

Teachers' Perception of Inclusive Education in Government Pre-primary Settings

By

Rabeya Sultana
23155009

A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University
April 2025

© 2025. Rabeya Sultana
All rights reserved.

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:



Rabeya Sultana

Student ID - 23155009

Approval

The thesis/project titled “Teachers’ Perception of Inclusive Education in Government Pre-primary Settings” submitted by

1. Rabeya Sultana
Student ID - 23155009

of Spring, 2023 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development in April, 2025.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

Syeda Fareha Shaheeda Islam
Senior Lecturer, Early Childhood Development
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University

Program Coordinator:
(Member)

Ferdousi Khanom
Senior Lecturer, ECD Academic Program
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)

Dr. Dilruba Sultana
Senior Lecturer, M.Ed. Department
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University

Departmental Head:
(Chair)

Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University

Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Teachers' Perception of Inclusive Education in Government Pre-primary Settings

Student name: Rabeya Sultana

1. Source of population: Government pre-primary teachers and head teachers
2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)
 - a) Physical risk to the subjects (no)
 - b) Social risk (no)
 - c) Psychological risk to subjects (no)
 - d) discomfort to subjects (no)
 - e) Invasion of privacy (no)
3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)
 - a) Nature and purpose of the study (yes)
 - b) Procedures to be followed (yes)
 - c) Physical risk (n/a)
 - d) Sensitive questions (yes)
 - e) Benefits to be derived (yes)
 - f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (yes)
 - g) Confidential handling of data (yes)
 - h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (n/a)
4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)
 - a) from study participants (yes)
 - b) from parents or guardian (n/a)
 - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
 - a) Proposal (yes)
 - b) Consent Form (yes)
 - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (yes)

Ethical Review Committee:

Authorized by:

(chair/co-chair/other)

Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Abstract

This qualitative study explores teachers' perceptions of inclusive education within government pre-primary settings. It aims to examine the level of understanding and attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education practices and the strategies they employ to support diverse learners. The study highlights the challenges teachers face in implementing inclusive teaching methods and their experiences in creating enabling environments for all children, including those with special needs. By analyzing teacher perceptions and classroom practices, the research identifies existing gaps in knowledge, attitudes, and resource availability, which hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education. The findings provide valuable insights into the extent to which inclusive practices are integrated into pre-primary classrooms and underscore the importance of capacity-building initiatives and policy adjustments. These results can guide teachers, policymakers, and administrators in fostering a positive approach to inclusive education in government-run pre-primary schools, ultimately ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all children.

Keywords: Inclusive education; teachers' perceptions; pre-primary education; government schools; teaching strategies; early childhood education.

Dedication

To BRAC IED (Institute of Educational Development), whose unwavering commitment to advancing education and child development has inspired countless individuals, including myself. Their innovative approaches, dedication to research, and advocacy for early childhood development have been a beacon of hope and progress. This work is a tribute to their vision and efforts in shaping a brighter future for children and communities.

Acknowledgement

I express my heartfelt gratitude to Almighty Allah for granting me the strength, resilience, and determination to pursue and complete this research. I am deeply grateful for the invaluable support and encouragement I have received throughout the course of this research.

I extend my sincere gratitude to BRAC IED (Institute of Educational Development), BRAC University, and Dr Erum Mariam, Executive Director of BRAC IED (Institute of Educational Development), for offering me the opportunity to pursue this course under scholarship. Their support has been a cornerstone of this journey.

Special thanks to my supervisor, Syeda Fareha Shaheeda Islam, Senior Lecturer and Academic Administration Lead at BRAC IED, whose insightful guidance, continuous encouragement, and patience have been invaluable throughout the research process. Her expert advice was instrumental, particularly as I navigated personal challenges, including dealing with some health issues, while working on this thesis.

I am grateful to the esteemed faculty and members of the 18th batch of the Early Childhood Development program at BRAC IED and BRAC University, thank you for your unwavering support and guidance, which enriched my learning and academic experience.

Special thanks to Nishat Jahan Jyoati, Research Officer at the Directorate of Primary Education, for her invaluable support in organizing IDI and FGD in selected Government Pre-primary Schools in Dhaka and Noakhali.

I am deeply indebted to the participants of my study, whose cooperation and valuable input formed the foundation of this research. Without their willingness to share their perspectives, this work would not have been possible.

My heartfelt thanks also go to my incredible batchmates of the 18th batch of the Early Childhood Development program at BRAC IED, BRAC University. Their camaraderie, encouragement, and intellectual discussions have made this journey not only rewarding but also memorable.

