dhaka-11, Chattogram-5, Mymensingh-12, Khulna-6)	Teachers - 13 (Special Teacher-4 and Mainstream Teacher-9)	Participants-09 (F-7 and M-2) in Chattogram	Dhaka-2, Mymensing-2, Chattogram-1 (F-3 and M-2)
Mainstream teachers - 68 (Primary-57, Secondary-11) (Dhaka-21, Mymensingh-15, Khulna-13, Chattogram-19)	Parents of child with disabilities - 08		
	Officials - 07 (DPE-2, ADPEO-1, URC-2, AUEO-2)		
	Experts – 2 (IER,DU-1, PISER,BUP-1)		
<i>Name of the locations indicates division, <u>not</u> district.</i>			

Trends and issues of transition and inclusion

Functional indicators of effective and successful inclusive education outlined in “PEDP-3 IE Conceptual Framework (DPE) have been followed to review the trends of inclusive education in Bangladesh context. The four indicators of the framework is widely followed in Bangladesh for reviewing inclusive education practices in mainstream primary education.

The four indicators have also been followed to see the trends and issues of transition and inclusion in primary schools in this study. The indicators are as follows-



- **Access**

Access, enrollment and attendance of SWDs in mainstream schools have been increased country-wide. However, in many schools, buildings are still inaccessible in terms of inadequate infrastructural facilities, and regular attendance in the class is not always monitored by the authority.

- **Acceptance**

Teachers, officials, staffs and peers have changed their negative attitudes toward students with disabilities as well as educating them within regular classroom. However, school community environment often seems unwelcoming as stigmatization, bullying, prejudice are still in place.

- **Participation**

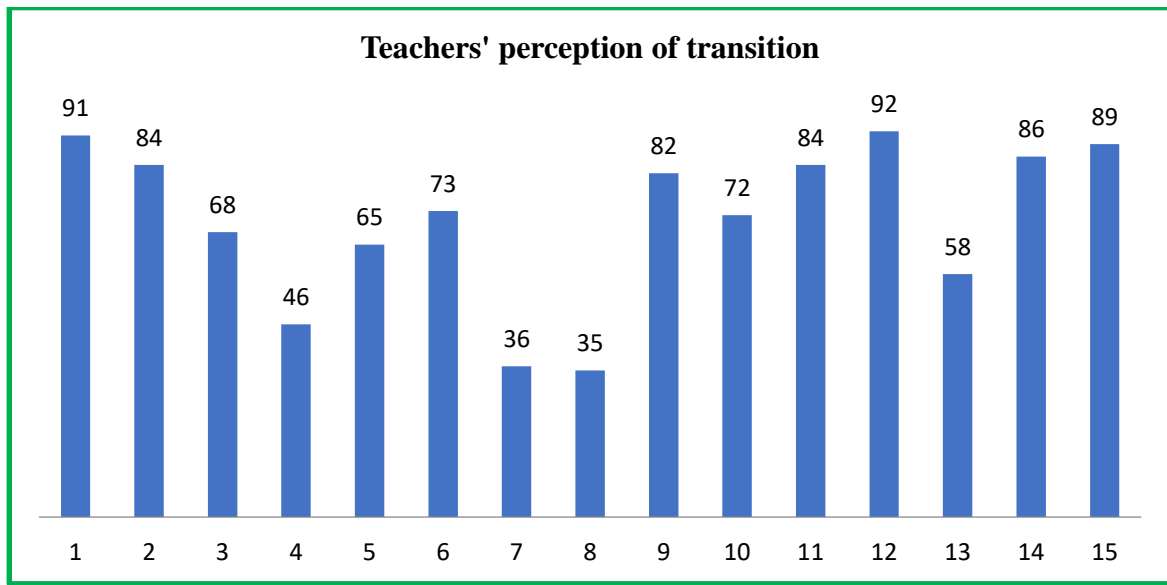
Teachers and students in regular classroom show helpful attitudes for the active participation of students with disabilities in class and school activities. Involvement in co-curricular activities is also acknowledged. However, due to unfavorable seating arrangement or time constraints sometimes they cannot fully contribute to the activities, i.e, writing on blackboard.

