

**Government Primary School Teacher Training Needs for Inclusive
Education in Bangladesh**

Md Abu Bakor Siddik
Hiroshima University

Norimune Kawai
Hiroshima University

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Government Primary School Teacher Training Needs for Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

Abstract

Bangladesh adopted inclusive education for all government primary schools when it implemented the National Education Policy 2010. However, Bangladesh continues to face several challenges in implementing inclusive education, and low teaching quality remains a significant issue in teaching children with special needs. To overcome this challenge, Bangladesh is developing inclusive teacher education. The current study reviewed 25 studies published in the last 15 years to compile and describe teachers' needs for implementing inclusive education in Bangladesh. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' training needs to implement inclusive education. This study also addressed the challenges of limited teacher training resources and discussed the three critical components of teacher training: professional learning, practice and engagement, and specific training content, such as involving children with special needs and collaborating with stakeholders including students, parents, and local leaders. This study also found that government primary school teachers need to be involved in long-term pre-service training. The result of this study can be used to develop a teacher training program for inclusive education in the future to fulfill government primary school teachers' training needs in Bangladesh. The findings of this study suggest the in-service training for government primary school teachers be improved to provide them teaching techniques for diverse students and collaboration skills with stakeholders in school communities to implement quality inclusive education.

Keywords: Bangladesh, inclusive education, children with special needs, teacher education.

Introduction

In the era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), countries around the world require inclusive, equitable, and quality education (United Nations, 2015). As part of Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, Bangladesh has introduced inclusive education in all of its government primary schools (GPSs). As a developing country, Bangladesh is also trying to realize the SDGs by implementing inclusive education. The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) runs 66,540 primary schools (including GPSs, registered non-government primary schools, non-government primary schools, and new nationalized primary schools) across Bangladesh (DPE, 2017).

Studies have established that Bangladesh continues to face numerous challenges in implementing inclusive education at the primary education level. The major challenge is teachers' abilities to teach children with special needs in regular classrooms (Ahsan, Tasnuba, Akter, Islam, & Miah, 2016; Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Siddik & Kawai, 2018). This is due to insufficient human and structural resources, which is a common issue for other developing countries as well (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Ajuwon, 2007; Azam, 2015; Barnamala, 2015; Charema, 2010; Lamichhane & Kawakatsu, 2015; Osborn, Cutter, & Ullah, 2015; Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Guang-Xue, 2013). To overcome this challenge, Bangladesh has been developing inclusive teacher education since 2008 (Ahsan et al., 2013; Ahsan et al., 2016).

Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

Bangladesh became a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. It ratified Education for All (EFA) in the same year and implemented a new national law called The Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, 1990, that made primary education

compulsory for all the children in Bangladesh. This law enforced the provision of education for children with special needs but considered it social work, not an academic activity (Zaman, Khan, & Mahbub-ul-Alam, 2011). Furthermore, Bangladesh ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007. In 2008, Bangladesh legislated a special law for persons with disabilities called the Persons with Disabilities Rights and the Protection Act 2013 (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2013). Moreover, the new National Education Policy 2010 includes a clear, mandatory directive on inclusive education for children with mild and moderate disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2010). Therefore, current GPSs have to include children with special needs from the school catchment area.

Inclusive Teacher Education in Developing Countries

Teacher preparation programs play a significant role in supporting inclusive education (Forlin & Hopewell, 2006; Sokal, 2012). One of the most significant challenges developing countries encounter is the effective preparation teachers receive for implementing inclusive education programs in their schools. If teachers want to become efficacious, inclusive practitioners and understand and meet the needs of all learners, they need to receive the appropriate training on inclusive education (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma, 2011; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2011).

Teacher education systems are based on pre-service models in most countries (Sharma et al., 2013). They seek to develop new programs to form strong connections and collaboration between training institutions and schools (Florian & Rouse, 2009). Even though some countries have had teacher education systems since the 1980s, they are still ineffective in improving teachers' quality in inclusive education (Sharma et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2013). In most jurisdictions, teachers continue to rate insufficient opportunities for training as the key reason for finding inclusion too challenging to implement. According to Forlin (2012,

p. 4), “teacher education for inclusive education in most regions has been tokenistic at best and non-existent at worse.”

Another critical issue in countries where inclusive education has been embraced recently is the insufficient pre-service and in-service inclusive teacher training in professional practice (Forlin, 2010a). According to Deppeler (2012, p. 132), “Quality teaching within inclusive schools requires focused attention on improving the collective professional knowledge and practices of teachers.” Therefore, teacher training reform for inclusive education remains a challenge because, in Bangladesh, very few academics are engaged in developing appropriate curricula for inclusive education and employing suitable inclusive pedagogies for children with special needs.

