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Teaching students with special needs in Chattogram: A case study

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Abstract

The practice of teaching in education has developed into more than an aspect of learning and acquiring knowledge. With the increasing demand for education, policymakers have become aware of the right to education for learners with special needs. Since education emerged as a symbol of economic and social stability in many developed nations, various sections are added to the folds of educational attainment i.e., formal education, informal education, and non-formal education. Currently, special education is also viewed as a crucial aspect of formal education in international settings. However, in the context of Bangladesh, the scenario of special education has been conflicting. This research aims to focus on evaluating teaching / pedagogical approaches that are applied in special-needs classrooms or institutions. Although the government of Bangladesh along with the Ministry of Education (Moe) passed laws in the constitution of the country, to ensure specialized education for learners with disabilities from the primary stage of education, factors like classroom management, Inclusive education (IE), and efficient teachers' training are still in the grass-root level in many parts of the country. One of the major causes behind this drawback is the lack of motivation and teachers' research responsibilities towards the effective implementation of special education in Bangladesh. Therefore, to understand the current status and impact of special education in the shadow of the education system, this research attempts to explore the facilities and teaching approaches that special education facilitators employ in Chattogram City. To accelerate the research, an open-ended interview has been conducted at several institutions in the city. The ADDIE Model has been adopted as a framework to support the analysis and background of the study. As per the research findings, the study reflects on the need for government training programs, local funds, and infrastructure to motivate learners' strategies and engagement in the classroom.

Keywords: Inclusive education, special needs, teaching practices, classroom management, teacher training, government programs

Introduction

Education is a term that can vary according to the context of its surroundings. Education involves empowerment, judgment, and creating a sense of identity in individuals. However, in any case, the term implies the act of teaching and as a result acquiring knowledge in general perception. Over the past few years, education has been subject to changes in academic policies and reforms to meet the goals of the target groups. Education is a reform strategy aimed at quality and equality as per the allotted budgets of the nations. Education is an ongoing process that passes knowledge, culture, belief, and most importantly a framework of socially accepted norms from one generation to another. An education system is developed based on two main features: to preserve knowledge and discoveries and to act as a pathway for change. For instance, the education system has been passing on commonly accepted values that were recognized in the past, such as respecting authority, patriotism, honesty, loyalty, etc. These values are to be incorporated into present-day education policy to produce good workers and citizens. The purpose and function of successful education are embedded in the Latin word *educare*, meaning to "train or to mould" (Craft, 1982) ^[1]. Therefore, the role of educators is to fulfil this function and to strive to develop an individual's personality, abilities, curiosity, and creativity. (Bass, R.V, 1997) ^[2]. Educational attainment has become a top-priority element of the development agenda. As an agent of social stability and leading a contribution to the economy, education helps to improve the quality of life and creates awareness in society. Ideally, the term education can mean different things to different people. However, it is not limited to classroom activities. There

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are 3 types of education systems recognized by the government. These are formal, informal, and non-formal education. This paper is primarily designed to discuss and evaluate special education practices carried out in Chattogram. Special education, in simple terms, refers to the form of instruction specially designed to accommodate the learning objectives of learners with disabilities. This includes separate classroom management, pedagogical methods, curriculum, and assessment according to the interventions of the learners. To address the adaptation of special education, the individualization of instruction is an important factor in this practice. In the context of special education, special needs refer to the separately established disabilities in learners. These needs can be defined in terms of social, physical, behavioural, and emotional instabilities. Therefore, special education is designed based on the learning environment, teaching approaches, and assessment of practices on challenged learners.

Designing efficient classrooms and carrying out administrative duties are the most crucial needs of special education. Structured education practice and classroom management are interconnected because management is a process through which an educator can implement desired and effective teaching according to the needs of individual learners. The benefits of classroom management are many, such as maximizing learning, avoiding disruptions, and implementing positive reinforcement. The physical characteristics of a learner's environment can affect the physical and mental state of a learner and stimulate effective learning. According to B.F Skinner and Albert Bandura's Environmentalist Theory, human development, behaviour, and learning are the results of the influence of the environment in their development. These theorists contributed greatly to the development of the Environmentalist theory; therefore, we notice traces and influence of the theory in classroom practices "Many environmentalist-influenced educators and parents believe that young children learn best by rote activities, such as reciting the alphabet over and over, copying letters, and tracing numbers" (Wanjohi A.M. 2010, p. 3) ^[3]. Several factors are to be taken under consideration to evaluate the expected outcomes in a special-need classroom such as efficiency, motivation, etc. When a learner fails to respond to the classroom environment, he/she is labelled as having formed certain learning disabilities. According to Bandura, there are three major influential functions in the effectiveness of modelling situations: the characteristics of the model, the attributes of the observers, and the consequences of the model's actions (Educational Learning Theories: Chapter 3 Required Reading, 2021). Instructional practices in special education are dimensions that are characterized by teacher training programs, cognitive strategies, classroom design, and expected outcomes. Several International legislations and legal frameworks have been passed internationally to recognize the needs and interventions of special learners. In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was the first body to specifically address the rights of learners with disabilities and ensured that every learner received education through the fullest possible social integration. Later in 1994, the World Declaration on Education for All with support from UNESCO, United Nations, and UNICEF served as the first milestones for the implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) in special needs classrooms.