- **Achievement**

It is recognized that the ultimate goal of inclusive education is meeting learning needs and achieving learning outcomes as desired. The students with disabilities participate in each type of formative and summative assessment and they obtain the required marks and get promotion to the next grade or level. However, their cognitive skills and positive behavioral attainment are sometimes far from the standard.

Strengths and weaknesses of transition and inclusion

Both survey and interview data were used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of transition and inclusion process in primary education in Bangladesh. The collected data from different sources were triangulated for data validation. Answers from each statement of the survey questionnaire for both special and mainstream teachers were analyzed through statistical programme.



Graph: Teachers' responses (%) against statements of survey questionnaire

In the above graphical presentation, statement-1 was on teachers' belief of transition. More than 90% teachers believe that transition and inclusion should be implemented for students with disabilities in mainstream education. In statement-2, 9 and 11, it is indicated that more than 80% teachers believe that students with disabilities can learn better and can acquire behavioural and social skills in inclusive setting with the peers who do not have disabilities. In statement-12 which emphasized on community support for transition and inclusion, denotes that community extends their support for implementing transition and inclusive pedagogy. In addition, in statement-15, majority of the teachers (nearly 90%) of mainstream schools realize that their teaching capacities and diversified skills get improved through the inclusive teaching-learning practices.

In contrast, most of the teachers of special school do not communicate with mainstream school authority for transition of their students with disabilities who have achieved some practical and academic skills to be adapted in inclusive setting. Only 46% special teachers (statement-4) try for transition to nearby regular school and 36% special teachers (statement-7) try to follow up the academic and behavioural progress of the transitioned students in new school. In statement-8, it is revealed that majority of mainstream teachers are not interested to contact with special teachers for improving their teaching skills or acquiring differentiated teaching strategies for teaching in inclusive setting. Only 35% teachers show their motivation to enhance their pedagogical efficiencies in this regard.

The overall findings related to strengths and weaknesses of transition and inclusion process are outlined below that have been extracted from data of different sources.

Strengths of transition and inclusion

- Both special and mainstream teachers believe that SWDs should be placed in mainstream school
- Access and acceptance to mainstream have been accredited
- Peers show positive attitude and try to support SWDs in school activities
- Community participation in inclusive process has been strengthened
- Local education officials are willing to take the responsibilities for transition
- Flexibilities in examination and remedial education has been introduced
- Infrastructural facilities in schools are improved for SWDs
- SMC and PTA are very motivated and responsive to transition and inclusion
- Teacher training on inclusive pedagogy has been increased
- Financial assistance for enrolled students with disabilities is provided from government for continuation of education and other services needed

Weaknesses of transition and inclusion

- Social stigma and misconception of disability are still big impediment
- Special teachers do not communicate or follow up with mainstream school
- Mainstream teachers' capacities need improvement for inclusive teaching
- Assessment system requires to be modified as per students' needs and abilities
- Community needs to be more sensitized to transform school as disability-friendly
- Student-centered teaching-learning needs to be practiced more for SWDs
- Supply and use of teaching-learning materials / resources have to be confirmed
- Collaboration between special and mainstream school needs to be strengthened
- No transition policy or guideline from special to mainstream or primary to upper level is formulated by relevant directorates
- Cognitive learning outcome is sometimes overlooked whereas socialization skill is nurtured more

Factors influencing transition and inclusion

From in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions with special and mainstream teachers, parents of SWDs, SMC and community representatives, education officials and inclusion experts, the following five factors were identified as crucial for successful transition in Bangladesh-

➤ **Factor-1: *Relevant policy, circular or guideline***

There is lack of policy, guidelines, circular which can guide the education administration or school authority for transition. This seriously hinders the transition process for the student with disabilities from special school to mainstream school. A head teacher of a special school pointed out-

“If we have had any written document or circular regarding transition, then it was possible for us to put pressure and take legal actions if any mainstream school denies any students to be educated in mainstream setting. That is why the mainstream teachers show reluctance to welcome the students with disabilities to be included in their regular school.”