Finally, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my family - my parents, my elder sister, my nieces, and especially my beloved husband, for his unwavering love, encouragement, financial support for my study, consistent mental support, patience, and sacrifices that have supported me every step of the way - and my cherished sons Kaihan and Keeyan, helped me to keep my passion, devotion, and caring sacrifices to overcome all hurdles. Their belief in me has been a source of immense strength and motivation.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Approval	iii
Ethics Statement.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Table of Contents	viii
List of Acronyms	x
Chapter I Introduction & Background.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the study	5
Significance of the study.....	6
Research Question.....	7
Operational Definition.....	8
Chapter II Literature Review	10
Understanding of Inclusive Education	10
Challenges Faced by Teachers.....	12
Training and Professional Development.....	14
Impact of Inclusive Practices on Student Outcomes.....	17
Chapter III Methodology	19

Research Approach and Design	19
Research Site.....	19
Research Participants	19
Participants Selection Procedure.....	20
Data Collection Tool.....	20
Data Collection Method and Procedure	21
Data Management and Analysis	22
Validity & Reliability	23
Etical Issues	24
Limitations of the Study.....	24
Chapter IV Results/Findings & Discussion	26
Results.....	26
Demographic Information.....	26
Findings.....	27
Discussion	50
Conclusion	63
Recommendations.....	65
References.....	67
Appendix.....	72

List of Acronyms

UN: United nation

SGD: Sustainable development Goal

IDI: In-depth Interview

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

Chapter I: Introduction and Background

Introduction

Inclusive education is one of the core concerns in developing countries like Bangladesh due to the importance of equality in quality education. So, being recognized as a human right, inclusive education aims to enable both disabled and non-disabled children to enter the school environment (UNESCO, 2009). It moves beyond merely including children with disabilities in general education classrooms to recognize the diverse learning needs of all children (UNESCO, 2020a).

The Government of Bangladesh has taken great strides in developing inclusion in pre-primary and early learning settings, resulting in an environment where all children can thrive, regardless of ability or background (Ministry of Education, 2019). The government has implemented progressive policies, including the National Education Policy (2010), the Persons with Disability Rights and Protection Act (2013), and the Pre-Primary Education Expansion Plan (2012), all prioritizing the integration of children with disabilities and other marginalized groups in mainstream schools (Malak et al., 2013; Zulfiqar et al., 2018; Fharia Tilat Loba, 2012).

Pre-primary education, delivered through the “Shishu Bikash” program in government primary schools, targets children aged 5 plus, with recent pilots extending opportunities to 4-plus-year-old younger children, for a total of two years of pre-primary education (Mehtab, 2014). These settings are designed to be play-based and child-centred, yet their success in fostering inclusion depends heavily on teachers’ attitudes, training, and access to resources (UNICEF, 2021; Mehtab, 2014).

Inclusive education is a fundamental human right recognised throughout the world and an effective catalyst for educational reform. For example, the Salamanca Statement highlighted the importance of inclusive education systems for all children, including children with disabilities (UNESCO, 1994). Aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 4, which advertises inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2024). Inclusive practices have been shown to lead to positive academic and social outcomes for all students. As the Global Monitoring Report underlines, inclusive education creates an environment that enables all learners to flourish while promoting equity, thus reducing discrimination (UNESCO, 2020a).

Despite progress, the effectiveness of inclusive education largely depends on teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Teachers' attitudes and knowledge about inclusive education play a significant role in determining its effectiveness (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Their perceptions differ depending on various factors such as their experiences, training, and encouragement by educational institutions (Forlin, 2010). National programs such as the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) and Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI) have encouraged inclusion and offered training modules in Bangladesh; however, there are still inconsistencies and depth in teacher preparation (Zulfiqar et al., 2018; Mehtab, 2014; Fharia Tilat Loba, 2012). Teachers in pre-primary environments typically struggle to address the whole range of student requirements without extra help, relying instead on differentiated teaching and peer assistance (Mehtab, 2014).

Although previous research in Bangladesh has examined inclusive education at the primary level, there is a lack of empirical studies focusing on pre-primary teachers' perceptions and the factors influencing their attitudes (Mehtab, 2014). This study addresses that gap, aiming to understand how pre-primary teachers interpret, adapt, and apply inclusive practices in their pre-primary classrooms—an essential step for designing effective training, policies, and

support systems that can improve educational outcomes for all children (Fharia Tilat Loba, 2012).

