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THE POLICY AND PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF A DISTRICT IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

At present Inclusive Education (IE) is the most important issue in the education sector of the world. As a developing country Bangladesh also tried best to implement IE in all level of education. After the liberation of 1971, Government of Bangladesh enacted the constitution. Education is mentioned as the basic rights of all children in the constitution. The CRC, Salamanca Statement, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) have stimulated argument and policy development for around issues relating to inclusive education in the whole world. The Government of Bangladesh also has ratified many acts and regulations for implementation of IE. 'The Primary Education Development Program-2(PEDP-2)' and 'PEDP-3' are policy initiatives of the government to ensure IE. Despite those well formulated policies and different initiatives, there are still large gaps in the development that we need. In this context this research will find out what is gap between the current policy and the practices of IE in Bangladesh. This paper describes the current scenario of the practices of policies of IE in the Bangladeshi Government Primary Schools. Quantitative research approach with questionnaire was applied for the research. Data was collected from a selected district in Bangladesh. The sample size was 40 and all respondents are the teachers of the Government primary schools of that districts. The respondents have given data by answering some close ended questions and described the barriers and limitations to implementation of IE by some open-ended questions. The findings imply that the existing policies are effective enough for implementing of IE; but proper supports are needed. They also make recommendations for proper execution of IE in Bangladesh.

KEY WORDS: *policy and practice, inclusive education, Primary Schools, sub-district Bangladesh.*

INTRODUCTION

Needs of the study

Inclusion is a widely discussed issue of this century to reduce inequalities in the outcomes of children because of barriers and disadvantages (Topping, 2012). After the UN declaration in 1948, inclusion began to be an important issue in schools. Social justice provides strong theoretical support to inclusive practice. It mainly related to the practice of liberty, equality and democracy (Young,1997; Fraser, 2005; Lister, 2008). These three ideas are considered as ideal values for building a fair society (Benjamin and Emejulu, 2012). In this regard as a developing country, Bangladesh has started conceptually inclusive Education from 2007. So, we can see Bangladesh is now just in the introductory level of IE. Although we have the constitutional bonding to ensure education for all, it is not enough for inclusion. We have the education policy and different types of rules and regulations, but result is not at a satisfactory level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to collect information about the teacher's view of the Government primary schools of Bangladesh about inclusive education and to know about the barriers they face to implement the current policies. I also want to know their opinion for better implementation of IE and their recommendation for effective

practice of IE. Following on from this, another purpose of the study is to make suggestions for the policy makers.

The research questions of this study are:

- How do head teachers(HT) of Government Primary Schools in Dhaka district Bangladesh view and implement the Inclusive Education(IE) policy?
- How do assistant teachers(AT) of Government Primary Schools in Dhaka district of Bangladesh view and implement the Inclusive Education(IE) policy?
- What are the barriers to effectively implementing government policy on IE?
- What are the solutions to effectively implementing government policy on IE?

The aim of the study is

To dessiminate the experiences and perceptions of the teachers of gov. primary schools who are mostly responsible for implementing the IE in primary level for the 6-14 years old age group.It can help the policy makers understand better the needs of the schools for better implementation of IE.

Interest in this topic

Although different acts, programs and policies have been executed to ensure IE in Bangladesh, the success has not emerged at the expected level. Although children's attainment in the primary education is good, the large number of children of target groups (children with a disability, ethnicity, vulnerable and gender disparity) often remain isolated from the school system. Sometimes they are enrolled in the school but do not continue for different reasons, such as lack of appropriate teaching learning methods, suitable school environment. Some students cannot learn because of the lack of proper teaching learning aids. Some students cannot understand the learning because of their learning disability. This research finding can be influential in future planning and the implementations process of inclusion, especially for target groups throughout Bangladesh. With the understanding and knowledge of the study, the policymakers to take initiatives to ensure students' wellbeing and prepare them for school. The practical research findings can help the policymaker understand the gap and the lack of facilities and resources in the practice of inclusive education. This process will enhance our understanding and will provide a platform for the development of further research. Ultimately this will benefit excluded children who do not attend the school.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Social Justice:

Inclusive education is related with human rights because it ensures social justice. Social justice does not accept exclusion of children from school in regard of gender, class, race or ability (Ryan 2006, in Ahsan & Mullik 2015). Social justice provides strong theoretical support to inclusive practice. According to Bell (2016) social justice is both a goal and a process. Our vision for social justice is a world in which the distribution of resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognised and treated with respect.

Students' wellbeing:

To confirm whole child education, the Scottish education system is committed to ensuring education to make successful learners, confident individual, effective contributors and responsible citizens through the curriculum (Scottish Executive, 2004). Berk (2013) suggests that needs of feeling safe, loved, included to develop self-awareness or self-esteem and to build relationships with others are associated with children's psychological development. Weare (2015) suggests that there is a link between wellbeing, learning and school improvement. Children with greater well-being and secure attachment obtain better scores and attendance and less dropout (ibid).. Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman (2010) suggest that diversity of the children may make them vulnerable and damage their learning and their ability to connect with others. Hossain et, al. (2014) note that 13.4-22.9% of Bangladeshi children have a psychological disorder. For this reason, now it is a world-wide concentration on how policy and school can develop children's resilience and sense of wellbeing (Noble and McGrath 2014). Parker, Rose and Gilbert (2016) note that the school can be a secure place for all children but particularly those who have the experience of attachment difficulties. Through a positive ethos, the school can become a safe environment which is conducive to effective learning, positive relationships and caring attitudes.

literature related to this study

Different studies, research and reviews have been undertaken to try to find out a proper implementation process of Inclusive Education (IE) by the scholars of IE.

E. Shyman suggests in his article named 'Towards a Globally Sensitive Inclusive Education based in Social Justice' that education is not an opportunity, but it is a civil right created from social justice. For this, all necessary support should be provided in the general education classrooms for their educational achievement. If necessary, for the proper access to curriculum and avoiding the exhaustions in the general classrooms, the provisions and interventions can be delivered in separate environments, but it is not depending on the teachers' willingness, it is mostly the choice of individual.

Tripura and Banu (2016) identified that, due to a different language, poverty, geographical location and social marginality, children from ethnic minority backgrounds are excluded from mainstreaming education although 'The National Education Policy 2010' and 'The Third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-3)' take different initiatives to include them. This journal focused on some relevant issues, challenges in the implementation of policy and practice of IE for the ethnic minority and propose to careful thoughts and plans to promote inclusion in remaining provision in Bangladesh.