➤ **Factor-2: Teachers' preparedness and training**

It was found that Directorate of Primary Education provides in-service training on inclusive education for primary teachers though the training is not for all teachers. Teachers of mainstream school are not always ready for accepting student with disabilities and teaching in inclusive classroom and they lack of appropriate training for differentiated teaching skills for quality inclusive education. A mainstream head teacher stressed-

“The education office should arrange professional development training on inclusive pedagogy for all the teachers. But only one or two teachers from each school get the opportunities from the IE training programme. It should be provided for all teachers as they all face the same challenges of teaching students with disabilities specially when dealing with behaviour.”

➤ **Factor-3: SMC/Community sensitization**

In majority cases, School Managing Committee and school community extend their sincere support and cooperation to local school in implementing transition and inclusive education. They have been found to be very sensitized for the rights to be included and educated in the mainstream school with students of the same age. A female representative of a SMC pointed out-

“We play active role when our school invite us to take part for decision making process. When a child is deprived of education or drop out or face nay difficulties due to disabilities, we try to solve the issue within our capacities. We do believe that it is our moral duty to ensure the right to education for all children with and without disabilities and their well-being for future life. It should start from the primary school”

➤ **Factor-4: Parental active involvement**

It was found that if parents are motivated and supportive for their child's education, then school authority can handle the challenges regarding transition and inclusion smoothly. Most of the cases, it is seen that teachers are not always interested to engage parents as it is

complex and time-consuming process. In particular, for educational and behavioural development and following up it is very necessary to involve the parents of children with disabilities. It was also found that if the parents do not want transition of their child from special school to mainstream, then it would never happen. A principal of a special education school stated-

“We are willing for transition to mainstream school, but sometimes parents do not show their interest as there are many strict rules and academic pressure in mainstream school. In special setting, children with disabilities can learn behavioural and vocational skills and teachers can pay much attention to their children’s betterment.”

➤ **Factor-5: Support of education office**

In the study it was perceived that support and cooperation from local education offices is inevitable for successful transition and inclusive education in mainstream schools. As there is a circular from Directorate of Primary Education that each child regardless of disabilities must be enrolled in schools, so the officials cannot ignore the guidelines. But in practical experience, teachers do not get proper support from education office when needed. A senior assistant teacher of a mainstream school expressed her experience -

“Education office always put pressure on us for accepting and enrolling students with disabilities and following special instructions for inclusive teaching. However, when we need assistance from the office, especially during PEC examination, the officers do not cooperate in time that is why we face some problems because parents want teacher’s responses.”

Case studies: Remarkable transition stories

Case-One : Dhaka

Institutional collaboration makes the dream true

Reshma (pseudonym), a 13 years old girl, has visual impairment. She was shifted from Baptist Mission Integrated School for the Blind (BMIS) to Mirpur Girls' Ideal Laboratory Institute (MGILI) in class VI in 2018. It should be mentioned here that there is a previous understanding of accepting students from BMIS to MGILI. BMIS authority had communicated with MGILI before Reshma sat for Primary Education Completion Examination. Reshma has been accepted warmly by peers and teachers, but due to lack of Braille materials, she often fails to participate in the T-L activities fully. Nevertheless, teachers from BMIS are supportive to her study upon the request from MGILI. Now Reshma is allowed to use specialized device for reading text and doing math. Her parents are happy, grateful and very responsive to her present school's affairs.