This research aims to explore the perspectives of pre-primary teachers in government pre-primary settings, therefore guiding policymakers and educational leaders to ensure that the basis of lifelong learning in Bangladesh is effectively inclusive and equitable for all children. Chapter I is going to discuss the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, its significance, and the research questions. The following chapters will articulate the literature review, methodology, present and analyze findings, discuss implications, and offer recommendations for policy and practice.

Statement of the Problem

Inclusive education, which seeks to integrate all learners, including those with disabilities, into mainstream classrooms, faces significant challenges in Bangladesh's government pre-primary education system. Although there are policy commitments and international treaties, including the Salamanca Statement and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4), implementation remains inadequate (UNICEF, 2021). Such inadequacy is rooted in various systemic challenges, including lack of resources, inadequate teacher training, fixed curricula, and societal stigmas against children with disabilities (Ambia & Rahman, 2021; Shakiba, 2020).

The challenges of inclusive education have significant consequences for Bangladesh's educational system. The lack of infrastructure and resources, such as accessible classrooms and teaching aids, limits schools' ability to accommodate diverse learners (Roundtables, 2023). Teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education are often shaped by insufficient professional development and a lack of understanding of inclusive practices (Malak et al., 2013). Moreover, these issues are compounded by the lack of a comprehensive policy related

to inclusive education that can guide implementation (UNICEF, 2021). Consequently, many schools do not implement inclusive practices or lack the knowledge and tools to implement them, resulting in unequal access to quality education for children with disabilities (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). Moreover, classrooms in Bangladesh are inherently diverse but remain largely unprepared to address the needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties due to rigid curricula and overcrowded conditions (Raisa, 2020).

The challenges of implementing inclusive education disrupt Bangladesh's overall educational system. Inadequacies hinder the learning process for all students. Despite policy reform efforts, many children with disabilities are still marginalized due to inaccessible physical infrastructure and a lack of adaptive materials and trained teachers (Zulfiqar et al., 2018). Teachers often lack specialized training for diverse learning needs, leading to ineffective strategies in mixed-ability classrooms (Ambia & Rahman, 2021). Moreover, rigid curricula are not flexible enough to adapt to the students with special needs who get marginalized (Shakiba, 2020). This situation affects children with disabilities and limits opportunities for their peers to develop empathy and collaborative skills in an inclusive setting (Mostafa, 2023).

The existing research indicates that students with disabilities encounter many challenges in educational settings, including physically inaccessible school premises, lack of assistive devices, and social discrimination from peers and teachers (Bani Odeh & Lach, 2024; Raisa, 2020). Even regular school attendance is limited due to physical infrastructure issues (Roundtables, 2023). Homogeneous classrooms make it easier for teachers to manage their students, whereas diverse classrooms often require teachers to upskill just to keep up (Raisa, 2020; Zulfiqar et al., 2018). Social stigma and a lack of awareness further isolate these students, resulting in higher dropout rates and reduced opportunities for academic and social development (UNICEF, 2021; Ambia & Rahman, 2021).

Teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction is compromised by the challenges of inclusive education. Many teachers do not receive pre-service and in-service training regarding inclusive practices and are therefore not equipped to attempt to meet the diverse needs of their students (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024; Shakiba, 2020). Overcrowded classrooms, heavy workloads, and insufficient specialized training exacerbate the issue (Raisa, 2020; Zulfiqar et al., 2018). A lack of exposure to successful practices and poor professional development can lead teachers to develop negative attitudes toward inclusion (Malak et al., 2014). Additionally, limited access to teaching materials and support services hampers their efforts. Teachers frequently feel overwhelmed by managing a classroom while catering to students with special needs without adequate institutional support (Ambia & Rahman, 2021).

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore government pre-primary teachers' perceptions of inclusive education within the classroom. It will explore teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences in the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classroom contexts. This exploration is necessary because teachers have a tremendous impact on all students and particularly those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Using qualitative interviews and group discussions, this research will explore teachers' sense-making of their inclusive pedagogical beliefs and practices.

This study aims to explore factors affecting the effective delivery of inclusive education within pre-pr-primary contexts. Important factors include the type of previous training, available resources, administrative support, and attitudes towards students with disabilities. Through an analysis of these elements, the study will shed light on the challenges and facilitators teachers encounter in ensuring inclusive learning settings. In closing, the study

aims to generate knowledge and policy-relevant information to improve early childhood education in Bangladesh so that all children have equitable learning and development opportunities.