Inclusion aims to provide and promote equal opportunities as per the constitutional amendment to compensate for difficulties in learning "The concept of integration" stemmed out from the perspective of democracy". Inclusive education generally means that all learners despite their learning disabilities, strengths, and weaknesses become a part of the school community through shared learning environments. Inclusive education is now accepted in countries like the United States, Denmark, France, Canada, Sweden, etc. In these countries, various forms of practices are introduced in an inclusive setting to promote mastery in learners, these include open school systems and flexible classroom arrangements with creative instructional practice.

Background of the Study

In the context of Bangladesh, is a South-Asian country with a strong focus on education and development projects. The country has been ranked 117th on the World rank for the education system in 2021. According to the Population and Housing Census 2022, it has been stated that the literacy rate of Bangladesh is 74.66%. An approximate figure of 47.22 lakh people which makes up 9.1% of the population are challenged physically or mentally. Through strong development works and an active social community, the country is embracing the perspective and practices of inclusion in education. Existing laws, constitutional amendments, and policies are adopting a uniform education system to ensure equal opportunities for the disabled community. Physical disability and vision disability are the two common types of disabilities that are prevalent in Bangladesh. In the 21st century, the government of Bangladesh recognized these communities and implemented the disability law under the Person with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2023 to help in the process of academic and social improvement (Rahman *et al.*, 2015) ^[4]. In 2011, the government of Bangladesh introduced chains of primary schools focused on the needs of disabled communities. Inclusive Education at the secondary level has been introduced by the government by creating awareness and projects. Additionally, Training and workshops in IE are made familiar in the classrooms. Secondary-level teachers are aware of inclusive education but are not typically prepared to undertake challenges and implement the same extensively (Rahaman *et al.*, 2015) ^[4]. This paper is an explorative study that will critically evaluate and explore special education classrooms to find out the challenges of pedagogical approaches adopted for the needs of inclusive education. A study revealed that, special needs educators are the most stressed professionals due to the diversified challenges and accommodations they are exposed to in a differently abled classroom. Inclusion as a concept in Bangladesh suggests that inclusive education is not just limited to a different approach to teaching practice but has wider aspects of gender equality and opportunities and socio-economic factors that do not favour the social condition of the country in some regions. One of the major drawbacks of the special-need communities in Bangladesh is the lack of statistical data collected by the government. Although the government of Bangladesh has a centralized education system and plays a crucial role in implementing inclusive education, the lack of routine data from these communities leads to the neglect of services in some communities (Rahman *et al.*, 2015) ^[4]. These can hamper the development and implementation of programs for the

special community to initiate proper education. Inclusive education leads to a major change in a general classroom setting and requires the reflection of a teacher's knowledge and skills for professional practices. However, studies suggest that secondary teachers seem to have inadequate knowledge, understanding, and interpretation of inclusive education. Some of the highlighted reasons behind this are lack of interest in educators, lack of knowledge regarding disability and the implementation of inclusive education in individual teaching practices, and the absence of appropriate training programs for therapists, audiologists, and educators (Zaman, Munir 1992) ^[5].

Research Hypothesis

According to the analysis of professional development, inclusive training was provided with an off-sight approach therefore, this resulted in differentiated learning goals and success among teachers. Therefore, teachers lacked the necessary skills to include all learners in the special-need classroom in the learning process (Malak *et al.*, 2014) ^[19]. The challenges identified in the implementation of inclusive education in Bangladesh are linked with unfulfilled academic goals. Segregated learning settings (inclusive classrooms) can leave an impact on learners' interaction with their environment. They often tend to get socially marginalized due to the stigma of being "weaker" than others. According to strategic data and analysis, it has been argued that certain academic limitations are involved with the practice of a fully inclusive classroom, that it can slow down the development process and disrupt the quality of education in a learner. Moreover, it can also lead learners to depend entirely on their environment making it difficult for educators to initiate a practical approach to teaching in the classroom (McCarty, 2006). This paper will observe and explore the teaching facilities and academic support provided to special-needs learners in Chattogram.