Inclusive Teaching Education in Bangladesh

The training system for GPS teachers in Bangladesh is mostly in-service. To become a teacher, individuals do not need to join pre-service training or have pre-teaching experience at school. After obtaining their teaching positions, they join a long-term training program for 18 months, where they acquire theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching. This training program is the only mandatory long-term training opportunity for GPS teachers. In addition, some universities in Bangladesh offer a Bachelor’s and/or Master’s degree programs in Education; however, those are not considered pre-service teacher training because those degrees do not provide any advantage to candidates for procuring teaching jobs in GPSs. Even though the candidates have their Master’s degrees, it does not help them obtain better positions in GPSs.

GPS teachers engage in a one and a half year-long regular pre-service training called Diploma in Primary Education (DPEd). However, teachers can attend the course within three years of their recruitment because of the heavy workload of the training centers, which serve

a large teacher population (Ahsan et al., 2016; Quddus, 2007). It was observed that an inaccessible environment, inadequate training, insufficient resources, absence of teaching materials, low confidence of teachers and staff, negative attitudes toward children with special needs, gender discrimination, prejudice, and a rigid teaching-learning process in assessment systems are common barriers in Bangladesh for including children with special needs in the regular education system (Ahsan, 2006; Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012b; Ahsan et al., 2016). Therefore, implementing inclusive education in Bangladesh still has a long way to go to achieve success. Initiatives are required to develop positive beliefs and attitudes in regular teachers toward inclusive education.

The students' primary education curriculum in Bangladesh has not been updated since 1995 and is not suitable for children with special needs because of the study content and evaluations (Ahsan, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2013; Ahsan & Sharma, 2018; Das, 2011).

Moreover, the primary school teacher education curriculum was initially revised in 1988 and 1993, and the third revision was completed in 2001 (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013). After 2003, it was only in 2013 that significant changes were introduced in the teacher education curriculum when Primary Teachers Training Institutes (PTIs) introduced DPED. However, the DPED program did not contain any inclusive education content at the beginning, though a chapter related to inclusive education was added in 2015 (Ahsan et al., 2016).

The dropout rate in Bangladesh is still high (18.6%), and 53% of the students who drop out of primary schools have some form of disability (Ahsan, Haq, Johora, & Siddik, 2013; Directorate of Primary Education [DPE], 2018). Regular school teachers are not very confident about including children with special needs in their programs (Ahsan et al., 2016; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2009; Kim, 2011). Several studies have identified the inadequate preparation of school teachers as a significant barrier to inclusive education (Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012a; Ahsan et al., 2013; Ahsan et al., 2013; Avramidis &

Norwich, 2002). Therefore, it is apparent that teacher education for inclusive education in Bangladesh needs enhanced reformation to improve pre-service and in-service training programs (Ahmmed, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012; Ahsan et al., 2012a; Ahsan et al., 2013; Ahsan et al., 2016).

Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education in GPSs

The Ministry of Education (MoE) oversees the regular education system, whereas the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) oversees the education of children with special needs. Despite that, there has been little communication among MoE, MoSW, and schools. Due to the limited communication among these ministries and schools, teachers and students with special needs do not receive teaching materials or assistive devices on time (Das, 2011; Miles, Fefoame, Mulligan, & Haque, 2012; Zaman et al., 2011). Linking MoE and MoSW's programs could resolve some of the resource mobilization challenges for children with special needs. Besides having a collaborative program between specialized (special schools, government, and non-governmental project schools) and regular schools, it may be fruitful for teachers to involve children with special needs in regular schools.

Students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders do not appear to possess positive attitudes toward children with special needs (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Hoque, Zohora, Islam, & Al-Ghefeili, 2013; Mullick, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2012). Likewise, the negative attitudes of local leaders toward children with special needs can result in significant obstacles to the effective implementation of inclusive education in regular classrooms. The positive aspects of inclusion are to raise awareness of disability issues and educational needs systematically (Das, 2011). Malak (2013b) found that most of the pre-service teachers mentioned students with special needs as "dull," "unhappy," and "strange," which indicates a lack of knowledge and a negative attitude. Ahmmed et al. (2012) reported that most of the parents of children

without disabilities do not want their children to play with children with disabilities. Children without disabilities may ridicule children with disabilities (Mullick et al., 2012). Sometimes children with special needs are made into an object of ridicule and are often bullied by other students (Das, 2011; Mullick et al., 2012, 2013).

Teachers, too, face many challenges with large-sized classrooms and the challenging infrastructure of schools for children with special needs (Das, 2011). Specifically, teaching in large-sized classes is one of the biggest challenges in implementing inclusive education for teachers, which creates negative attitudes in teachers toward dealing with students with special needs (Forlin, 2010b).

Resources for Inclusive Education

The Bangladeshi government enacted the Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act-2001 to ensure the rights of people with special needs. This law legally permitted education for children with special needs in regular classrooms (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001). According to this act, mainstream schools are expected to include learners with disabilities in their classrooms. In the history of education in Bangladesh, Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act-2001 provided the first legal framework for ensuring the educational rights of people with special needs (Ahsan et al., 2016). However, this act suggested a segregated educational setting for children with special needs, not an inclusive educational setting (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013).