Significance of the Study

This study is crucial for addressing the challenges and opportunities of implementing inclusive education in early childhood settings. Challenges such as inadequate teacher training, limited resources, and insufficient awareness of stakeholders in Bangladesh prevent successful implementation despite some policy reforms and efforts (Ahsan et al., 2013; Malak, 2013). The attitudes and beliefs of pre-primary teachers are regarded as a critical factor for the success of inclusive education in the mainstream classroom; thus, it is vital to explore their perceptions of inclusive education.

This study has practical implications that can be evidenced in multiple aspects. The findings could inform the development of professional development training for teachers, enhancing their expertise in inclusive practices and effectiveness in diverse classrooms. Having information about teachers' perceptions can help policymakers and education professionals in the development of policies that specifically target teaching improvement and inclusive education (Ahsan, 2014). Moreover, the study can help curriculum developers design more targeted materials to meet the needs of all students.

This study could drive policy changes by highlighting gaps in current policies and practices and identifying necessary actions for advancing inclusive education. The findings may guide policymakers in revising frameworks or introducing new policies to ensure equitable access to quality education for all children, including those with disabilities. The research could also lead to the inclusion of inclusive education modules in teacher training curricula and the

allocation of resources for infrastructural improvements, fostering more affirmative and inclusive educational experiences for all children (Malak et al., 2013).

This study aims to fill a critical knowledge gap in the literature on inclusive education in Bangladesh. While some research has been conducted on various components of inclusive education, there is little focus on teachers' perceptions at the pre-primary stage (Malak, 2013). Exploring teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences can provide new insights into the barriers and facilitators of implementing inclusive practices in the foundation phase.

This research will improve early education in the long term because it promotes inclusion from the beginning. In particular, social instruction among children with diverse skills in pre-primary settings is an effective strategy for breaking down stigmatization and creating an underlying culture of acceptance and equity for children from a young age (Yazudi, 2018). It also aligns with global efforts such as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, where inclusive and equitable quality education is prioritized (United Nations, 2024). This study is aimed at addressing these concerns and contributing to the broader discourse to create a more diverse and inclusive education system in Bangladesh.

The findings of this study will promote inclusiveness from the early years of education, aiding early childhood development. Inclusive pre-primary settings can encourage socialization among children with varied abilities, combat stigmatization, and build a culture of acceptance and equity from a young age. This research will contribute to creating an inclusive educational landscape in Bangladesh by highlighting these issues.

Research Questions:

Focusing on teachers' attitudes, preparedness, and difficulties in implementing inclusive practices, this paper is going to explore teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in government pre-primary settings. It intends to highlight the necessary support systems,

available resources, and training deficiencies that affect the integration of children with diverse needs. The findings could help improve policies by strengthening teacher training and accessibility to support a more inclusive early childhood education.

The following research question will be explored in this study-

1. How do pre-primary teachers define and understand the concept of inclusive education within their classroom?
2. How do pre-primary teachers practice inclusive education in the pre-primary classroom?
3. What are the felt needs of the teachers in the effective implementation of inclusive education?

Operational Definition

Teachers' perception: Teachers' perceptions encompass their beliefs, attitudes, and interpretations about various elements of teaching and learning environments. In this study, it specifically refers to teachers' understanding of inclusive education principles and practices and their effectiveness in pre-primary education. These perceptions may also reflect their attitudes towards mainstreaming students with diverse needs in regular classrooms, as well as their experience and training in inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is an approach where students with diverse needs have equal access to all aspects of the school, adhering to every child's right to education. It is designed to create an environment in which all students can thrive by encouraging teachers to adjust their methods and curricula so all learners can interact positively in academic and social settings (UNESCO, 2005).

Pre-primary Settings: Pre-primary is an educational setting for young children aged 3–5 years, as they transition to primary school. These include kindergartens, nursery schools, or

early childhood education programs. Play-based learning and social engagement are emphasized for holistic development, preparing children for their future experiences in education settings (OECD, 2021).

Chapter II: Literature Review

Literature Review

Inclusive education, the concept of including students with diverse needs in mainstream educational settings, has become a global focus, including in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, government pre-primary settings are known as “Pre-Primary Education” (PPE), also called “Shishu Bikash” classes, which are attached to government primary schools. The official age requirement for enrolment is 5 plus years, with the aim of preparing children for entry into Grade 1 at age 6. The PPE program is designed to provide a play-based, child-centered curriculum that prioritizes core skills, socialization, and preparedness for formal schooling (Amran & Obaydullah, 2019). The recent pilot program for children aged 4 and above signifies an extension of this paradigm, with the objective of including younger children and enhancing early inclusion and developmental support (Sultana & Hasan, 2024). As Bangladesh advances its inclusive education framework via programs like PPE, comprehending teachers' perspectives is essential. This literature review seeks to explore teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in government pre-primary settings in Bangladesh and globally. The review is going to cover several themes, such as understanding of inclusive education, challenges faced by teachers, training and professional development, and the impact of inclusive practices on student outcomes.