Literature Review

The special education discourse reflects the intellectual and ideological shift of differences in disability and their psycho-medical needs. The term "special" in this context, stands for "unusual" or "special importance". Recognizing major disabilities in society led to a major shift from special needs to special education. The term special could carry both positive and negative judgments based on its prevalence and importance in society. Over the years with development and progress in this field, special education can now be viewed with the kind of learning strategies and opportunities that are desirable and important. As the number of special education learners increased in the twentieth century, several questions and theories were formulated to understand the pattern and purpose of this stream of education. This included curriculum, assessment, classroom management, and individualized needs. Conflicts and benefits of the special education system were constituted. During this time, Samuel Alexander Kirk (1953), in his article "*The Child Who is Mentally Handicapped*" wrote about the eight distinctive forms of special education from generalized education, these are a special class organization, special materials, special diagnosis, special clinical teaching procedures, intensive use of learning principles, systematic instructions, individualized instruction and parent education (Cook & Schirmer, 2005) ^[8]. Over the past formative years, through

the reestablishment of the terminology of special education with policies and practices, special education has become an integrated part of public education. Understanding any field of study requires knowing its history and the ability to discuss important aspects of its measures and practices. Bangladesh is a developing country with a dense population. At the current stage, the literacy rate of the country stands at 74.9% and the education expenditure is 2.1% of GDP (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2023). In the context of Bangladesh's education system, general education is a three-tier formulation that includes: Primary, Secondary, and Higher-Secondary education, and public examinations are held after each level of schooling. Here, general education refers to a system that promotes free and compulsory education from kindergarten to the fifth standard. Academic awareness is initiated by government-planned schemes that include free textbooks, lunch, classroom materials teacher-training programs, etc. According to National Education Policy, A student is expected to complete 12 years of education up to class twelve and it is the responsibility of the state to ensure basic education for every learner in the rural and urban regions of the country. Any individual or NGO willing to undertake this responsibility must seek permission from the respective authority and comply with the rules and regulations of the policy (National Education Policy, 2010). To meet the academic requirements and demands of Bangladesh, the government is undertaking massive development projects and looking into the practice of teaching methods, administration, curriculum planning, development, etc. The primary objective of the National Education Policy of Bangladesh is to promote the interest, protection, and cultivation of human values by ensuring education and other facilities. This policy targeted the overhaul problems of the education structure and delivered a well-planned, science-oriented, and high standard of constitutional directives to counter the issues of the present structure (Ministry of Education, MOE). Bangladesh is home to 40 million learners with a record of 9.1 per cent disability prevalence in society. To stimulate the welfare of the disabled community, the government adopted the National Action Policy on Disability. Article 28 of the Constitution of Bangladesh empowers the government in undertaking measures of special provision for people with disabilities in society. It further emphasizes promoting equality and refraining from discrimination against the citizens of Bangladesh (Mahbub, 2022) ^[11]. Consequently, to implement the course outlining prevention, healthcare, rehabilitation, etc. the government formulated a five-year National Action Plan which correspondently focused on early intervention of disabilities, education, training, social security, material development, and employment with overall national coordination. The National Action Plan (NAP) has been adopted to promote an overall balanced society based on human values, dignity, and advancement.

Placing special importance on the issue of disabilities, the government of Bangladesh specifically addressed policies to safeguard and initiate development for the disabled sections of society. The policy was passed to ensure the involvement and participation of persons with disabilities in national and social programs or welfare. Therefore, the disability law is commonly known as Bangladesh Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act – 2001. According to this law, disabilities can be of various types and categories. A person may be

affected by one or more forms of disabilities. The accepted definition of disability was laid as follows –

A person with a disability is physically disabled either congenitally or as a result of disease or being a victim of an accident, due to improper or maltreatment, or for any reason has become physically incapacitated or mentally imbalanced as a result of such disabledness or one mental impairedness has become incapacitated, either partially or fully and is unable to lead a normal life. (National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD))

According to the 2001 Disability Welfare Act, the types of disabilities defined and knowledge are noted as given below:

1. Persons with visual impairment
2. Persons with physical disabilities
3. Persons with a hearing impairment
4. Persons with a speech impairment
5. Persons with a mental disability
6. Persons with multiple disabilities

(The National Autistic Society, November 2015)