Sharma et al. (2013) conducted a review focusing on the readiness of teachers to follow policy of IE. This paper highlighted the attitude of the teachers about inclusion which is make mandatory by ratifying different policy in the South Asian region including Bangladesh. Sharma et al. (2013) mentioned that lack of enough knowledge, proper qualification, preparation and experience of teachers about IE are the main obstacles of IE. They identified also other barriers such as non-realistic policy, limitation of educational material and a lower level of understanding of all stakeholders about inclusion. They proposed for a well-structured policy and plan which focusing on the needs of all learners and trained teachers.

Forlin (2013) makes a review on the changing paradigm and future guidelines for implementing IE in developing countries focusing on policy and practice. The situations, requirements, challenges and methodology of IE are the same in the developing countries. For this reason, the study of Forlin (2013) helps us to know or recognise the variables that affects IE for diverse children because the study notes how policy can affect the situation and success of IE. Forlin (2013) notes that enacted policies must be realistic for their locality. Policy makers must consider the local requirements which is practical and suitable for implementation. She also recommended to build up the capacity of staff and teachers.

Bansal's (2016) findings focus on the attitude of the teachers to include diverse children in their class. He thinks teacher's attitude towards IE especially about special education needs is the heart of the success of IE. Teacher's attitude can vary in respect of type of school, educational and professional experiences. He suggests providing clear guidance in policies to make positive attitude to ensure IE. He finds professional commitment and attitude towards IE is correlated. Teacher's capability, commitment and aptitude can be important in ensuring effective IE. For this, pre-service and in-service teacher training, collaborative support of authorities and all stakeholders also should be provided, as well as teaching aid for the children to create positive attitude of teachers. This learning also provides an outline of my proposed study. The proposed study will extend Bansal's (2016) findings by offering a perspective from the Bangladesh context.

Kawser et al. (2016) identified some barriers to IE in Bangladesh in their article named 'Barriers of Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Making Inclusion a Reality'. They identified that lack of proper policy, teacher training, positive social attitude, related teacher training, proper curriculum, sufficient resources, awareness of community people and the support of higher authority are the main barriers to ensuring effective IE in Bangladesh. They suggest that there should be one education policy for all types of children and there must be collaborative implementation policy for core ministries and Non-Government Organisations and take comprehensive strategic plan for special education needs for proper implementation of IE.

Roger Slee (2013) in his article named 'Meeting Some Challenges of Inclusive Education in an age of Exclusion' notes some challenges to implement the international conventions and declarations in local level. He thinks confusion and contradiction among thinking, talking and doing the conception and practice of IE inconsistent and not connected to all societies and policies.

Vaz,et al(2015) notes in their journal article named 'Factors associated with primary school teacher's attitude towards the Inclusion of students with disabilities' that the practical implementation depends on the teachers' attitudes . The most significant barrier to IE is the teachers' attitude and expectations. They also identified that female teachers have more positive attitude towards IE.

Mallick and Sheesh (2013) identified students and parent's perception about mainstreaming education for children with special needs in Bangladesh. They note that mainstreaming teachers, general students and their parents are not enough aware about children with special needs (CSN). Although they support the provision of education in the mainstream school of CSN, they think skilled and trained teachers, suitable infrastructure and necessary teaching aids are also essential. The CSN and their parents are afraid of the negative attitude of the teachers and other students and they think they may have to face discrimination, bulling and isolation in the school. The authors suggest negative attitude of teachers, students and other parents about CSN should have to be changed for the implementation of IE.

Subban and Sharma (2006) suggests in their article that having some knowledge about the acts and the IE trained teachers, revealed the positive attitude towards students with disability in the mainstreaming settings. They found that teachers think that severely disabled students are not suitable for mainstream school and they make things difficult for non CSN students.

 Tiwari et al (2015) notes that teacher's knowledge is inadequate about the IE and many of them thinks IE is based on ethics. They note that teachers of Delhi mostly supported special education for students with disability (SWD).

Riehl, C.J. (2000, in Ainscow, 2013) suggests that school leaders should build connection between school and communities. She also said that in developing a positive relationship with the school community is a new form of practice.

Richard Rose (2017) suggests that policy alone cannot achieve the IE. It needed not only the understanding of the policies but also the ways to achieve the policy. It also required the self-confidence of the user. He suggested for effective accessible disseminations for teachers and parents. He also thinks misunderstanding of IE can make separation in education among the children with disability and the children with poverty, discriminations and prejudice.

Pulkkinen and Jahnukainen (2016) have pointed out in their study on Finish reformation that reformation of policy can help the promote of inclusion. Their study found that after policy reformation local authorities took decisions for better funding to schools for IE.

The policy context:

The constitution of Bangladesh, developed in1972 and revised in 2000, notes in article 17: "The state shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of – establishing a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education and extends free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law"; in Article 28(3)- "No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction, or condition with regard to access to any place of public entertainment or resort, or admission to any educational institution" (Government of Bangladesh, 2000). Bangladesh is thus committed to many international declarations such as; The Convention on the rights of the child (UN,1989), 'Education for All' declaration in 1990 and based on this Bangladesh ratified 'Compulsory Primary Education act- 1990' (UNESCO,1990). Also, the signatory of 'The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action' (UNESCO, 1994), 'The Dakar Framework of Action' (UNESCO, 2000), 'Sustainable Development Goal' (UN, 2015) and 'The UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities' (UN, 2008). Our 'National Education Policy 2010' stated to ensure quality education for all children (Government of Bangladesh, 2010) to confirm the obligation of constitution and 'National Children Policy-2011' (Government of Bangladesh, 2011) also mentioned to provide education for all children. To fulfil all commitments 'The Third Primary Education Development Program' (PEDP-3) have taken activities to ensure quality education with equal opportunities for all children and the main objective of the PEDP-3 is- "an efficient, inclusive and equitable primary education system delivering effective and relevant child friendly learning to all Bangladesh's children from pre-primary through grade 5" (Government of Bangladesh, 2015). To achieve this target PEDP-3 has implemented a component named 'Mainstreaming Gender and Inclusive Education Action Plan (MGIEAP)' (ibid) and it has four target group, these are: excluded children with disability, Ethnic, Gender equity and vulnerable children. This year PEDP-3 has completed and PEDP-4 has stated from July, 2018. PEDP-4 also has been designed with that subcomponent (MGIEAP) and newly added Special Education Needs (SEN). To ensure primary education for children with disabilities Bangladesh ratified 'Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act-2013'. Besides to emphasis on the children with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (NDD) Gov. has approved 'The Neurodevelopmental Disabled Persons Protection and Trust Act- 2013' (Government of Bangladesh, 2013). To properly implementation this act Gov. has prepared an action plan for the children with NDD named 'National Strategic Action Plan

for children with Neurodevelopmental Disorder 2016-21' (Government of Bangladesh, 2016). It has been implemented with the collaboration of five core ministries, these are: health, social welfare, women and children affairs, primary and mass education and education ministry. The main objectives of these policies are to address and take the necessary initiatives to ensure access and quality education for all children. For these national and international obligations Bangladesh has taken different initiatives to ensure Inclusive Education. So, it has both national and international priorities.