Understanding of Inclusive Education

Due to policy reforms and international commitments, inclusive education became familiar in Bangladesh's education and disability sectors, initiatives such as the Education Policy 2010 and the Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act 2001 (Malak et al., 2013). However, effective implementation of these policies is hindered by limited resources, lack of teacher training, and societal attitudes towards disability (Ahsan et al., 2012). Teachers often report feeling

unprepared to implement inclusive practices due to unclear guidelines and a lack of support from school administrations (Zulfiqar et al., 2018; Shakiba, 2020).

In Bangladesh's government sector, pre-primary education is effectively delivered through assigned two-year pre-primary classes known as "Shishu Bikash" classes in government primary schools and, to a limited extent, through autonomous Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers. By encouraging universal enrolment, modifying curricula for diverse students, and offering teacher training on inclusive practices, both settings are made to support inclusive education principles and practices. The attached pre-primary classes are the most widespread and serve as the main vehicle for implementing inclusive education at the early childhood level (UNICEF, 2021; Amran & Obaydullah, 2019).

The understanding of inclusive education can vary among pre-primary teachers in Bangladesh based on their training and experience levels (Ali, 2020). A qualitative study conducted on teachers from English-medium schools highlighted the fact that there are some who are in favour of inclusion, but others do not think that it meets the learning needs of children with learning disabilities at all (Shakiba, 2020). Such differences in perception are also sweeping the world because of education, professionals, and training. Teachers require more in-depth training programs surrounding inclusive practices to aid in building their confidence and competency (Ali, 2017). This difference in perception results from a multitude of reasons: for instance, teachers' education backgrounds, professional experiences, and training. Teachers' attitudes play an essential role in the success of inclusive education; their willingness to adopt inclusive practices is often compromised by misconceptions of disabilities and insufficient knowledge (Sharma et al., 2012).

Teachers worldwide have gradually developed an understanding of inclusive education. Inclusive teaching requires acknowledging that all students have different experiences and

capabilities and that their learning potential is open-ended. This necessitates ongoing professional development in inclusive pedagogies and classroom management strategies (Florian & Spratt, 2013).

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusion education are pivotal for their acceptance and implementation of inclusive practices. Teachers who have a positive perception of inclusion are more willing to take on inclusive practices and help create a learning environment for all students (Sharma et al., 2012). On the other hand, teachers who hold negative beliefs about inclusive education are less willing to implement inclusive schools, which leads to even more exclusion of students with disabilities, with fewer opportunities for these students to go to school (Ahsan et al., 2012).

Challenges Faced by Teachers

Bangladesh has made significant strides in promoting inclusive education, especially through national policies such as the National Education Policy 2010 and international commitments like the Salamanca Declaration and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Sultana & Hasan, 2024; Zulfikar et al., 2018). The Primary Education Development Programs (PEDP II, III, and IV) have focused on integrating children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and marginalized groups into mainstream schools (Malak et al., 2013; Amran & Obaydullah, 2019). Inclusive practices involve the progress of child-oriented curricula, teachers' training on inclusive education, and the facilities of teaching materials in cooperative terminology (Sultana & Hasan, 2024). The government of Bangladesh, primarily through the Directorate of Primary Education and the National Academy for Primary Education, develops and delivers inclusive education modules for pre-primary and primary teachers (UNICEF, 2021). Training is allocated through Upazila Resource Centres, concentrating on inclusive teaching strategies, concerning diversity, and classroom

management for children with special needs (Prothom Alo, 2025; UNICEF, 2021). Previous studies emphasize that while these training initiatives exist, teachers' participation and intensity are constantly inadequate, leading to gaps in real classroom practice implementation that remain inconsistent due to resource constraints and gaps in teacher preparedness (Sultana & Hasan, 2024; Amran & Obaydullah, 2019).