Case-Two : Mymensingh

Peers' bullying compels to be drop-out

Shabnam (pseudonym) is a girl of 11 and she has hearing-speech disability. As a result of sincere effort of special school, DPEO and MMCH, she was shifted to a mainstream GPS from a special school in 2019 as from grade III to grade IV, her intellectual abilities were quite normal. After 5/6 months of transition, Shabnam started to express discomfort and unwillingness to go to school regularly showing the excuses of headache or stomachache. In order to find out the real fact, her mother talked to some of her peers and teachers of the school. Unfortunately, it was revealed that some of her peers (not everyone) would not accept her in their group work. They sometimes stigmatized her, made fun of her, removed hearing aid from ears, drew derogative and slighting pictures on her khata, used incorrect and funny signs to communicate with her. In spite of being positive, her teachers could not control over the class always and did not follow up about her continued absenteeism. The result was that Shabnam dropped out from mainstream, and came back to her previous special school.

Case-Three : Chakoria, Cox's Bazar

NGO's support transforms the school accessible

Protik (pseudonym) is a 11 years old boy having mild Cerebral Palsy and using wheelchair for movement. He started schooling at the age of 5 at a special school (Prodipaloy) and continued there up to age 9. His overall performance was satisfactory and his parents decided to enroll him in a neighboring GPS in class IV, though school authority accepted him in grade III. The school building had a broken ramp which was not suitable for wheelchair at all. That is why, with the spontaneous help of his classmates, Protik had to struggle to enter the school building without his wheelchair every day. Seeing it, Handicap International (now Humanity & Inclusion), an INGO repaired the ramp and renovated toilets to be accessible for the physically challenged students. Now the school has become fully accessible and inclusive. Protik can easily get into the school building and enjoy learning in a barrier-free environment.

CHAPTER : FIVE

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

This has been evidenced that transition is a major ecological shift that poses considerable social, emotional, academic and organizational challenges. It is commonly assumed that this school transition is especially difficult for children with disabilities including Autism and other special needs. Thus, the transition is viewed as an ongoing process where levels of support should be adjusted accordingly.

In this study, transition of students with disabilities in mainstream education setting has been explored from different dimensions. Firstly, the existing policy, guideline, circular, documents have been reviewed. Secondly, current practices of transition and inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education was explored in line with criteria set by Directorate of Primary Education through Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-III). Every aspect of functional inclusive education in the socio-economic perspective of Bangladesh has been examined. In this procedure, the current situation, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges were shown for transition and inclusion issues. Different types of instruments were used to collect data from field level and various analytical framework and methods were employed to analyze and extract the findings in accordance with study objectives.

Finally, the factors which influence the transition process and inclusive education in mainstream education were identified from qualitative data. Lack of relevant policy and documents, lack of teachers' preparedness and teacher training, lack of different resources and materials, lack of social and community awareness and sensitization, lack of school and administrative collaboration and support were found very significant variables for effective transition and inclusion process in Bangladesh context. It can be mentioned that the findings from this study are much aligned with the other studies related to inclusive education for students with disabilities in primary education context of Bangladesh.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications and recommendations have been formulated for better implementation of transition and inclusive education.

- ✓ While education for normal students is controlled by Ministry of Education, it is painful that education for students with disabilities is directed by Ministry of Social Welfare. So, educational provisions for students with disabilities should be moved from Ministry of Social Welfare to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and Ministry of Education. This stresses that students with disabilities are entitled to education service as a right, rather than being object of charity. It has to be advocated that transition and inclusion of students with disabilities is a right-based approach that must be embedded into national policies and guidelines.
- ✓ There is an absence of reliable and consistent data on the magnitude and educational status of students with disabilities. This makes it difficult for educators, policy-makers and programmers to understand the nature of the problem, and identify possible solutions. So it is needed to carry out a comprehensive survey to identify the magnitude of the students with disabilities so that it is possible to understand the nature of disability and identify the needs of students with disabilities.
- ✓ Since teachers are the protagonist in implementing inclusive education, so it is very important to know their perceptions towards teaching students in inclusive classroom. A longitudinal study can be conducted in this regard. According to the findings, an operational framework for transition, including and teaching students with disabilities in general classroom can be developed.
- ✓ The curriculum lacks the required flexibility to cater to the needs of students with disabilities. There are limited developmentally appropriate teaching-learning materials for both students with and without disabilities. The teaching-learning process does not address the individual learning needs of students.
- ✓ Teachers lack training and experience in teaching and handling students with disabilities. So, inclusive education should be addressed in both pre-service and in-service training for teachers and head teachers. Classroom teachers should be trained on use of curriculum with regards to learning needs of students with disabilities. And, in-

service teachers training on inclusion should be classroom practice orientated and appropriate teaching methods and materials should be incorporated in the training manuals.