The prevailing data and statistics on disabilities, remain to be a matter of serious debate. Mostly because these data are underrated and there is very little reliable data due to the lack of a comprehensive lack of national survey on disability. Over the past few years, various recognized organizations, centres, and institutions have been working for the disabled in the capital and various low-lying areas of Bangladesh. A few prominent organizations for instance are BRAC, Plan International Bangladesh, Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation, Proyash Institute of Special Education and Research (PISER), Action on Disability and Development (ADD), Bangladesh, Bangladesh Blind Mission (BBM), etc. These institutions have adopted a target-focused approach for training and academic prospects to address the needs of the learners. Exclusively, addressing the academic needs of special learners, the National Education Policy further strengthened and emphasized primary education in general schools and separate institutions for special education. It is important to redefine that, unlike general education which is formulated and controlled by teaching pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment as per the state education policy, special education, as the name suggests refers to a specialized branch of education systematically planned for eligible learners under its norms “It is for those students who have physical, cognitive, language, learning, sensory, and/or emotional abilities/disabilities that deviate from those of the general population and whose abilities/disabilities require special educational services” (Zigmond, Kloo, 2011, p. 175)^[14]. Tracing a long-distinguished history from 1954, special education has progressed a long way in the 21st century. These days, most special education institutions have been developed with an integrated system with inbuilt medical facilities and interventions. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) defines functioning and disabilities in a similar way as “a dynamic interaction between health conditions, contextual factors, both personal and environmental” (World Report on Disability, p. 04). According to this, disability cannot be viewed purely as medical or social rather it should be approached with a balance to give appropriate weight to the different aspects of disabilities.

The concept of special education is reserved by the

constitution in Bangladesh through different policies and practices. Remarkable contributions have been made over the last few years to meet the goals of the learners in the country. The government is undertaking various initiatives to boost the literacy rate and fight unemployment. The government is committed to international conventions to promote equal rights for the disabled communities of the country, therefore, to initiate and facilitate special education training, the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) reinforced key interventions such as the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), collaborative learning, inclusive curriculum, etc. With government-approved international training programs, special importance is laid on teacher development. These highlight the need for a pre-service curriculum and effective training programs based on the foundation of the Rights and Protections of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013. Complying with Education for All (EFA), initiatives have been undertaken to support special education facilitators in regulating their classrooms by providing material resource rooms, technologies, training, etc. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has taken small-scale initiatives to arrange training programs in Bangladesh and overseas as a part of improving the teaching experiences through specialized training. According to the Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP), the government provides two types of inclusive education (IE) training, which includes a three-day awareness-raising program for head teachers & management and a fourteen-day program stressing inclusive education. Although Bangladesh has undertaken several policy initiatives to provide equal access to education, the implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) is still at its elementary level in the country. The framework of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) demonstrates the need and significance of the roles played by trainers of special education programs. Although the implementation of inclusive education is in its early stage, the government has taken initiatives that include policies and programs to ensure access to learning for all children regardless of their special circumstances (Article 17 and Article 28, The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh). It is important to note here that, the implementation of IE in Bangladesh is based on international treaties and various initiatives have been stratified in many of the legislations in the country. Some examples of these are the National Education Policy for the Disabled, National Education Policy 2010, Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act 2001, etc. (Malak et. al, 2014)^[9]. However, even after many initiatives and availability to meet the challenges of IE education in Bangladesh, researchers in this field of study proved valid reasons behind the slow progress and failed attempts at inclusive education. One of the significant factors contributing to the development of inclusive education is the teachers in this field. Teachers are not born with distinctive qualities of good instruction, rather experiences are gained through training and exposure. Similarly in Bangladesh, teachers need to gain specific training in IE through appropriate training periods as many teachers expressed their worries about including various forms of disabilities in the classroom. Therefore, they indicated a need for more clarification and support about the concept of IE in the education policy of the country (Khan *et al.*, 2013)^[16]. The absence of research initiatives in teachers to implement inclusive education in schools has been recorded. Another

significant factor that has to be highlighted is the lack of awareness about IE education in Bangladesh. Although the government has raised campaigns, a large mass of people is still unaware of inclusion thus full inclusion cannot entirely be possible. Due to this a large part of the community views inclusive education and special needs learners in a negative light. The majority of the participants of inclusive education in Bangladesh have mentioned that, their instructor provided them with vague knowledge and basic concepts of inclusion in terms of academic facilities. This could be a potential reason behind the exclusion of inclusive education in the Bangladesh setting (Ahsan, 2016) ^[18]. To appropriately determine early interventions of special education, teachers and facilitators are asked for consistent monitoring and evaluation of the learners to measure their academic growth. Disability-inclusive education demands the attention of specialists and teachers training in evaluation and practices. However, one of the major obstacles that hinder the development of disability-inclusive education in Bangladesh is the lack of training therapists, and other personnel such as audiologists, speech therapists, etc. to provide effective care to learners (Zaman, Munir, 1992) ^[5]. To facilitate building academic programs and support inclusion, UNICEF has taken the initiative and organized teams to evaluate and monitor learner-specific needs to assess the impact of their programs (UNICEF, 2021) ^[17]. The government has also introduced stipends specifically for girls and participants with a significant study gap. However, studies show that gender barriers are a common restriction in disability-inclusive education. A large part of the program is limited to the quality of education and available facilities for learners.