Teacher preparedness is one of the major challenges in accessing inclusive education through adequate training and professional development. Research indicates that teacher education programs in Bangladesh do not provide sufficient training related to inclusive pedagogies, and teachers are unprepared to address diverse learners with disabilities in their classrooms (Sarker & Unzum, 2023). It is also not only applicable in the context of Bangladesh, as teachers globally also reflect on the preparedness of them delivering lessons in inclusive classrooms. However, research suggests that teachers across the world often do not feel adequately trained to succeed with inclusive education (Forlin, 2010). Without specific training teachers tend to fall back on outdated techniques that target only one learning style, not allowing for a holistic approach to learning for each student (Yadav, 2024). This inadequacy reflects on a global level where teachers express being overwhelmed by the demands of inclusive education while lacking training and support (Muñoz-Martínez et al., 2021). Forlin and Chambers (2011), for example, have found that, while teachers tend to believe in the moral ethos of inclusion, they also find themselves torn by concerns about their preparedness and the broader education system's readiness to support them. To ensure that teachers rise to the challenge doesn't just require training but also support, appropriate working conditions, and classroom autonomy (Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

A major hurdle is the availability of resources and support services. In Bangladesh, teachers face challenges such as include large classrooms, heavy workloads and a lack of flexible curriculum policies that can facilitate the implementation of inclusive practices (Malak,

2013). Additionally, very few schools are provisioned to facilitate learning for learners with disabilities (Sarker & Unzum, 2023). Globally, the funding and resource shortage is one of the biggest barriers to inclusive education (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024).

Societal attitudes toward disability and inclusion pose significant challenges for teachers. In Bangladesh, misconceptions and lack of knowledge about disabilities contribute to unfavourable attitudes towards inclusive education among many pre-primary teachers (Malak, 2013). These attitudinal barriers are not unique to Bangladesh; globally, teachers' perceptions of their efficacy and the value they place on inclusion can significantly impact their willingness to implement inclusive practices (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Negative societal attitudes toward disability can lead to segregation and discrimination, further hindering the progress of inclusive education (Bindhani & Gopinath, 2024).

Systemic barriers, including restrictive curriculum guidelines, and standardized testing, make the implementation of inclusive education challenging. Curriculum policies are so inflexible in Bangladesh that teachers are not allowed to make curriculum changes that meet all students' needs (Malak, 2013). Across the globe, standardized testing and mandated curriculum structures function similarly to limit teachers' abilities to offer individual supports and accommodations (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). These barriers are indicative of larger systemic issues that must be addressed and incentivized to make inclusive education models a reality.

Training and Professional Development

To change teachers' perceptions of inclusive education, professional development and ongoing support are indispensable. Teachers trained in inclusive practices are more positive and implement these strategies in their classrooms (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Training that includes inclusive teaching methods, classroom management, and collaboration with special

education professionals empowers teachers to confidently enact inclusion practices (UNESCO, 2020b). In Bangladesh, there is a need for immense, more comprehensible training programs to prepare pre-primary teachers for inclusive education (Malak, 2013). Globally, inclusive education emphasizes teacher training and continuous professional development as key components. Studies indicate that teachers benefit from workshops, peer collaboration, and mentorship programs that enhance their knowledge of inclusive practices (Cowley, 2011).

Research indicates that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are shaped by their perceived teaching efficacy, concerns about inclusive education, and the level of training they receive. In Bangladesh, pre-service teachers with higher perceived teaching efficacy tend to have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education and lower levels of concern (Ahsan et al., 2012). However, many Bangladeshi pre-primary teachers have adverse attitudes toward students with special education needs (SEN) due to misconceptions and a scarcity of knowledge about disabilities and inclusion (Malak, 2013). This emphasizes the need for comprehensive teacher training programs that address these misconceptions and facilitate teachers with the necessary tools to support all students. Additionally, collaboration among teachers, parents, and other stakeholders is crucial in generating an inclusive school culture (Yadav, 2024).

Globally, professional development for teachers is significant for the successful implementation of inclusive education. While many European countries acknowledge the importance of inclusive education, they often prioritize emplacement over supporting teachers' pedagogical procedures (Körner, 2007). Solely setting out the children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms is inadequate; the quality of education must also upgrade. Research in Greece highlights the need for teacher training, practical

implementation, and reconsidering pre-primary pedagogy goals to create high-quality inclusive classrooms (Strati, 2024).