Barriers of IE

Although, it can be argued that there has been much effort, there are many barriers in Bangladesh to implement IE. IE policies are imposed from the centre to the periphery for implementation (Malak 2014). Allan (2013) identified some barriers for inclusion, such as the conflict between policies and priorities; lack of communication and collaboration between ministries (specially between health, education and social welfare)/organizations and agencies responsible for the implementation of inclusion; Here we must be conscious about the presence of diversity of community and society in the displays, books and curriculum (McAuliffe,2018). Teachers are confused about their teaching capacity to teach children with disabilities and difficulties (Malak 2014). That is the main barrier to IE, the limited knowledge of teachers about inclusion especially for the children with SEN. The training they have received is very traditional, certificate oriented and theory based. For this reason, still now they are in hesitation (Ahsan and Mullick 2013). They have a tendency to exclude (Mullick et al 2012). There are many misconceptions and myth reinforce parents' decisions to hide disabled children and to regard them as a burden. Other parents and children do not value them. Moreover, they avoid them, bully them and make fun of them. They think that opportunities provided to children with disabilities are wasted (Mullick et al 2012, kawser 2016). Leadership also does not work well here, and leaders at different levels do not have enough power. They have no authority to make decisions like employing teachers and caregivers, devising and implementing initiatives, identifying or mobilizing resources, enabling collaboration with other schools or local organizations, developing and conducting professional development activities and getting members of the community involved in school activities (Mullick 2012). The learning environment of the school is also not good. Our teachers have large classes that affect the quality of learning (Mullick 2012).
The implementation of inclusive education is the most important requirement to ensure social justice and the children's wellbeing for fulfilling social emotional and mental health needs of each child. In the developing country like Bangladesh the role of policy is the key indicator to proper ensure of IE. According to Armstrong (2000) policies do not exist in a vacuum; they reflect underlying ideologies and assumptions in society. Oliver (1990, in Armstrong2000) thinks policy tried to keep people with special needs in the community, to stop them being in special schools and day centres. The above literature review helps us to show the situation of IE in different aspect which are comparable to Bangladesh.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Research participants:

The sample participants for this research under Dhaka district. The respondents were the teachers who have experienced working with inclusive education in the mainstreaming primary schools of Bangladesh. The stratified sampling for data collection selected fifty headteachers and fifty assistant teachers as respondents from the same school within the district as sample participant by using random sampling. Schools were selected randomly from both rural and urban area. The total participants were 100.

How to analyse the data?

After collecting the Questionnaire, I have checked the data for accuracy.
The data was numerical, and collected the data in Likert scale. For developing a numerical database, at first, coded all responses for all questions except the descriptive answers. The statistical analysis was more relevant for data analysis because most of questions were answered through a 5-point Likert scale. To analyse the open-ended question of this study I also used the thematic analysis.
This research followed the descriptive statistics, use nominal data for common information and followed Likert scale for collecting my ordinal data. The most positive one got highest number and the most negative one got lowest number.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first question of the questionnaire provided the information of the location of the school. The number of respondents vary between rural and urban school shown in figure 1
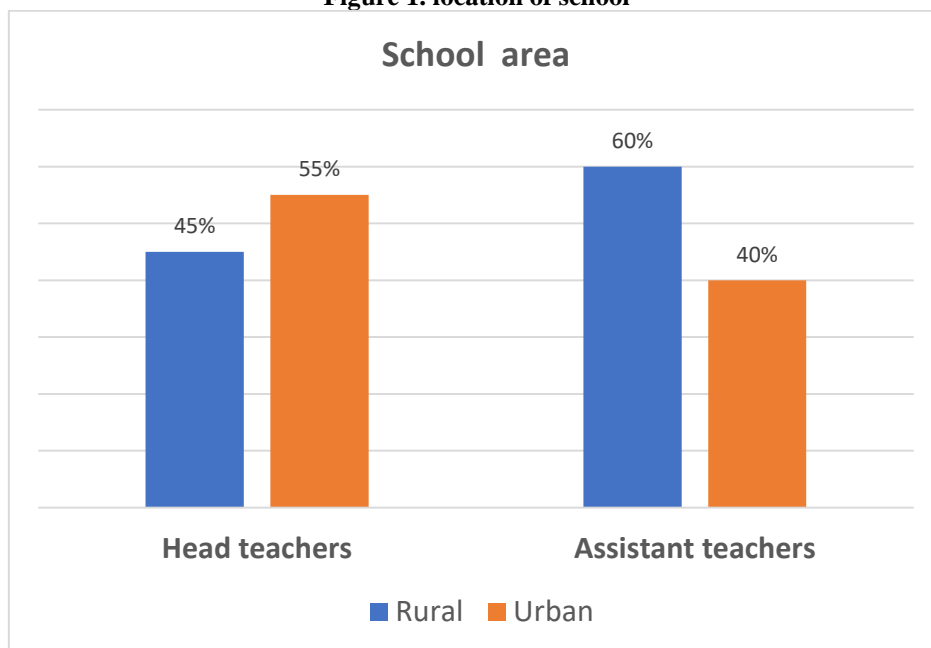
Figure 1. location of school

Figure 1 shows that majority of the respondent head teachers (55%) are from urban schools while maximum respondent assistant teachers (60%) are from rural schools. The questionnaires have been provided to all teachers at the same time.

Age of respondents:

The second question of the questionnaire about the information of the age of the Participant. The last joining age of all types of teachers is thirty and the age of retirement is fifty-nine.
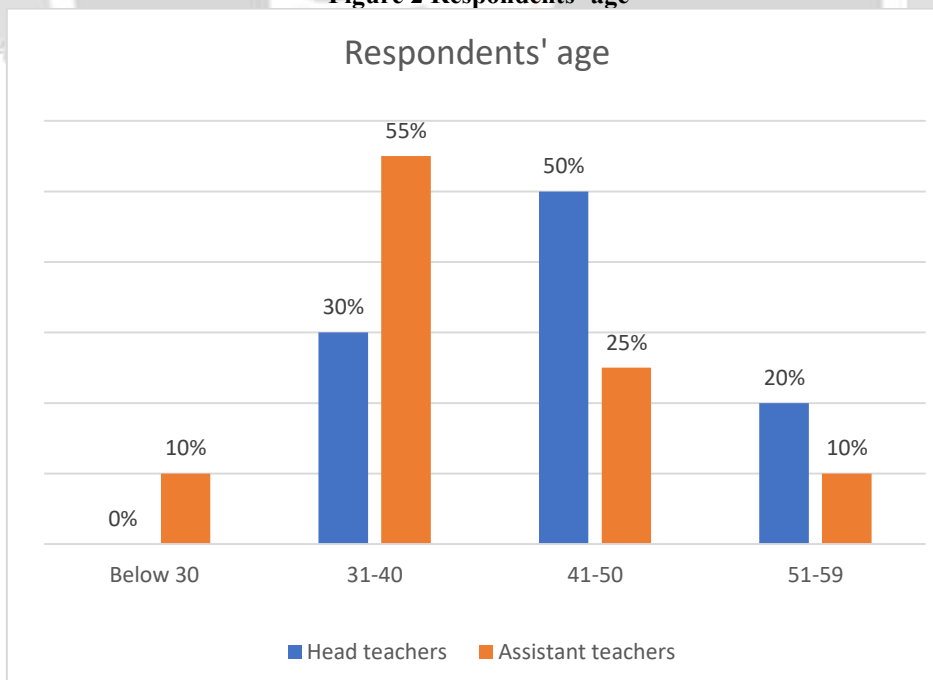
Figure 2 Respondents' age