Framework

This paper is anchored on the ADDIE Learning Development Model, which is defined to be a systematic method of gathering learning with enhanced skills and knowledge. Developed in 1970, the concept and the terminology were formulated in Florida State University's Center of Education Technology. Initially, the major objective of the model was to develop courses and rationalize the production of training materials for the U.S. Army. Over the years, the model has been modified to meet the needs and adapt to various contexts of education. The idea at each stage of its implementation demanded detailed separate phases at each step. In due course of its usage, practitioners revised and streamlined these steps into interactive procedures. Over the last few years, ADDIE has become successful and remains a leading design methodology that ensures the articulation of instruction to achieve learning and performance goals by the organizations. The ADDIE learning development model has been thought to be simple and effective because the concept is characterized by simple, collective, and effective steps that involve measuring individual performance requirements. The application of this model requires efficient learning programs and the flow of supporting materials that are developed to meet the demands of the changing environment in education. The ADDIE learning development model consists of five steps that continue throughout the cycle of the learning development process. The ADDIE learning development model stands for five phases that are considered crucial for instructional design practice. ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. These steps are followed

as a sequence to attain intended behavioural outcomes. This method is thought to be effective in online or offline training programs to produce a structured outline.

The five steps training model is discussed below:

- **Analysis:** The first step includes a precise analysis of the training grounds. This refers to setting a focused goal and identifying the problem. The trainer must ensure that the tasks match the level of skills of the target audience. Here, importance is given to the tasks and practices that should meet the learning demands of the learners. The instructor must also identify the existing knowledge of the learners and their learning expectations from the upcoming tasks. This phase determines the content of the course and achieves the goals of the organization.
- **Design:** This phase translates the information that was gathered through analysis and creates an informative outline. This stage determines the goals and identifies tools and resources to measure the performance of the learners. Planning and curriculum evaluation are also essential facets of the design phase. Here, practical decisions are undertaken to guide the course content. This also includes strategies of delivery methods such as online classes, offline classes, or blended classrooms.
- **Development:** The third step represents the idea of the model, i.e., the learning experience is brought to life by building an end design. The development stage includes the beginning of production and testing effective methodologies. The context ideas are exclusively designed through visual graphics, videos, fonts, and colours. This process demands a copious amount of testing to find ways that work best for the target audience.
- **Implementation:** The implementation involves the delivery of the course content to the learners. It specifically focuses on training and management, which also includes communication, data collection, trainer training, etc. To effectively, implement a training program, LMS (Learning Management System) can be put to use that helps to track metrics associated with the learners.
- **Evaluation:** Lastly, the evaluation step allows the organization or the trainer to gather direct feedback and important information on the efficiency of the content. It is equally important to evaluate the design, development, and delivery to gather continuous success and address the shortcomings of the program.

Methodology

The study adopted small-scale qualitative research based on a few special-needs schools located in Chattogram, Bangladesh. The study prompts to give equal importance to classroom observation and in-depth analysis of qualitative research findings. To enable comprehensive analysis, data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted in terms of the academic scenario of Chattogram. To facilitate the study, a qualitative interview technique is utilized through open-ended question patterns. The categories of special educators are directors, teachers, and supervisors who are employed full-time with major responsibilities. The systematic collection of data is more likely to give readers a realistic view of special-needs education in Chattogram City.

Instrumentation

The process of gathering systematic data includes interviews with special-needs educators who are involved in the learning process and environment. Several 10 instructors were approached. The data sampling technique relies on the judgment and experience of educators in the field of special education. This includes details of effective teaching, IEP Plan, visionary techniques, personality development, behaviour analysis, and inclusive classroom environment.

Demographic Information

Variable	Category	Responses
Gender	Male	95%
	Female	5%
Age	20-25	15%
	28-30	25%
	30 and above	65%
Educational Degree	Bachelors	85%
	Masters	15%
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	55%
	5-10 years	45%
BS Ed. Degree holders	Yes	5%
	Development programs undertake	95%

Data Collection & Analysis

The research data is collected between July 18th, 2023, and July 22nd, 2023. To facilitate the data collection, three special-needs schools were approached beforehand through email along with a well-established letterhead seeking permission to observe and conduct interviews with the teachers. A questionnaire was developed with eight selective questions targeting the plan of the proposed study. The first school visit was on July 18th, 2023 at 12:30. The interview session lasted for an hour. The second school visit took place on July 20th, 2023 at 13:00. The interview was followed by classroom observation. The duration of the interview session lasted for one hour and twenty minutes. The third school visit was on July 22nd, 2023 at noon, which lasted for an hour. The responses of the participants are recorded for further use. In addition to that, the answers are evaluated to observe the variables of the proposed studies. To accentuate understanding of the data collected, the proposed study has adopted the thematic analysis technique, which is a commonly adopted method for analyzing qualitative data. The process involves identifying the data and looking for a systematic pattern to find themes.