The Bangladesh government has initiated various training programs to promote, sustain, and advocate inclusive education. Specifically, under PEDP4, a five-day training on inclusive education has reached 98,000 teachers, with a target of reaching 130,000, focusing on empathy, social barrier removal, and anti-bullying strategies (Prothom Alo, 2025). Upazila Resource Centres provide continuous teacher training, while the National Academy for Primary Education and the Directorate of Primary Education offer inclusive education modules for primary teachers (UNICEF, 2021). There are official manuals and guidelines available to help teachers incorporate inclusive practices, and future programs like PEDP5 are planned to further improve these efforts (Prothom Alo, 2025; UNICEF, 2021). These efforts are supported by collaborations with NGOs and development partners, aiming for system-wide capacity building (UNICEF, 2021).

Professional development opportunities in inclusive education are significant for providing teachers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies required to teach effectively in diverse environments. Successful inclusion strategies, such as those in Finland, highlight ongoing professional development, including training on adapted education and inclusive pedagogies (Saloviita, 2017). Workshops, seminars, and certification programs provide teachers with up-to-date knowledge on inclusive practices, research, and legislation. On-the-job training, coaching, and mentoring offer real-life experience, valuable insights, and feedback for moderate improvement. Programs that link participation to career incentives, focus on particular subjects, assimilate lesson enactment, and include initial face-to-face training tend to result in higher student learning gains. This highlights a gap between effective professional development programs and the global reality, where many programs lack incentives, opportunities to practice new skills, and follow-up support (Popova et al., 2022).

There is a growing global issue of a gap between evidence and practice relating to teacher professional development. Essential characteristics are missing from many professional development programs in low- and middle-income countries (World Bank, 2018; Popova et al., 2022). It emphasizes that programs must be evaluated and standardized to fit both teachers and students' requirements.

Impact of Inclusive Practices on Student Outcomes

The impact of inclusive practices on student outcomes is multifaceted. Academically, inclusive education provides students with disabilities access to the similar curriculum and learning opportunities as their peers, improving their performance. Socially, inclusion fosters a sense of belonging and encourages positive interactions among students of diverse backgrounds. According to Molina Roldán et al. (2021), students without special education needs (SEN) also benefit from interactive learning activities with their SEN peers, developing respect, acceptance, and acknowledgment of differences in abilities (Molina Roldán et al., 2021).

In Bangladesh, various factors affect the implementation of inclusive education in government pre-primary settings, including teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive practices. Research shows that teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education strongly influence the success of these practices. Ahsan et al. (2012) found that pre-service teachers with high perceived teaching efficacy tend to have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education and lower levels of concern. Positive attitudes and willingness to teach inclusively may be promoted through improved confidence in their ability to teach inclusively (Ahsan et al., 2016).

Studies indicate that collaborative learning in inclusive classrooms leads to improved social interactions among students with and without disabilities, fostering community and

belonging (Metcalf, 2010). Many research findings have proven that students with disabilities perform academically much better in integrated classrooms than in the segregated ones (World Bank, 2018). But for these benefits to be realized, implementation mechanisms must offer sufficient teacher and student support.

Globally, inclusive education has been associated with beneficial academic and social outcomes for all students, not only those with disabilities. Studies show inclusive practices lead to better academic performance, higher social interactions, and better self-esteem for students with disabilities. For instance, a meta-analysis by Yerliyurt Günay et al. (2021) found that inclusive practices have a positive effect on attitudes, and this effect is at a large level, indicating that inclusive practices have been strongly influenced by positive attitudes to yield favourable results (Yerliyurt Günay et al., 2021). Moreover, inclusive education also brings benefits to typically developing students by promoting tolerance, acceptance, and understanding of diversity, allowing for new friendships, and improving the overall environment in the classroom.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Approach and Design

The research employed a qualitative methodology to comprehensively explore government pre-primary teachers' perceptions of inclusive education. Qualitative research is suitable for generating broad and detailed knowledge about the research purpose, as it captures rich experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2017). This study focused on understanding government pre-primary teachers' views on inclusive education in their settings. To achieve this, the research will employ methods like in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which are effective for investigating respondents' reactions and feelings (Adedoyin, 2020).

Research Site

In qualitative research, the site is purposefully chosen to explore in detail a phenomenon by interviewing such people in person (Creswell, 2017). In this study, the researcher approached the participants to capture valuable insights into the varied experiences, viewpoints, and perspectives of pre-primary teachers. The study was conducted in the urban area of Dhaka and the rural area of Noakhali, Bangladesh.