Figure two shows that there are no head teachers under the age thirty. But the half of the head teacher's age is between forty-one to fifty. On the other hand, the majority of the assistant teacher's (55%) age is in thirty-one to forty years. So, it means that most of the participants are from younger group.

Educational Qualification of Respondent's:

The third question of my questionnaire was about the educational qualification of the respondents.
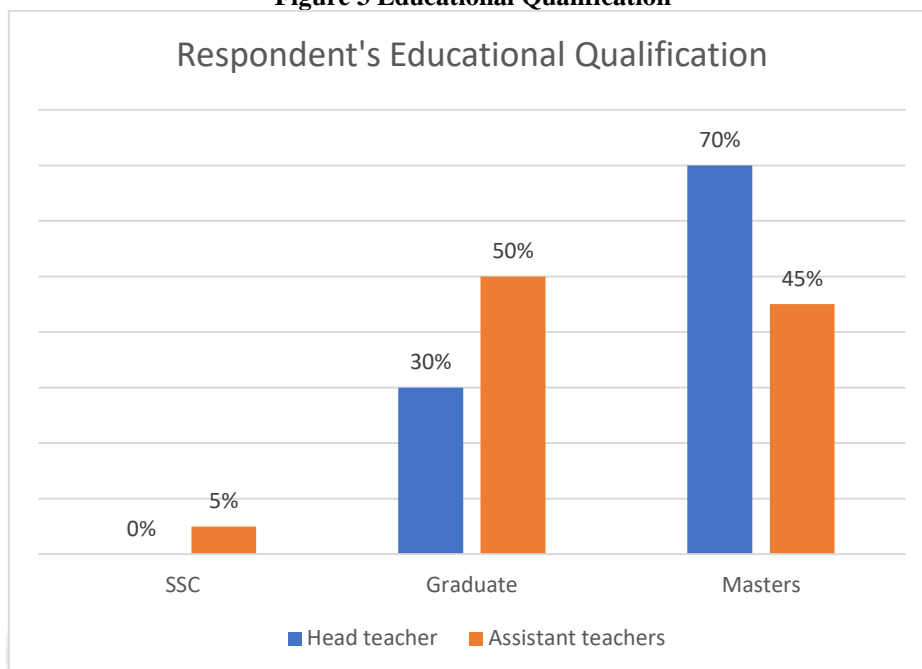
Figure 3 Educational Qualification

Figure three shows that there are no head teacher under the graduation level. The minimum educational qualification of head teachers of Government primary schools of Bangladesh is graduation. Only five percent teachers have the Secondary School Certificate. Fifty percent of assistant teachers are graduate, and rest forty-five Assistant teachers are Masters. On the other hand, maximum of head teachers (70%) are the master's level and rest of them (30%) are graduate. In fact, in national level 24.9% teachers are masters. I have taken data from the capital city. For this reason, the qualification of all my respondents is higher.

Designation of the Respondents

In this research respondents were head teachers and assistant teachers of the mainstreaming Government Primary Schools of Dhaka area in Bangladesh.

**Figure 4: Percentage of the Head teacher and Assistant teacher**

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Head teacher	20	50%
Assistant teacher	20	50%

The above table showed that as the number of the respondent head teacher is twenty and the number of the respondent Assistant teachers is twenty, so the ratio of the participant head teacher and assistant teacher is 50:50. The percentage of respondent head teacher is 50 and the percentage of respondent Assistant teachers is also 50. This shows that there was no selection bias.

Length of the Service of Respondents teachers

The chart below shows the teaching experience of my respondents.

**Figure 5 Respondent's Experience in Teaching**
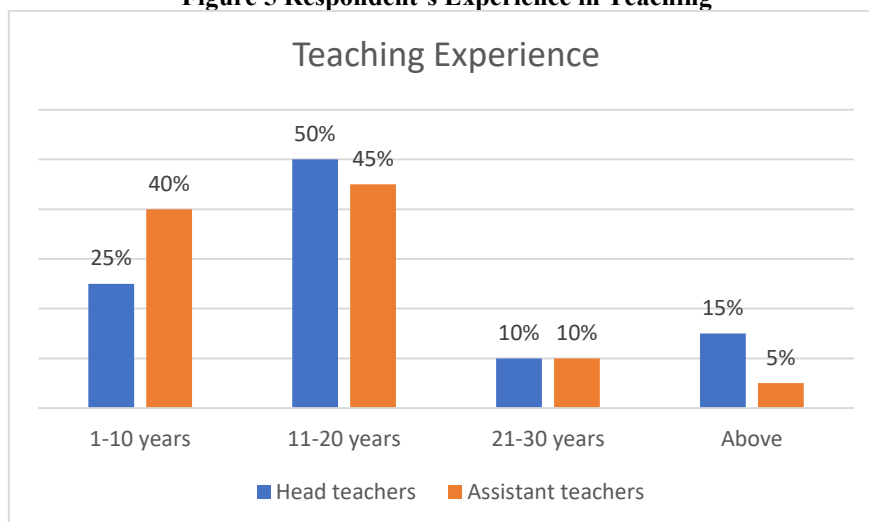
This figure shows that 50% of head teachers and 45% assistant teachers have 11-20 years experiences in teaching profession. So, the respondent teachers are both experienced and young. So, their given information should be valid enough and provide reliable evidence.

Respondent's gender:

The last question of the first part of the questionnaire is about the gender of the participant.