- ✓ As education of students with disabilities requires comprehensive and strategic involvement and coordination among ministries, departments, NGOs and others catering to disability, an inter-agency coordination structure should be developed to facilitate responses to the special needs of the students with disabilities.
- ✓ Attitudes from different level are also big obstacles to effective implementation of inclusion in mainstreaming. To overcome this issue the teacher training institutions, school administrators, and all staff in the system need to be updated with the positive aspects of inclusion. Awareness raising and sensitization programme on disability and inclusion issues with regard their diverse educational needs should be systematically initiated at all level.
- ✓ Lack of proper screening and identification system to assess the disabilities sometimes make misconceptions. So, mechanisms have to be developed for early identification and assessment of students with disabilities in comparison with their peer age level.
- ✓ Evaluation and feedback processes are needed for assessing academic performance of all learners, including students with disabilities. The focus of evaluation needs to go beyond academic achievement, especially for students with disabilities. Suitable provisions to existing approaches and practices of examination and evaluation should be introduced and practiced at all level of mainstream education (e.g., extra time, remedial education, flexible pattern of question paper and answer script, provision of writer facility for students with visual impairment, etc.).
- ✓ Quality of school building is another barrier for inclusion of students with disabilities - easy to enter and accommodate, in particular for students with physical disabilities. Accessibility to school should be improved by making minor modifications to the physical structure of schools (buildings ramps, accessible toilets, wide doorways, more space in classrooms, etc).
- ✓ Lack of resources related to disabilities and inclusion can make positive output in teachers' and students' attitudes toward disability in classroom. Supplementary reading

materials and other materials reflecting disability and inclusionary issues should be introduced in the ordinary education system in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Education of students with disabilities is considered as a matter of general charity and welfare rather than a right that every child should demand. The agenda of transition and inclusive education presents a considerable challenge. The Salamanca Statement and Framework undoubtedly gave a boost to this process worldwide. Much of the attention in the development of inclusion strategy for the students with disabilities in mainstream education has been focused on the school and, particularly, the classroom. However, many of the barriers which remain lie outside the school, they are at the level of national policy, of the structures of national systems of schooling and teacher training. In order to achieve the goal of equitable and quality inclusive education for all learners in the classroom all these barriers should be removed out. Bangladesh is still struggling with some issues of quality education in the basic education level those can be resolved through inclusive approach to education. Effective transition and inclusion of the students with disabilities in the mainstream primary education can play a vital and dynamic role in implementing the Rights and Protection Act for Persons with Disability 2013, Policy Guidelines for Special Education 2018, Article-24 of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Goal-4 of Sustainable Development Goals (equitable quality inclusive education for all) in Bangladesh.

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Appendices

Appendix : 1

LETTER OF CONSENT

Director
Research and Documentation Division
National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM)
Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh

This is for your kind information that I, the undersigned, hereby grant my consent to work as Advisor in the proposed study entitled "*Transition of Students with Disabilities from Special School to Mainstream Inclusive Education in Bangladesh Context*" which will be led by Dr. Asim Das, a faculty of Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka (E-mail: asim.ier@du.ac.bd) and his team. I clearly understand the terms and condition set by NAEM and I am conscious about the objectives and methods of the aforementioned study.