Statement of Ethical Practice

Principles of Research Ethics

This paper aims to investigate teaching practices adopted in select special-needs schools in Chattogram. Factors such as learning outcomes, learners' motivation, and understanding are observed to extract variables and findings for the study. The study is committed to conducting independent and exploratory research by ethical principles.

Objectives of Ethical Statement

The research has been conducted with an ethic of respect for communities, individual persons, and independent knowledge. The data collected regarding the study have been obtained by respecting the consent of the participants. Furthermore, the study warranted the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants to maintain privacy.

Responsibilities to Participants

As the study aims to explore the teaching experiences of participants in connection to special education practice, the data collection techniques ensured that learners are fully informed about the research and are not bound to answer against their will. Therefore, every participant is treated fairly and sensitively without discrimination. The research data have been obtained in an inclusive environment ensuring that every aspect of experiences and differences are valued. In advance of data collection, awareness, and knowledge has been gathered to understand the sensitivity and diversity of the environment.

Findings of the Study

The thematic analysis technique produced five themes.

Pre-service Methods: Effective and Useful

The majority of the participants highlighted the effectiveness of the pre-service variables that are involved in special education. Teachers' competence and understanding of the differences in learners are emphasised. Special educators mentioned the employment of scientifically proven techniques and early interventions to classify learners based on classes and divisions. Participants often stated that, at first, learners are identified by step-by-step assessments to differentiate them based on learning capacities. As a result, different IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) are produced to address the needs of the learners. IEPs are developed based on the strengths of the learners, the academic concerns of the parents, and the recent evaluation of learners' academic, developmental, and functional needs of the learners. IEPs are adjusted by the learning goals set by the special-education trainers. Vocal training, fine motor skills, behaviour analysis, and verbal skills are taken into consideration to prepare the education plans.

“Inclusive Environment Often Leads to Better Outcomes”

In the account of their teaching experience, participants generalized that inclusive education provides equal opportunities and addresses the needs of the learners within a non-discriminative policy. From their perceptions, inclusive teaching ensures that learners' preferences are met, diversities are respected, and flexible learning goals are set by adjusting the age level and progress of individual learners. Participants concluded that inclusive education is an effective measure because it helps learners to develop individual strengths and contribute to their learning experiences. The majority of the participants also mentioned a few techniques that are currently in use such as ABLLS (Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills), PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), TEACCH (Training and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children), etc.

Ensured Parent Training to Address Inclusion

The third theme is the involvement of the parents in the learner's intervention. Participants reported that an integral part of the special education program is the awareness of the parents regarding learners' academic development. In addition to the admission of the learners, parent training is arranged to address methods of teaching and management. Parents are also welcomed into the classroom to observe

learners' performances and outcomes. One of the participants mentioned that parent training includes a three-month training period with ten theory classes and five practical classes where parents are given hands-on training with their children. Family counselling sessions are also provided with specialized training on the characteristics of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Furthermore, participants gave examples of social activities or events such as picnics arranged for parents and learners to understand and strengthen the relationship of the duo.

Behavior is Communication

Almost all the participants addressed that, challenging behaviours can be reduced or fixed through behaviour modification by emphasizing the trigger points of behaviour and understanding the consequences attached to it. Early behavioural management through systematic strategies can help learners cope with behavioural problems. According to special educators, behaviours are a means of communication for non-verbal participants that serve four purposes such as: to fulfil sensory needs, to escape a situation, to obtain tangible objects, or to gain attention. To cope with learners' challenging behaviours, participants confirmed the use of visual support such as photographs, line drawings, and colourful word plates to reduce the anxiety and frustration of learners. Visual support is developed to support communication in learners as information presented in a visual system is processed faster than communicative messages. Some examples mentioned by participants are visual scriptures, stories, etc. Participants stated an emphasis on learners' care and neurodevelopment to help with an individual lacking.