Figure: 6 Respondents' gender
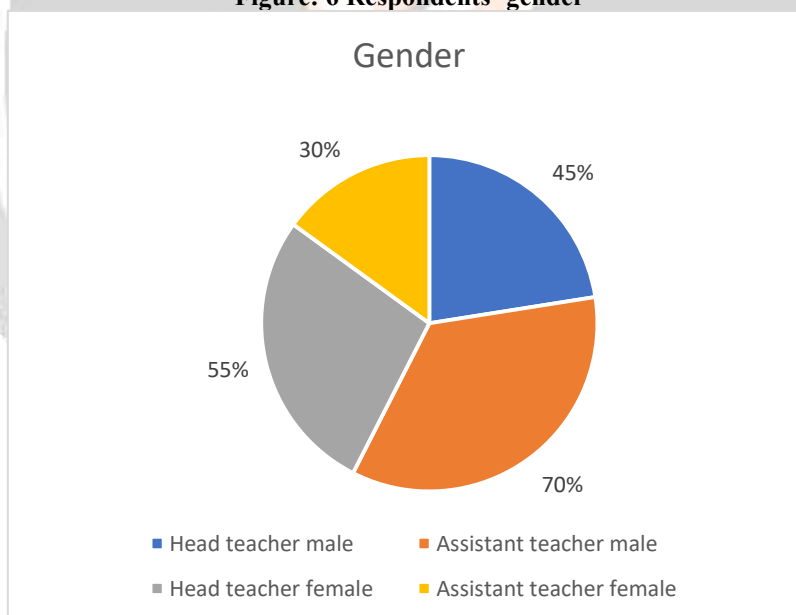
The above figure shows that most of the respondent assistant teachers (70%) are male, on the other hand maximum of the respondent   head teachers (55%) are female. In fact, nationally 67.7% of those serving in the Government primary schools of Bangladesh are female (Government of Bangladesh, 2017). Although the Government of Bangladesh has the target of appointing 60% female teachers in Government primary schools (ibid). Vaz,et al(2015) notes that female teachers have a more positive attitude towards IE.

Teachers view about the implementation of the Inclusive Education (IE) in the primary schools of Bangladesh.

Database of the children with special needs

The first question of the second part of the questionnaire was about the database of the children with special needs. In this aspect most of the head teachers and assistant teachers (82%) agreed that they have the well-publicised database of children with special needs (CSN). In fact, in Bangladesh, every year at the beginning of the new educational session teachers have completed a survey of their school catchment area of all types of children. Besides, each year they have collected data of the all children of their catchment area with the approved format of MOPME to provide information for the Annual Primary School Census (APSC) and Annual Sector Performance Report (ASPR) which provided data and information about primary education of Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh,2017).

Knowledge about Inclusive Education (IE) policy

The second question of the second part of the questionnaire was about the participant's knowledge about the different national and international policy of IE. In this point maximum of the head teachers (90%) and assistant teachers (90%) have answered that they have enough knowledge about the different national and international policy of IE. Among all teachers a few (10%) of head teachers and assistant teachers (5%) disagreed with this point. Almost same data came from the rural and urban teachers. In this point, rural teachers both head and assistant teachers (90%) and urban teachers both head and assistant teachers (70%) are also agreed that they have enough knowledge about policy of IE. In the literature review Sharma et al. (2013) identified lower level of understanding and lack of enough knowledge of all stakeholders about inclusion as compared to my sample.

Effectiveness of current IE policy for the supporting of special education needs (SEN) of the school

The third question was about effectiveness of current IE policy for the children with special education needs (SEN) in the schools.

Figure 7: Current IE policies are effective

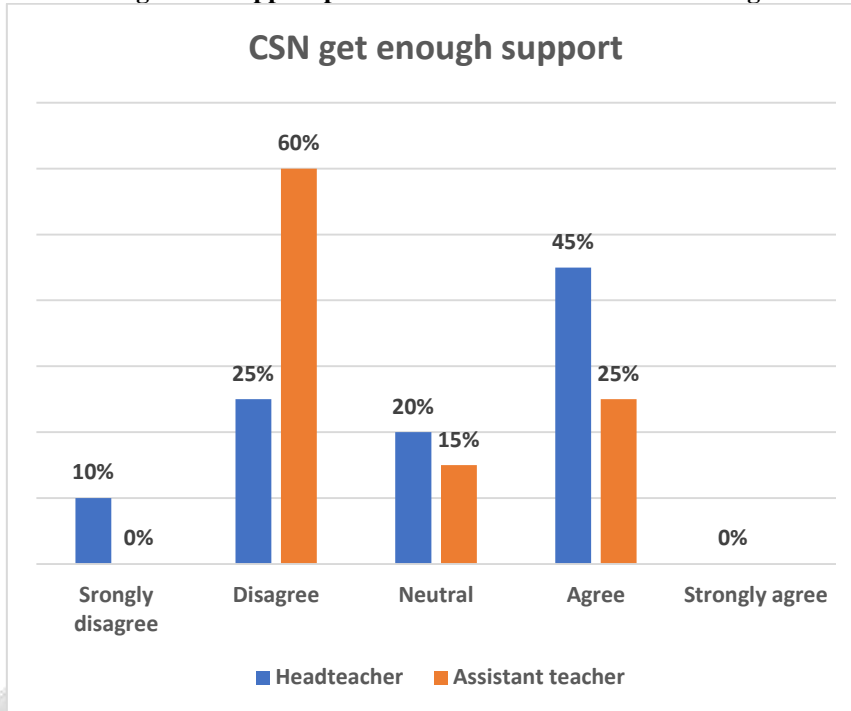| Liker scale	Head teacher		Assistant teacher	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	2	10%	1	5%
Neutral	2	10%	1	5%
Agree	14	70%	18	90%
Strongly agree	2	10%	0	0%

The above table shown that maximum of the respondent head teachers (70%) and assistant teachers (90%) think that current IE policy is effective for supporting children with special needs (CSN) in their school. Same as, maximum rural teachers (90%) and urban teachers (70%). Both head teachers and assistant teachers also agreed in this point.

Although teachers thought that current policy was effective, they proposed a well-structured policy and plan which focusing on the needs of all learners and trained teachers. So, this needs further research.