Any queries regarding the consent can be directed to me using my following contact details. I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Thanking you

Sharmin Huq

Dr. Sharmin Huq
Professor (*retired*)
IER, University of Dhaka
Mobile : 01911-936519
Email : huq_sharmin@yahoo.com

Appendix : 2

STUDY TOOLS

i) Survey questionnaire for special school teachers

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Transition must be done for the students with disabilities		
2. Students with disabilities can learn better in mainstream setting		
3. Students with disabilities prefer to move to inclusive setting		
4. Special school communicate for transition to neighbor school		
5. Special teachers are willing to advance the transition process		
6. Mainstream school show positive attitudes in the matter		
7. Special teachers always follow up after transition		
8. Mainstream school seeks your expertise to deal with students		
9. Students are skilled and trained to adjust in new school		
10. Parent are interested to transfer their kid to mainstream school		
11. Transition process does not require financial distress		
12. Community support schools before and after the transition		
13. Stakeholders play supportive role in the process of transition		
14. Special school does not try to keep them continued as they pay high tuition fee		
15. Special school welcome students if they again come back to their previous school		

ii) Survey questionnaire for mainstream school teachers

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Transition must be done for the students with disabilities		
2. Students with disabilities can learn better in mainstream setting		
3. Students with disabilities prefer to move to inclusive setting		
4. Special school correspond for transition to mainstream school		
5. Special teachers are willing to advance the transition process		
6. Mainstream schools exhibit positive attitudes in accepting students with disabilities		
7. Special school teachers always follow up after transition		
8. Mainstream school seeks special teachers' expertise to deal with students with disabilities		
9. Students with disabilities can acquire new learning and improve behavioral and socialization skills in mainstream		
10. Parent are always interested to take part in school activities		
11. Transition process does not require any financial distress		
12. Community support schools before / after the transition		
13. Stakeholders play supportive role in the process of transition		
14. Mainstream school perceive transition as opportunity of teaching skill enhancement		
15. Mainstream school ensure supports from peers and staffs toward students with disabilities		
16. Mainstream teacher s are flexible in examination and assessment for students with disabilities		
17. School head encourages fellow teachers in promoting better learning environment for students with disabilities		

iii) Interview schedule for teachers, parents, special educator, inclusive education expert, education psychologist, SMC members

- ✓ How do you perceive transition of student with disability from special to mainstream school?
- ✓ Which issues are associated with successful transition to mainstream schools?
- ✓ What curricular and co-curricular issues need to be addressed in regular school practice?
- ✓ What types of professional development mechanism should be introduced in current system?
- ✓ What initiatives have you taken for functional and sustainable transition?
- ✓ What are your specific role in this regard and how did you contribute?
- ✓ How do other stakeholders engage themselves for sustainability of transition?
- ✓ What steps should be taken into action for functional transition and inclusion?
- ✓ What are the challenges for effective transition implementation?
- ✓ What are your suggestions and recommendations for school authority to promote transition?

iv) Interview schedule for Govt. officials (DPE, NAPE, UEO, AUEO, URC)

- ✓ How do you perceive current mainstreaming student with disabilities in general education system?
- ✓ Which administrative issues are associated with successful mainstream in your schools?
- ✓ What curricular and co-curricular issues are related to mainstreaming in regular school practice?
- ✓ What types of professional capacity development mechanism should be introduced in current system for promoting inclusion?
- ✓ What initiatives have you taken for functional and sustainable mainstreaming and inclusion?
- ✓ What are your specific role in this regard and how do you contribute to the process?
- ✓ How do other stakeholders engage themselves for successful transition and inclusion?
- ✓ What steps should be taken into action for functional transition and inclusion?
- ✓ What are the challenges for effective transition and inclusion implementation?
- ✓ What are your suggestions and recommendations for school authority/SMC/local education office to promote inclusion and transition?

v) FGD guideline for participants and stakeholders

- ✓ How do you perceive transition of student with disabilities from special to mainstream school?
- ✓ Which issues are associated with successful transition?
- ✓ What are the challenges for effective transition implementation?
- ✓ What are your specific role in this regard and how did you contribute?
- ✓ How do other stakeholders play role in this procedure?
- ✓ What steps should be taken into action for functional transition and inclusion?

vi) Case studies outline

- ✓ Identification of notable topic from findings
- ✓ Review the background
- ✓ Analysis of current status
- ✓ Progress or frustration
- ✓ Reasons behind the situation
- ✓ Lessons for future