Insufficient Government Programs

The last theme of the analysis involves a drawback of special education in the context of Bangladesh's education system. Participants expressed their concern about the lack of government training programs on special education. Although, in this era, special education gained public attention and support from the communities, the lack of interested individuals with hands-on training in special training poses a major threat. In non-government special schools, the authority often organizes training programs by inviting certified foreign therapists which includes the investment of a large sum. Participants suggested that registered organizations such as Proyash, Access Bangladesh Foundation, and Bangladesh ABA Center for Autism organize practical training programs by targeting local funds. With the help of government associations, new start-up schools can begin providing community services and wider participant awareness will be created in special education. Participants emphasized practical training to gather an in-depth understanding and expertise in handling learners by implementing scientifically proven methods and techniques to meet the demands of the learners.

To implement the components required to develop the ADDIE model for special needs education, the need analysis can focus on the need to incorporate technology-based learning in social classrooms. Subsequently, learning can be measured by determining whether a learner has adequately performed the given task to the designated level. Therefore, each phase of the ADDIE Model is designed to interact with each other.

- **Analysis:** This is primarily the most important phase in

instructional design. Educators and teachers undertake analysis to create a lesson plan, evaluate its goals, and implement it in the classroom. To develop an effective academic plan, designers must consider four elements – the learners, instructional goals, analysis, and learner's objectives. In the study conducted to extract data collection for this paper, analysis of the learners' end goals, learning objectives, and how learners perceive the information is successfully observed. In special-needs education, analysis refers to the pre-academic services and IEPs developed to meet specific learners' needs. To identify the shortcomings of the learners, early diagnosis and learner assessment are conducted with the assistance of parents and educators. Once the IEPs are developed, autism-specific teaching methods are adopted to implement effective teaching. Furthermore, aspects of skills, behaviours, and learning are taken into consideration to bring positive development in the field of teaching and learning.

- **Design:** This is simply the implementation of instructional practices in the framework of the classroom. In this phase, instructors must conduct a study on the needs of the learners and facilitate learners' interaction with the content introduced to the classroom. Apart from the materialistic content, learners' assessment is developed to measure learners' motivation and success. Since the stages of the ADDIE model are interdependent, the design phase requires the data collected through analysis to ensure the reliability of the assessment to learning needs. Under the folds of practicality, the assessments designed for special needs learners pass through three major steps. At first, the assessments are laid out for the learners to avoid confusion. Then the results are analyzed to extract the goals of the instructions in context to the contents of the classroom. The second and final step involves the decision of an effective delivery style with integrated methods. In the case of special needs classrooms, Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech and Language Therapy (SLT), and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) are some of the commonly used methods to address learners.
- **Development:** This phase involves the implementation of modern-day tools and technologies in the education system. In this step, instructors believe in adding positive developmental changes in the learning styles and behaviors of the learners, to make them globally competent. This process comprehends the progress and feedback of learners to improvise the sample assessments. Although the use of technology proves to have a higher degree of learning success in learners with disabilities, however, no technical settings were observed during the primary data collection. The instructors' approach to the study often relied on hands-on training practices to develop specific goals such as play skill development, communicative skills, cognitive development, and social competence. When questioned about the tools and technologies used to measure learning, the problem of financial deficit was highlighted by the teachers which contributed to lack behind in terms of technical development.
- **Implementation:** The fourth phase of the ADDIE model refers to a holistic implementation of learners' strategies, contents, and instructional designs. In simple

words, implementation is the transformation of plans into actions. Implementation requires active planning and motivation from the end of learners and trainers. The foremost step in this phase involves teacher training, which demands an instructor to utilize the content, create valuable assessments, and analyze the performances of his / her target learners. In the context of the data collection, teacher training programs were noticed to be deeply embedded in the system of special education. The institutions produced trained staff and professionals who provide community services on the outskirts of the city. Moreover, training opportunities are organized within the premises of the institutions for individuals interested in the core methodologies of special education. An important aspect of teaching requires a positive environment where learning can flourish, therefore, an inclusive environment enables a safe zone for learners to enhance individual strategies and learn through academic practices.

- **Evaluation:** The final step of the ADDIE model is the most important phase of the overall process. Evaluation is important to gather data, analyze, and necessarily contribute improvisation to benefit every individual involved in the circle of the model. In this phase, evaluation or analysis can be performed while carrying out the process or as an end goal, as it suits the requirements of the instructional designers. In the course of special-need classrooms, evaluation is carried out in two steps. At first, early intervention helps instructors create a portfolio of the learners' needs. Learner's physical development, communication, social interaction, and behaviour are some of the general aspects of evaluation. Secondly, once the implementation of IEP is confirmed, the learner's performance, motivation, and parent's feedback are utilized to bring flexible changes as per the progress of individual learners.