Support for the children with special needs (CSN) for their learning

The fourth question of my questionnaire is about the support that children with special education needs received in the school. Is it enough or not? The respondent's opinion is presented by a bar graph as below:

Figure 8: Support provided to the CSN for their learning
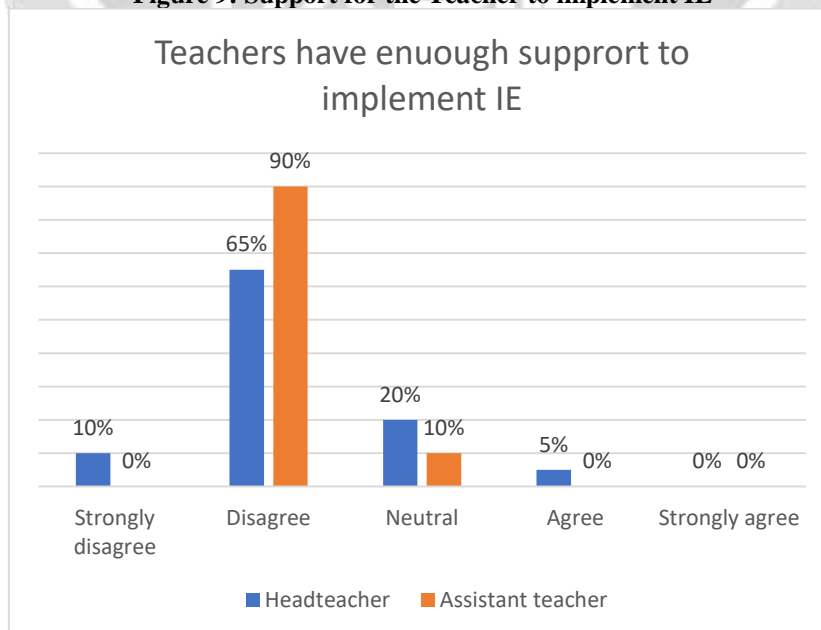

The above figure shows that from 20 head teachers 7 head teachers (35%), six of them from rural (66.7%) and one from urban and maximum assistant teachers (60%), seven of them from rural (58.3%) and five from urban (62.5%) think that the children with special needs (CSN) do not get enough support for their learning in the school. Nine of the head teachers (45%) and some of the assistant teachers (25%) think that CSN get enough support for their learning. Also, some cases of neutrality. Four of the head teachers and three of the assistant teachers gave neutral responses. So, we can see comparatively most of the assistant teachers and rural teachers both head teachers and assistant teachers perceived that CSN do not get enough support for their learning.

Teachers have enough resource, teaching aids and pedagogical support to implement IE.
In this question I want to know from the respondents if they have enough resource, teaching aids and pedagogical support to implement IE.

**Figure 9: Support for the Teacher to implement IE**

The above figure shows teacher's perceptions of the availability of resource, teaching aids and pedagogical support for implementation of IE. We found a negative impression of the teachers. Among the twenty head teachers two of them (10%) reported strongly disagree and thirteen of them (65%) stated disagree. Few of them (20%) show neutrality. Only one of all head teachers thinks that they have enough resource, teaching aids and pedagogical support. Even stronger negative opinions came out from the assistant teachers finding. Among the twenty assistant teachers eighteen assistant teachers (90%) thinks that to implement the IE they have not enough resource, teaching aids and pedagogical support. Rest of the ATs (10%) presented neutral opinion.

Effectiveness of training

The sixth question of the questionnaire is about the effectiveness of training. Is the training good and effective in that teachers understand the teaching methodology needed to give support to CSN?

Figure 10: IE training
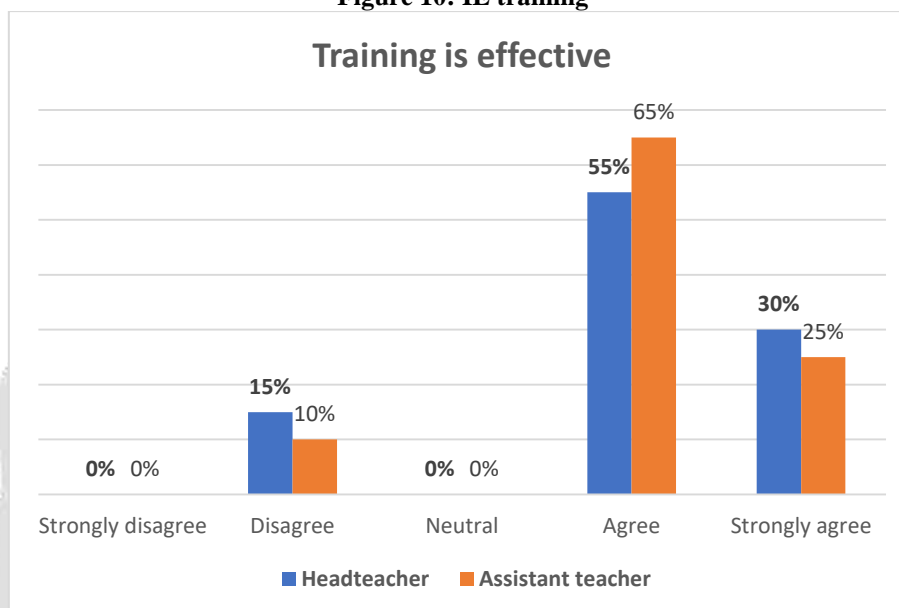
Maximum participants (87%) thinks that training is good and effective to know the teaching methodology to give support to diverse children. Eleven of them (27.5%) strongly agreed and twenty-four participants (60%) agreed in this aspect. Among them seventeen headteachers (85%) from twenty and eighteen assistant teachers (90%) from twenty. Only three headteachers and two assistant teachers think that training is not effective.

In the questionnaire one assistant teachers stated, *'Because IE training is not sufficient for the primary school teachers in our district. More specialised IE training would make me/us more effective in implementation the IE in my school.'*

Another assistant teacher said, *'Training are more essential way to know the teaching methodology to give support to diverse children in my district.'*

In fact, the assistant teachers of Bangladeshi Government primary schools received five-day long IE training but assistant teachers did not get any training on IE (Government of Bangladesh, 2015). These statements and my findings support the literature on behalf of needs of training.

Although some teachers stated training is not effective because they think that teachers need the specialised training to know the teaching method for CSN and diverse children, but most teachers think current training is good.

For this inconsistency it requires further research.

Teachers are supported for the implementation of IE by the outside people

The seventh question of the questionnaire is about the support of the people outside of the school for implementation of IE.