GPS stakeholders such as school managing committees, parent-teacher committees, Union Chairmen (local community leaders), and private donors to schools (i.e., local businesspeople and wealthy people) should work together to implement inclusive education successfully. These stakeholders express their positive attitudes toward implementing inclusive education in Bangladesh, and their positive attitudes are a significant resource for

supporting inclusive education in GPSs (Ahmmed et al., 2012; Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2011).

Teacher Education for Inclusive Education

Teachers require adequate knowledge about children with special needs and need to possess specific skills to change their behavior toward children with diverse needs to implement inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Donnelly, 2010; Sokal, 2012; Forlin & Sin, 2017). For example, Sokal (2012) mentioned conducting observations, record-keeping, and situation analyses, as well as implementing strategies to teach students effectively, identifying additional supports and resources, teamwork, appropriate implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with special needs, and understanding student diversity.

The European Union (Donnelly, 2010) emphasizes the following seven essential components of teacher preparation programs in inclusive education based on their experiences in training teachers:

- 1) The teacher preparation program should include awareness of the diversity of learners and social issues in their communities because the school is the point where different people engage and meet. Teachers have a pivotal role in encouraging everyone to participate, regardless of race, social status, and disability.
- 2) Teachers need to know how to recognize individual differences and implement learning strategies for all students.
- 3) Teachers need to know how to collaborate with other teachers and staff of the school to teach students with special needs. Additionally, teachers need to have a good relationship with other stakeholders, including the school managing committee and guardians.

- 4) Teacher education should be interpretative and comprise critical paradigms so that teachers can understand their tasks and are prepared to do action research to develop their tasks.
- 5) Teachers need to connect with other institutions outside their schools, such as other neighborhood schools, to understand their educational skills and the support facilities of these schools.
- 6) Inclusive teachers should be cross-categorical or multi-tiered persons so that they can gather knowledge about the global and multicultural aspects of education and philosophical approaches.
- 7) Teachers are required to learn from other experienced teachers who already know how to teach diverse students within one class. Therefore, teachers need to improve their collaboration skills.

Forlin and Sin (2017) stated four essential elements for teachers to make their classrooms inclusive: valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and personal and professional development. According to Donnelly (2010), Sokal (2012), and Forlin and Sin (2017), the essential elements for teachers to make their classrooms inclusive are knowledge about students' diversity and their teaching strategies, involving all students in in-class activities, and collaborating with all stakeholders of the school.

Study Objectives

This review summarizes the current situation of the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Bangladesh. The overall project concerns inclusive teacher education that will help teachers acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching students with special needs in regular classrooms. This review focuses on teachers' training needs as they have been presented in previous studies in Bangladesh. This review also

includes quantitative and qualitative studies on inclusive teacher education in Bangladesh. The findings will help to construct a practical teacher training manual on inclusive education.

The objective of this study is to explore the status of the GPS teacher education program and teacher training needs of inclusive education for children with disabilities in regular classrooms in Bangladesh.

Research Questions

The following three research questions underpin the current research.

- 1) What are the training needs of GPS teachers for professional learning or knowledge to implement inclusive education?
- 2) What are the training needs of GPS teachers for professional practice development to implement inclusive education?
- 3) What are the training needs of GPS teachers for professional engagement development to implement inclusive education?

Methods

The current study conducted a content document review, which is a research synthesis that aims to integrate findings on a specific topic (Neuendorf, 2002). The scope and subject were too narrow to conduct a systematic literature review (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The current study was conducted by reviewing published peer-reviewed journal articles. The selected articles were selected published study from 2005 to 2019. To locate relevant peer-reviewed articles, the following databases were used: CiNii Articles, JAIRO (NII), Academic Search Premier, EdLink, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Web of Science-Cross Search (ISI Ver.3.0), Academic Search Complete, SCOPUS (Elsevier API), Primo Central (Ex Libris) Education Full Text, and ERIC. Ninety-seven articles from the peer-reviewed journal were selected at

the primary selection for the current study. To search articles for the current study, different keywords were used, such as Bangladesh, primary education, inclusive education, teachers' education in different combinations. Eventually, among the 97 studies, 25 studies were reviewed for the current study. Those studies were reviewed by using thematic analysis, and the themes emerged from the literature.