Recommendation

Data collected for the research paper will most likely give readers an insight into the perspective and understanding of inclusive education in special-needs classrooms on behalf of the instructors. Although the depth of the structure of special education has unfolded its functions and benefits in a selective number of schools and institutions in Chattogram, some potentially effective suggestions will help in addressing the barrier to inclusive education in these institutions.

However, due to some internal shortcomings of the education system specifically in Chattogram, inclusive education is yet to transform under the folds of modern times.

- **Insufficient trainers/teachers:** The need for teachers or interested individuals willing to undergo effective training, is the most common concern expressed by the participants. Research analysis indicated that professional special-education consultants in Bangladesh often follow conventional methods of training. As a result, trainee teachers do not take responsibility for individual learning. Recognition and understanding of special education, are still in the developing stage, therefore, there is a lack of motivation in participants to be actively involved in community services. To address this issue, the

government can initiate awareness programs on disabilities that are prevailing in every household around the country.

- **Implementing technologies in learning:** Learners with disabilities have the potential to attend general schools and universities once their demands are addressed. During the primary data collection, participants highlighted their success in sending one in every three learners to a regular school after addressing their needs through early interventions. Thus, learners should be globally competent to undertake the challenges of regular education that involve the use of the internet and student-friendly technologies. Learners should be gradually exposed to specially designed assistive tools for learners with disabilities. These tools will further strengthen the grounds of special education and also help users accommodate the function and use of technologies.
- **Increased funding:** As mentioned earlier, the lack of government-funded projects raised concern among participants. Thus, there is an urgent need for local and foreign funding to improve teaching and learning experiences within inclusive education in Chattogram. The government should ensure sufficient training programs and the flow of inclusive materials in the start-up schools located around the city. In this way, parents will be rightly motivated toward the fundamental duties of enabling education and social rights for young children and adults. Moreover, improvised infrastructure and the use of adaptive devices will help to seek learners' attention and engagement in the classroom.
- **Emphasis on BSEd. Programs:** In data collection, it has been observed that almost every participant did not hold a specialized program in the field of practice. Furthermore, the interest or understanding of the advantages and purpose of the degree seemed to be shallow. By emphasizing the demand for BSEd. Degree and making it available for individuals to easily access the program would benefit the institutions in the implementation of inclusive education in the long run. An added advantage of opting for a specialized degree is that future special education instructors will be able to choose from various categories of specialization, which help them to develop an in-depth understanding of the same. Skills such as communicative skills, decision-making, and analytical thinking are extra credentials for better performance.

Limitation

When drawing the readers' attention toward the prospects and challenges of inclusive education in special-needs classrooms in Chattogram, it is equally crucial to discuss the limitations of the study, which can provide new insight into the depth of the context. Since the paper targeted small-scale research on the system of special education in Chattogram City, a data sampling strategy is implied on a select number of institutions, therefore, this paper cannot be generalized outside the context of this study. Moreover, it is also important to consider that, due to the constraint of time, data from other schools and institutions cannot be included in the study. Therefore, the study may lack potential information that may have contributed to the structural development of the paper. The challenges of this study in

the aspect of data collection led to consequential shortcomings, i.e., due to administrative and security purposes of these schools, the number of participants in gathering valuable information was relatively few. Most of the participants and schools expressed disinterest in providing data to facilitate the study. Some details given by the participants were conventional and lacked specific information, thus, were omitted from being included in the development of the paper. It has also been observed that some respondents were hesitant to answer questions as representatives of the schools. Lastly, the lack of administrative and logistic support when collecting information proved to be a major challenge for this study.

Conclusion

The study was conducted as small-scale research to review the implementation and practice of the special education system in Chattogram. To facilitate this study, exploratory observation was undertaken to analyze the impact and effectiveness of inclusive education (IE) in the city. The research includes a literature review from various aspects of journals, education policy, and articles reviewed to cite the development of special education in the context of Bangladesh. Some of the key components of inclusive education in special-needs classrooms such as individualized education plan (IEP), instructional practices, teachers' training, learning environment, and specially focused academic plans are highlighted to understand the grounds of learners with disabilities in the country. The purpose of the study is to explore and observe trained instructors who undertake strategic practices and also to measure learning success among young learners. The ADDIE model has been introduced as an effective approach to instructional design in specified education systems. The goal of this research is to provide a structural plan for special-needs instructors to implement an inclusive environment with a collaboration of early classroom interventions. Before conducting the data sampling technique, important elements relevant to the field of this study were accumulated and formulated into open questions to gather information and data. The findings of the research suggested a few insights that added valuable depth to the understanding of curriculum development, IEP planning, teachers-parents collaboration, etc. Alongside research findings, a few recommendations are provided to improve the learning experiences of learners with disabilities with the balance of modern tools and assistive technologies to help learners take responsibility for individual strategies.

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