**Figure 11: Support of the people of the outside of the school**
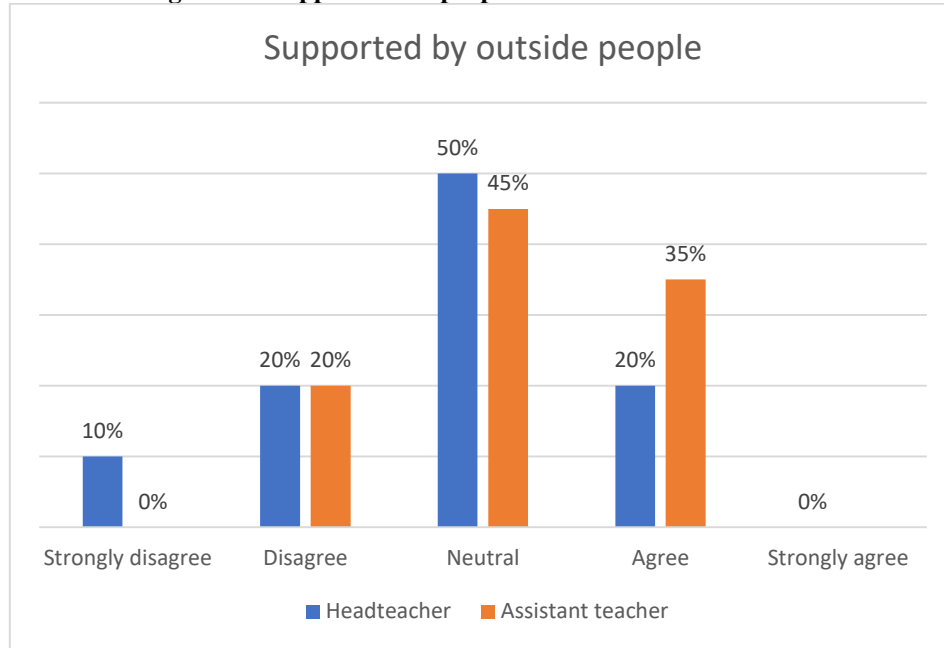
The above figure is shown that ten head teachers (50%) out of twenty and nine assistant teachers (45%) out of twenty stated neutral opinion. Two head teachers (10%) strongly disagreed and four (20%) of them disagreed with this topic. Also, four (20%) disagreed in this point. All of them think that they are not supported by people outside the school for implementation of IE. It is surprising that many of the teachers (head teachers 50% and assistant teachers 45%) showed neutrality. They are either not sure whether outside support is effective or have limited knowledge of it. Last of all, 20% and 35% assistant teachers agreed that they have received enough support from the people outside of the school.

It is also become true in the answer of the question no.11. In this question almost, all respondents recommended for the support of people of the outside of the school. One of the respondent assistant teacher said, "*Cooperation and assistance of around people is very important*".

Role of school management committee

The question number 7.8 is about the role of the school management committee (SMC) to implementation of IE in the school.

Figure 12: Chart about the given priority of IE in the school by SMC
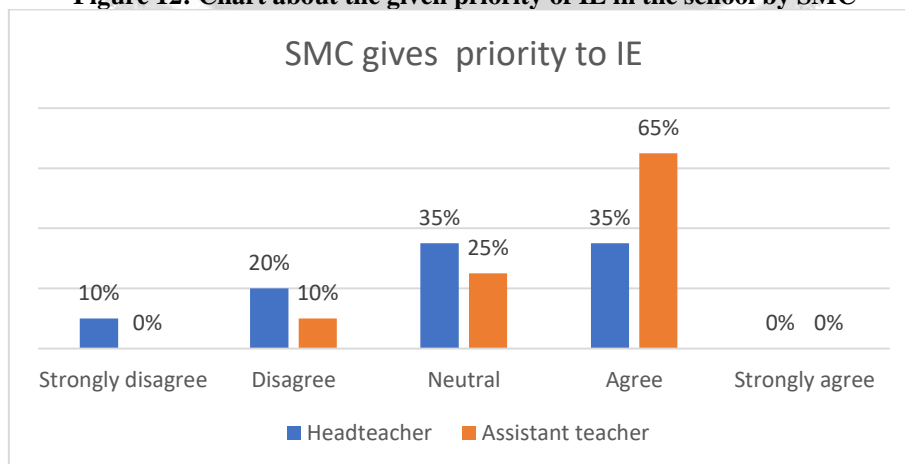
This figure stated that most assistant teachers (65%) thinks that the SMC gives enough priority to IE in their schools. Whereas the percentage of the head teacher (35%) in this question is lower than the assistant teachers. Among the all head teachers two (10%) stated strongly disagree and four (20%) of them stated disagree in this

point. Several head teachers (35%) and assistant teachers (25%) were neutral. Although many teachers gave as their opinion that they receive support from SMC.

Education for children with SEN

The question number nine and the last one is wanting to know the opinion of respondents about the education system for the children with special education needs.

Figure 13: Suitable education for children with special education needs.
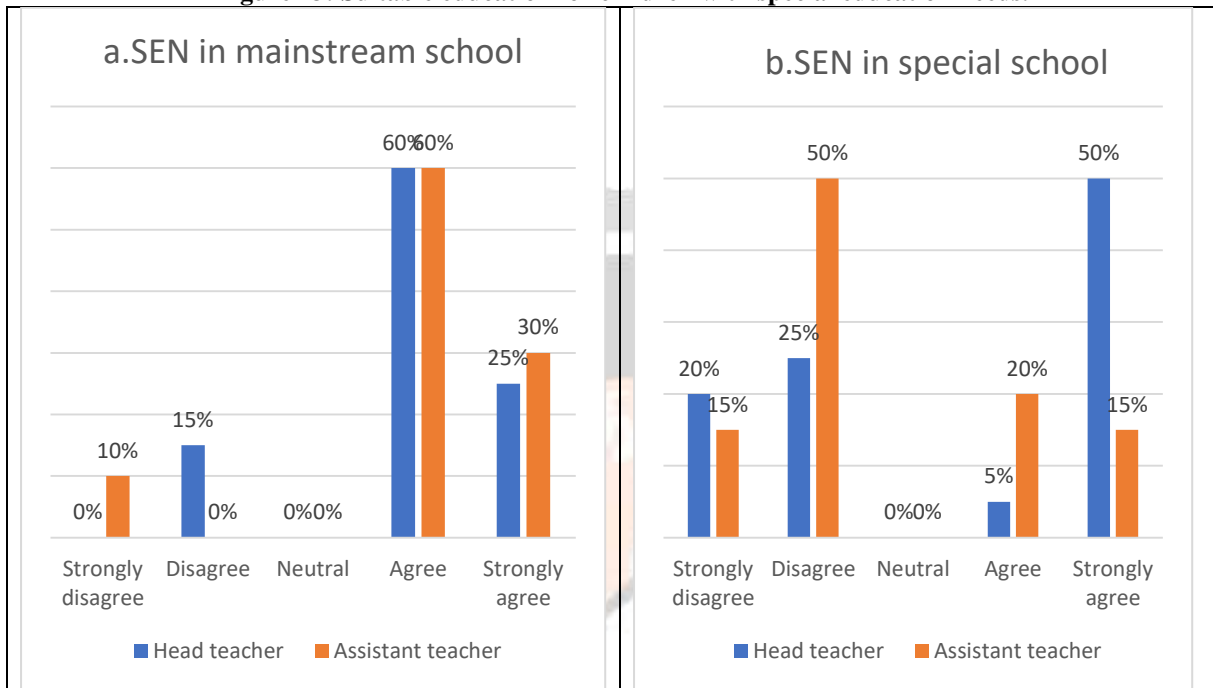
The above figure a. shows that a majority of head teachers (85%) and assistant teachers (90%) thinks special education needs (SEN) children should be catered for in the mainstream schools. Only two assistant teachers (10%) and three head teachers (15%) stated that SEN should not be implemented in the mainstream school. On the other hand, also many head teachers (55%) and seven assistant teachers (35%) perceived that it would be best if children with SEN are educated in the special school. But most of the assistant teachers (65%) and many head teachers (45%) disagreed in this point. It is a matter of contradiction that same head teachers (45%) and assistant teachers (25%) stated both positive and negative opinion about the implementation of IE in the mainstream school.