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria applied in this review were as follows (Cooper, 2017):

- 1) Settings: studies had to be carried out in inclusive settings in regular schools or classroom contexts in the primary education sector in Bangladesh.
- 2) Study methods: studies could be qualitative and quantitative as long as they were conducted on inclusive education or teacher education for inclusive education.
- 3) Participants: studies had to be related to students/children with disabilities or special needs. Although the meaning of disabilities and special needs are the same, for the keyword, they were different.
- 4) School-level: studies that are related to GPSs. In Bangladesh, many private and public organizations are implementing inclusive education at the primary education level. This study focuses on the literature related to GPSs only.
- 5) Timeframe: studies had to be published between January 2005 and March 2019. The earliest study on inclusive education in Bangladesh was published in 2005, and this study began in March 2019.
- 6) Publication status: studies had to be published in peer-reviewed journals.
- 7) Language: the authors of the reviewed studies could be from any country; however, the studies had to be written in English. There is no peer-reviewed journal on education in the Bengali language.

Selection Procedure

This review followed the stages of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009).

Figure 1 describes the study selection process.

In the first scanning, 97 studies were selected by searching the databases related to inclusive education in Bangladesh. Eight studies had been included twice; the remaining 89 studies were selected in the first round. Figure 1 describes our selection and screening procedures. Among the 89 studies, 35 studies were not related to inclusive education for children with special needs; therefore, those studies were not considered for this study. The full-text article analysis eliminated 54 studies, which left 25 studies.

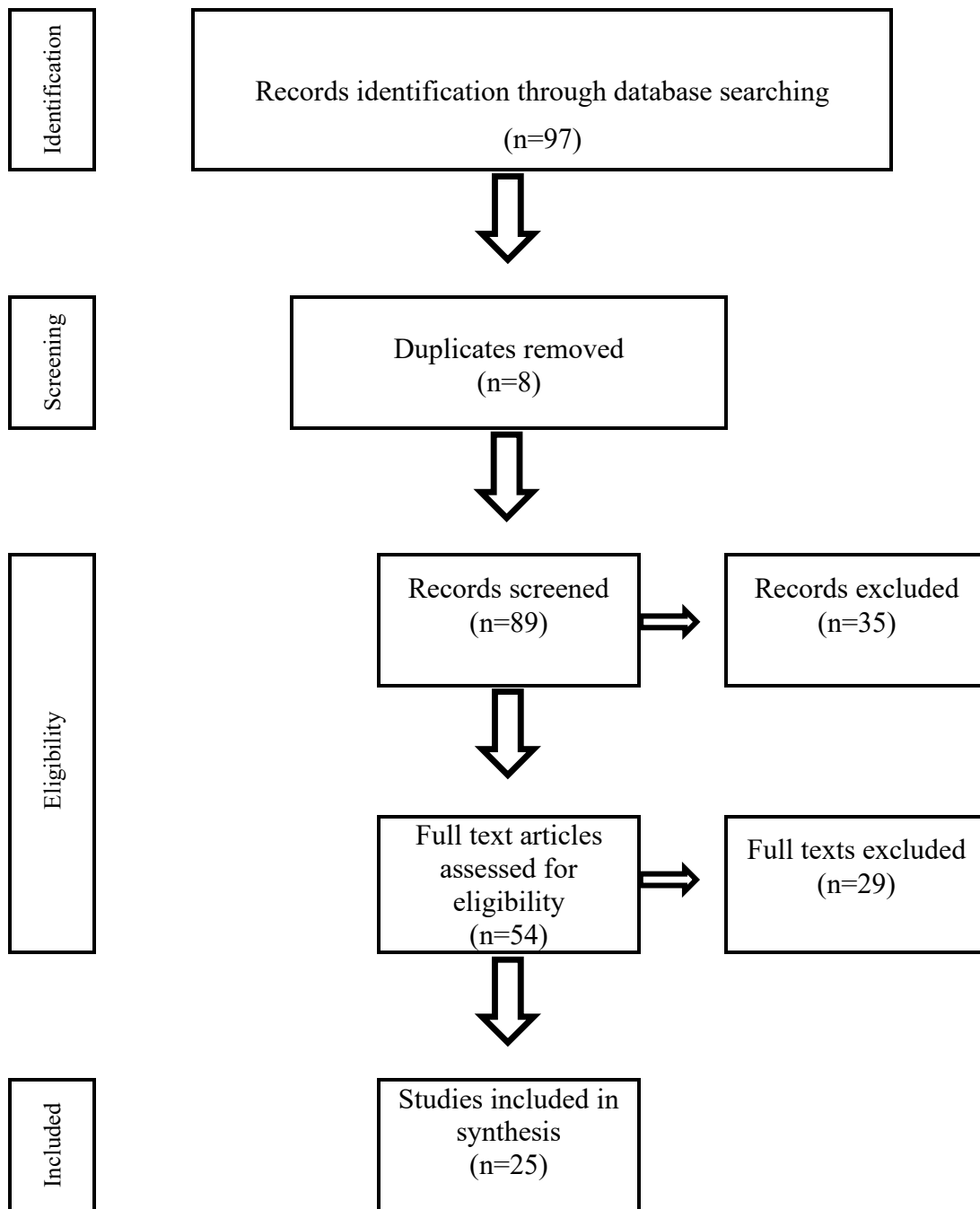


Figure 1. Flow chart of the selection procedure of studies with numbers of studies selected or rejected (Moher et al., 2009).

Coding

The following key themes were created in line with the research questions from the literature review: (i) professional learning/knowledge, (ii) professional practice, and (iii)

professional engagement (Ahsan et al., 2016; Brennan, 2017; Campbell & Fyfe, 1995; Dyson, Plunkett, & McCluskey, 2018; Lundqvist, 2016). The professional knowledge theme consists of two sub-themes: a) content knowledge and pedagogy, and b) knowledge about students' learning and development (Dyson et al., 2018). The professional practice theme consists of four sub-themes: a) skills and instructional strategies, b) classroom management, c) challenging environments and communication techniques, and d) curriculum and planning (Ahsan et al., 2013). Moreover, the professional engagement theme consists of two sub-themes: a) active learning and reflective practice and b) professional relationships and membership (Ahsan et al., 2016). Table 1 presents the themes and subthemes of the current study to analyze the data, which was adopted by Dyson et al. (2018). The analytical findings were presented according to those themes and subthemes what were emerged from the literature review.

Table 1

Themes and Subthemes for Analyzing Data (Dyson et al., 2018)

Themes	Subthemes
Professional learning/knowledge	Content knowledge and pedagogy Knowledge about students' learning and development
Professional practice	Skills and instructional strategies Classroom management Challenging environment and communication techniques Curriculum and planning
Professional engagement	Active learning and reflective practice Professional relationships and membership

Findings and Discussion

Descriptive Findings

The selected 25 studies describe the training needs of GPS teachers about inclusive education. Out of 25, 16 studies recommend both pre- and in-service training for teachers to

acquire appropriate knowledge and skills to implement inclusive education, ten suggested pre-service training, and eight recommended in-service training. Table 2 indicates the studies that suggest pre-service and in-service training for GPS teachers for inclusive education.

Table 2

Studies Promoting Pre- and In-service Training for GPS Teachers for Inclusive Education

Pre-service Training	In-service Training
Ahmed & Mullick (2014)	Ahmed & Mullick (2014)
Ahsan & Mullick (2013)	Ahsan & Mullick (2013)
Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler (2012a)	Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler (2012a)
Das (2011)	Das (2011)
Hoque, Zohora, Islam, & Al-Ghefeili (2013)	Hoque, Zohora, Islam, & Al-Ghefeili (2013)
Ahmed, Sharma, & Deppeler (2012)	Ahmed, Sharma, & Deppeler (2012)
Malak (2013a)	Malak (2013a)
Malak (2013b)	Das & Ochiai (2012)
Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler (2013)	
Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler (2012b)	

Though the studies listed in the left column of Table 2 suggest the importance of pre-service training for GPS teachers, GPS teachers do not have the opportunity to undergo it before acquiring their positions as teachers. Therefore, most GPS teachers join the teaching profession without any training in education. Before 2015, GPS teachers used to receive a one-year training called Certificate in Education (C-in-Ed) as a prerequisite training. From 2015, the Bangladesh government introduced a new prerequisite training for GPS teachers called the DPED, where GPS teachers received training for one and a half years, which included six months of practice teaching. C-in-Ed and DPED are the only long-term training programs for GPS teachers; however, this training is not sufficient for GPS teachers to specialize in any specific subject (Ahsan et al., 2016). Due to the insufficient training provided, it is difficult for GPS teachers to acquire in-depth training on inclusive education.

Analytical Findings

Professional learning/knowledge

Pedagogical content knowledge is unique to teachers because it is based on the way teachers relate their pedagogical knowledge to their subject matter knowledge (Cochran et al., 1991; Forlin, 2010b; Gess-Newsome & Lederman, 2002; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Studies recommend several knowledge components as important for GPS teachers to implement inclusive education in their schools. These include the concept of inclusive education, children with special needs, special education, and laws and acts about inclusive education both in the national and international context (Ahmmed et al., 2014; Ahsan et al., 2013; Das & Ochiai, 2012; Kibria, 2005; Miles et al., 2012; Mullick et al., 2012).

Content knowledge and pedagogy about Inclusive Education. Several studies established that teachers do not have adequate knowledge of inclusive education, such as the definition and context, laws, policies, and the target groups (Das & Ochiai, 2012; Miles et al., 2012; Mullick et al., 2012). Ahmmed et al. (2014) and Hoque et al. (2013) found that although teachers are interested in inclusive education, they do not have a broad enough scope of knowledge about it. Mullick et al. (2012) observed that not only teachers but local leaders (e.g., school management committee, school donors, local union chairpersons) and education officers also have limited knowledge of inclusive education.