One assistant teacher said about SEN in mainstream school, *'special education needs can be implemented in the mainstream school because in our society the special needs children are neglected. Most of our schools there are not enough teaching aids and well-known teacher. If it can be implemented in our mainstream school our special needs children will get enough teaching benefit.'*

Same teacher said about the SEN in special school, *'I believe that it would be best if children with SEN are educated in a special SEN school. They will get enough teaching as they need. They will contribute in the country as a citizen like others.'*

Another head teacher said about the SEN in mainstream school, *'Many training programs has been taken by Government to implement IE. Now school buildings are constructed with ramps to access in class for Special need children. Government provides hearing materials, wheel chair, language material, eye glasses to implement IE. We also get support from SMC, PTA, Village people and NGO to implement IE. So, I think that IE can be implemented in the mainstream primary school.'* It is interesting that this teacher also stated strongly that she agrees that SEN would be better developed in special school, *'Special learners cannot participate in Singing, dancing or drawing class. Sometimes special learner's behaviour is not supportive to all teaching method and they violent in classrooms. Understanding level is different. So, it would be best children with SEN are educated in Special SEN school.'*

My respondents are sentient to the needs of SEN in mainstream schools but due to lack of enough resource some think SEN will be implemented better in special school. For this reason, although they think that SEN can be implemented in the mainstream, they believe it will be best in special school.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Head teachers of the Government primary schools of Bangladesh contain positive thinking about inclusion. They said that the remaining current policies are good, and they think they have enough knowledge about the relevant policies. They also thought that current training program is good, but they felt that there was a lack of resources and enough teaching learning materials for classroom activities, for the children with SEN. They felt they have not received enough support from School Management Committee and people outside of the school to implement IE. About the education of SEN, head teachers said that they can provide education to them if they have enough supported from the Government otherwise special education is better for them. From their given information it came to light that their understanding is not clear about IE. Many of them consider IE to be only for the education of the children with disabilities.

This research was to know the view of the assistant teachers of Government primary schools of Bangladesh about the implementation of IE. Assistant teachers also think that the current policy of IE is good, and the policies are well known to them. Most assistant teacher's assistant teachers also think that training is good but some of them said that they need more training for special education. They also think SMC and people outside of the school did not provide enough support for inclusion although the response here was more divided. Like the head teachers, few of them think that IE can be implemented effectively in the mainstream unless the government provides enough support for children with SEN.

The barriers to implement the IE policies in Bangladesh context. Most of the barriers of implementing of IE mentioned by the teachers are similar to those discussed in my literature. Such as:

- Lack of trained teachers;
- Lack of enough support for the children with special education needs;
- Lack of enough teaching learning materials and pedagogical support for the education for the children with SEN;
- Lack of enough resources;
- Large class size;
- Lower level of understanding about IE of teachers;
- Lack of support from SMC and people outside of the schools and
- Negative attitude of teachers, parents and SMC.

This research is to find out the solutions to effectively implementing government policy on IE. In the given answers almost all respondent head teachers and assistant teachers recommended for more IE related training program for teachers; to provide enough resources and available funds; curriculum with pedagogical support for SEN; providing enough teaching learning materials specially for the children with SEN; and social awareness program for the parents, teachers, SMC and general population.

Recommendations

The Government of Bangladesh has tried hard to achieve the targets of the different conventions to which they are signatory, but success has eluded them somewhat. For this reason, from the above discussion and the research findings I can suggest for better implementation of IE policies, Gov. can take the initiatives suggested here:

To enhance the knowledge of the teachers and to build up the precise idea about the IE, Gov. can provide IE related quality training for the teachers. Now Government only delivers IE training for the head teachers, but assistant teachers also are liable for ensuring education for all children. Thus, assistant teachers also should be trained in IE. In the open-ended q.no.7.7 teachers expressed their need of specialized training for the special education for the children with SEN. So, Gov. can revise the DPED training curriculum by adding IE related content. To change the teacher's attitude Government should provide them IE related continuous professional development activities with proper update module to enhance their mental and professional confidence to deliver better education for children with SEN. Teachers' attitude is related to their view which can be changed by developing knowledge. To change their attitude different types of motivational workshops, seminars or other mobilization programs can be arranged by the Government.

To ensure better education in the mainstream schools for the children with SEN, Gov. should provide better and sufficient teaching learning materials. Curriculum also should be revised for inclusive pedagogy and should be flexible for all types of learner. To ensure implementation of IE, resources should be available for the schools dependent on need. Funding is an elementary need for the proper implementation of IE.

To successfully implement a stronger IE policy, authority should be decentralized. Local leader also should be enhanced with enough power for making decisions as to the need of the schools for distribution and proper use of the resources. For building awareness among the parents, SMC and the community and to mobilize them about the needs of education, especially for the children with SEN, there should be arranged different types of

social mobilization programs. Motivation is a key requirement to overcome the existing myth and prejudice of the people.

Conclusion

Finally, Bangladesh is concerned to implement inclusive education to ensure education for all children. The Government has tried to ensure whole child education by ensuring children's wellbeing influenced by the concept of social justice. Different national and international policies also help to promote inclusion in this country, as inclusion can help to reduce exclusion, discrimination, barriers to learning and participation (Booth & Ainscow,2011,3rd edition)

From my research finding an important issue has been shown that IE related policies of Bangladesh are pertinent for the implement of IE and teachers also wanted to implement IE in the mainstream schools, but they have not enough funds, resources, teaching aids, appropriate training, suitable infrastructure, cooperation of community people. There may be a further point, albeit not one covered in my research study: Teachers can lack job satisfaction because of the low salary structure and this has hampered their societal status. Alongside relative low pay, they have large class size and have to teach five to six class every day. That has made some frustrated with their job. So, Government should take care of the teacher's needs, although it must also be noted that Bangladesh is a developing country and has resource limitations. The way forward to better implementation of IE in Bangladesh needs more research.

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