Several studies indicated that teachers are relatively unaware of national and international education policies (Mullick et al., 2012). Das and Ochiai (2012, p. 7) stated, “GPS teachers do not know about the national education policy and other policies related to inclusive education.” GPS teachers have a shortage of knowledge about the national education system and policy, and they have limited knowledge about the policies for inclusive education. This shortage of knowledge is making GPS teachers reluctant to include

children with special needs in regular classrooms (Das, 2011; Hoque et al., 2013; Mullick et al., 2013; Šiška & Habib, 2013).

GPS teachers often have a misconception about inclusive education since they regard inclusive education as education for children with special needs (Ahsan et al., 2012a). They consider children with special needs as children with severe disabilities (Ahsan et al., 2012a, p. 252). Most of the studies found that GPS teachers do not have a clear understanding of inclusive education or diversity (Ahmmed et al., 2012; Das, 2011; Khan, 2011; Miles et al., 2012). Those studies recommended enhancing the knowledge of teachers on disabilities and inclusive education.

Several studies indicated that teachers are not very aware of gender issues (Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014; Ahsan et al., 2013; Kibria, 2005). Gender discrimination has become a challenge in implementing inclusive education because of the physical attributes of human beings. Teachers need to learn about gender issues from both the physical and social perspectives to implement the correct methods and techniques to teach children with diverse needs.

The above findings support Forlin and Sin's (2017) recommendation; they also recommend that teachers required a clear concept of inclusive education. Bangladesh's government clarifies inclusive education in the Primary Education Development Program-II (PEDP-II) and the National Education Policy 2010. Teachers need to understand inclusive education according to the PEDP-II and the National Education Policy 2010 (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013). Teachers also need to be aware of the target groups of inclusive education as the government specifies four such target groups in the PEDP-II report. The target groups are children with special needs, girls, children from ethnic communities, and children who are disadvantaged due to socioeconomic reasons (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013). GPS teachers in Bangladesh are required to know about these four target groups.

Bangladesh is a developing country, and international organizations are involved in developing the teacher education system in the country (Ahsan et al., 2016; Malak et al., 2013; UNICEF, 2014). GPS teachers need to be aware of both international and local laws and acts on children's rights to education, including inclusive education, because Bangladesh shaped its educational policy structures based on the global framework (e.g., EFA, UNCRPD, SDGs) (Enamul et al., 2013; Malak, 2013b; Miles et al., 2012).

Knowledge about students' learning and development. According to the PEDP-II, the target group for inclusive education in Bangladesh is not limited to students with disabilities. It also includes children with special needs, children who are impoverished, ethnic minority children, and those children who have experienced gender discrimination (Ahsan et al., 2016). The GPS teachers should have the opportunity to acquire knowledge about the process of reaching target groups, as mentioned in the PEDP-II (Ahsan et al., 2012b). Inclusive education provides education for all children, regardless of social, economic, and individual barriers (UNESCO, 1994).

Knowledge about disabilities and children with special and individual needs. Some studies explained that GPS teachers remain uncertain about the concepts of children with special needs or disabilities (Das & Ochiai, 2012; Khan, 2011; Kibria, 2005; Mullick et al., 2012). Ahsan et al. (2012a) noted that GPS teachers thought the definition of inclusive education is the education of children with disabilities and that teachers were concerned that "children with special needs" meant severe disabilities. Some teachers have a negative concept of disabilities and believe they are the result of evil deeds (Ahsan et al., 2013).

According to the above findings, GPS teachers need to know about disabilities and children with special needs. Studies find that people in Bangladesh, including GPS teachers,

still have a misconception about disabilities (Das, 2011; Malak, 2013b). People with disabilities are seen as a curse, and some teachers consider them as untouchables or contagious, and so, they do not accept disabilities positively. GPS teachers' social status is high, and people are accustomed to following them as local leaders, especially in villages. As such, teachers may assist in removing misconceptions about disabilities from society. Therefore, knowledge about disabilities and children with special needs will create a positive attitude in GPS teachers, and which can also help to create their positive attitudes towards students with special needs and parents who have children with special needs.

Professional Practice

The skills of instructional strategies. Most GPS teachers do not have any teaching experience to teach children with special needs. Ahsan et al. (2012b) found that 50.4% of teachers had significant interaction with people with disabilities, but only 5.1% had teaching experience in teaching children with disabilities. Having contact with persons with disabilities has a positive impact on teaching in inclusive classrooms (Ahsan, 2006). Studies (Ahmmed et al., 2012, 2014; Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014; Ahsan et al., 2012a; Ahsan et al., 2013; Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Das & Ochiai, 2012; Hoque et al., 2013; Malak, 2013a, 2013b; Mullick et al., 2012) recommended teacher training on instructional strategies for children with special needs. In DPED training, teachers receive an internship practical teaching program in their own schools.

Therefore, if there are children with special needs in their schools, they can practice the theory they have learned; however, if they do not have any children with special needs in their school, then they have fewer chances to gain practical experience in teaching children with special needs. In this case, GPS teachers can gain their teaching experience in special

schools to develop their skills for children with special needs by participating in the one-week to the one-month by an internship teaching program.

Classroom management. Large classes were considered particularly disadvantageous to students who were new to schooling (e.g., indigenous children, children living in urban slums or the street, refugee children, or children from very low-income families) (Mullick et al., 2012). Most of the studies noted that large classes are a big problem for teachers (Das & Ochiai, 2012; Enamul et al., 2013; Khan, 2011; Kibria, 2005; Malak, 2013a; Malak, 2013b; Mullick et al., 2012). Due to the extra pressure that results from a large number of students, some teachers also recommend special schools for students with special needs (Malak, 2013b). Malak (2013a) indicated that teachers were concerned about a few issues of inclusive education, for instance, the extra workload, large class sizes, and interruption of the regular students' progress due to the presence of students with special needs.

In Bangladesh, there is a shortage of GPSs; as such, the available ones have to teach many learners in one classroom. Teaching many learners in one classroom poses a challenge because teachers are unable to include those with special needs. Therefore, GPS teachers are required to acquire knowledge and skills in peer-teaching and group work to manage large-sized classes.

Managing challenging environments and alternative communication techniques.

Mullick et al. (2012) stated that GPS teachers need to know how they can gather local resources and use them. Physical access has been a significant challenge for children with disabilities from the beginning of the implementation of inclusive education (Ahsan, Haq, et

al., 2013; Kibria, 2005). Teachers need to know how they can modify their schools for children with disabilities.

GPS teachers have a heavy workload, and they are required to include children with special needs in their classrooms (Malak, 2013a, 2013b; Mullick et al., 2012). This combination leads to stress (Ahsan et al., 2012b). In Bangladesh, GPS teachers do not have any teaching assistants (Khan, 2011; Malak, 2013a, 2013b). Therefore, teachers have to control large classes and are unable to provide individual attention to students in the class. Hence, they need the training to acquire skills in collaboration with various stakeholders (school counselors, OTs, educational psychologists, parents) and to implement inclusive education. GPS teachers also face challenges in including children with special needs, especially children with behavioral challenges, and GPS teachers' training in inclusive education does not provide them information on how they can work with children with special needs behavior in the classroom (Ahsan et al., 2016). Therefore, teachers continue to face those challenges. In this case, GPS teachers need to acquire skills for alternative communication and the strategy to control students.

Curriculum and planning. Primary schools in Bangladesh follow the national curriculum. Moreover, all schools use the same books. When children with special needs enter GPSs, their teachers find it difficult to use the same books and lesson plans for all their students because their abilities and requirements differ. Studies found that GPS teachers do not know how to modify their lessons or their evaluations for children with special needs (Ahmed et al., 2012; Ahsan et al., 2013; Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Ahsan et al., 2012a; Kibria, 2005; Malak, 2013a; Zaman et al., 2011). They suggested that since children with special needs require revised lessons and assessments, GPS teachers need to know how they can modify their lessons and evaluations for these children.

The primary education sub-sector in Bangladesh follows a national curriculum implemented in the whole country. Therefore, GPS teachers do not have the authority to modify the curriculum or adapt it to teach diverse learners with various needs. GPS teachers do not have enough knowledge about the development and implementation of IEP (Ahsan & Sharma, 2018). Ahsan et al. (2016) found that there is no content on the development and implementation of IEP in the prerequisite and in-service training for GPS teachers. Sokal (2012) and Forlin and Sin (2017) stated that an inclusive teacher needs to know how to develop and implement IEP for children with special needs in an inclusive classroom.

Professional Engagement

Active learning and reflective practice. Ahsan (2012a) found that 49.6% of GPS teachers do not have any experience meeting children with special needs during their training or before joining their schools, and this finding supports the result of previous studies (Das & Ochiai, 2012; Kibria, 2005). Mullick et al. (2012) noted that the teachers who received prerequisite training believe it was necessary to include the contents on special educational needs in the program.

Studies found that teachers who have previous experience working with children or persons with special needs prefer working with these children than those who have no experience working with them (Ahsan et al., 2013). GPS teachers can be involved in a short-term practice in special schools to develop their knowledge and skills in teaching children with special needs. Sokal (2012), Forlin and Sin (2017), and Donnelly (2010) stated that an inclusive teacher needs to know how to work around their challenges to make their classroom more inclusive. Therefore, those studies keep enforcing the implementation of action research for inclusive teachers. GPS teachers need to know how they can participate in action

research, keep their records, analyze, and implement new ideas to include all learners in their classes.

Professional relationship and membership. Collaboration among teachers and with schools' stakeholders is an important requirement for GPS teachers to implement inclusive education. This collaboration should happen not only among teachers, but also with other stakeholders such as students, parents, and local leaders of the schools.

In Bangladesh, GPSs recruit teachers who are not specialized in any subject. After having obtained the positions, GPS teachers receive some in-service training. Most of the time, GPS teachers cannot join the training in time because of insufficient resources in the PTIs, and the training can be delayed for two to five years. After the DPED training, they receive some specialized training based on the GPS teachers' interests. Some GPSs have a few teachers trained in inclusive education, but some do not as well.

Moreover, GPSs with trained teachers on inclusive education needs to help neighborhood schools where there are no trained teachers. Therefore, GPS teachers need to prepare for collaboration among neighboring schools to implement inclusive education. As per the National Education Policy 2010, GPS teachers must include children with special needs in their educational practices, and thus, GPS teachers need to collaborate by teaching all children in their classrooms. Several studies found that GPS teachers were not familiar with collaboration to implement inclusive education, and these studies suggested that Bangladeshi GPS teachers were required to know how to do so (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Ahsan 2012; Malak, 2013a).

Mullick et al. (2012, p. 7) stated, "Students with disabilities often became the object of entertainment and were bullied by other students." Collaboration between students with and without special needs is vital for implementing inclusive education in GPSs. Studies

found that students without special needs play a vital role in involving children with special needs in regular classrooms (Ahmmed et al., 2012; Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014; Ahsan et al., 2012a; Das & Ochiai, 2012; Hoque et al., 2013; Malak, 2013a; Mullick et al., 2012; Zaman et al., 2011). Some students are motivated and are always trying to help children with special needs, while other students have a negative attitude toward students with special needs. Mullick et al. (2012) and Ahsan et al. (2012b) suggested that collaboration between children with and without special needs is essential for implementing inclusive education, and teachers must take responsibility for the collaboration. Teachers need to become the connection between children with and without special needs. The above studies found that GPS teachers have limited ideas regarding establishing cooperation between children with and without special needs.

Studies also found that most of the parents of children without special needs have a negative concept of disabilities (Ahmmed et al., 2012; Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014; Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Das, 2011; Hoque et al., 2013; Mullick et al., 2012) and have negative attitudes toward including children with special needs in regular classrooms (Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014; Mullick et al., 2012). Those parents do not want their children to interact with children with special needs. Therefore, teachers need to remove the negative concepts of disabilities from parents of children without disabilities and encourage them (parents of children without disabilities) to allow their children to help children with special needs. However, a couple of studies (Ahmmed et al., 2012, 2014) found that a few parents of children without special needs expressed interest and willingness to work with children with special needs and help teachers to implement inclusive education.

Teachers do not only play the role to connect students in schools and classrooms, but they also work to bridge the gap among the school stakeholders such as students, parents, and local leaders. Local leaders and education officials play a significant role in developing

teachers' professional skills (Mullick et al., 2013). Several studies have found that local leaders and education officers influenced teachers' professional skills (Ahsan, Haq, et al., 2013; Mullick, 2013; Mullick et al., 2012, 2013). Moreover, local leaders help to shape the physical development of schools through fundraising. Effective communication helps people to express thoughts, assist in building relationships, and enhance practical problem solving (Sharma, 2011).

Collaboration is vital to implement inclusive education. Collaborations between teachers and teachers, teachers and students, teachers and parents, teachers and local leaders, and teachers and education officers are particularly important to implement inclusive education (Loreman et al., 2011). Forlin and Sin (2017) also mentioned that teachers need the skills to work with school stakeholders and need to possess excellent communication skills. Sokal (2012) also suggested that teachers need to have the ability to communicate and collaborate with parents and other stakeholders of schools. In this case, GPS teachers are required to develop their communication skills to involve themselves as effective communicators inside and outside school. Moreover, parents of children without special needs have a negative attitude toward children with special needs (Mullick et al., 2012). Therefore, GPS teachers need to possess the skills to change the attitude of parents of children without special needs.

According to the above analytical findings, from the perspective of Bangladesh, GPS teachers' training needs for inclusive education can be classified based on the issues related to professional knowledge, professional practice & professional engagement. The professional knowledge segment focuses on content knowledge, and pedagogy about inclusive education, knowledge about students' learning and development, and knowledge about disabilities and issues related to children with special and individual needs. The professional skills segment represents skills of instructional strategies, classroom management, challenging managing

environments, and alternative communication techniques and issues related to curriculum and planning. Professional engagement represents issues related to active learning and reflective practice and issues related to professional relationships and membership.

Recommendations and Scope for Future Studies

Ahsan et al. (2016) found that GPS teachers receive just 4.5 hours of course time on inclusive education, which is not enough to learn how to teach children with disabilities in a regular education system. Under these circumstances, it is essential to provide extensive in-service and pre-service training for existing and new teachers. Future studies should be designed to explore what kinds of in-service training programs are the most valuable, convenient, and effective for GPS teachers and how these programs should be implemented for them.

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