Research Participants

According to Creswell (2015), a population is a group of individuals, organizations, or events that a researcher wishes to study, from which a sample is taken to make generalizations based on relevant characteristics (Creswell, 2015). The primary study participants were government pre-primary teachers from two schools in Dhaka and Noakhali, along with the head teachers of the selected schools. A total of 4 participants, including pre-primary class teachers and head teachers (1 male and 3 females), were involved in the interviews, and 2 focus group discussions were conducted; 6 mixed participants were involved in each group.

Inclusion Criteria -

- Pre-primary class teachers of two-year government pre-primary classes
- From selected government pre-primary schools
- Head teachers (from the same institutions)
- Directly involved in implementing inclusive education practices in two-year “Shishu Bikash” classes in government primary schools

Participant Selection Procedure

The study will use purposive sampling to select participants, a common method in qualitative research for identifying and exploring data related to the research interest (Creswell, 2015).

This approach targeted pre-primary teachers and head teachers from two selected government schools in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh, ensuring diverse perspectives. Participants were chosen based on their teaching experience, familiarity with inclusive education practices, and willingness to share their perceptions of two-year government pre-primary settings.

Data Collection Tool

The study will use a variety of methods to collect data, as recommended by Creswell (2017), to create common themes through the inductive reasoning of qualitative research. The In-depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) methods were used in this study.

In-depth Interviews: In-depth interviews use open-ended questions to gather data about participants' beliefs, reasoning, understanding, and emotions on a particular topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). A sample size of 4 teachers, including head teachers, were targeted for in-depth interviews, with 2 participants from Dhaka and 2 from Noakhali. These semi-

structured interviews allowed for rich, qualitative data collection and further exploration of their experiences, perceptions, and insights.

Focus Group Discussion: Focus group discussions (FGDs) are a method of collecting qualitative data through guided discussions with a small group of participants. FGDs are effective for gathering detailed information from participants' perspectives (Khatun & Saadat, 2020). This study was conducted with two FGDs in Dhaka and Noakhali, each consisting of 6 mixed participants from two selected government pre-primary school teachers and head teachers.

Data Collection Method and Procedure

Data were collected using an In-depth Interview (IDI) guideline and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guideline. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographic information, understanding, classroom practices, and felt needs of teachers in implementing inclusive education.

- Demographic information - Information about age, gender, educational background, years of teaching experience, and any training received for professional development was collected.
- Researcher developed IDI and FGD guidelines to explore the understanding, classroom practices, and felt needs of teachers in implementing inclusive education.
- The researcher developed IDI and FGD guidelines based on the research questions. These guidelines were reviewed by experts to ensure alignment with the study's objectives.
- After that, the questionnaire was piloted with two teachers who have been teaching in inclusive schools. Then it was finalized.

- Selection was carried out via direct outreach to schools. The researcher clearly articulated the study's purpose and objectives during these interactions.
- Teachers' contact numbers were gathered, interview timings were arranged, and participants were notified in advance.
- Data was collected through in-person interactions, fostering trust with participants to create a comfortable sharing environment.
- Data was collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs).
- Four IDIs were conducted, each lasting approximately 30-40 minutes. Two FGDs were carried out, each lasting about 60 minutes.
- Written consent was obtained from participants before data collection. All data were recorded with prior consent using audiotapes and field notes.

Data Management and Analysis

According to Cresswell (2015), understanding text and visuals is important for qualitative data analysis to building answers in research questions (Cresswell, 2015). After collecting data through In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), the details were meticulously checked for completeness. Qualitative data, such as field notes and recordings, were systematically organized and stored. Audio recordings were transcribed exactly, and brief notes were made into detailed narratives. A content analysis has explored the data to identify patterns and trends, driven by varying teacher training and experience and the accessibility of available resources.

There were a few steps that followed this process. First, the collected data has been transcribed and classified by the methods (IDI, FGD) used in the study; second, reviewed categorized data and field notes has been read many times and data similar to the actual

research questions has been highlighted by the researcher; third, the researcher has found different themes and issues from the reviewed data; at fourth, focused on identification of themes and sub-themes researcher has combined own thoughts and ideas with sense of data and relevance of it to the research problem in concern and noted the interpretation on separate sheet of paper; lastly, researcher was had a presentation of the data by summarizing the key points under the particular theme and adding direct quotations from the data. Both excerpts from interview transcripts and descriptions from observation notes have been utilized. Relevant themes had citations to support more information. The analysis aimed to identify common themes in teachers' perceptions, including their perceived benefits and obstacles to inclusive education, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of how these perceptions shape classroom practices and influence policy recommendations for enhancing inclusive education in Bangladesh's government pre-primary settings.

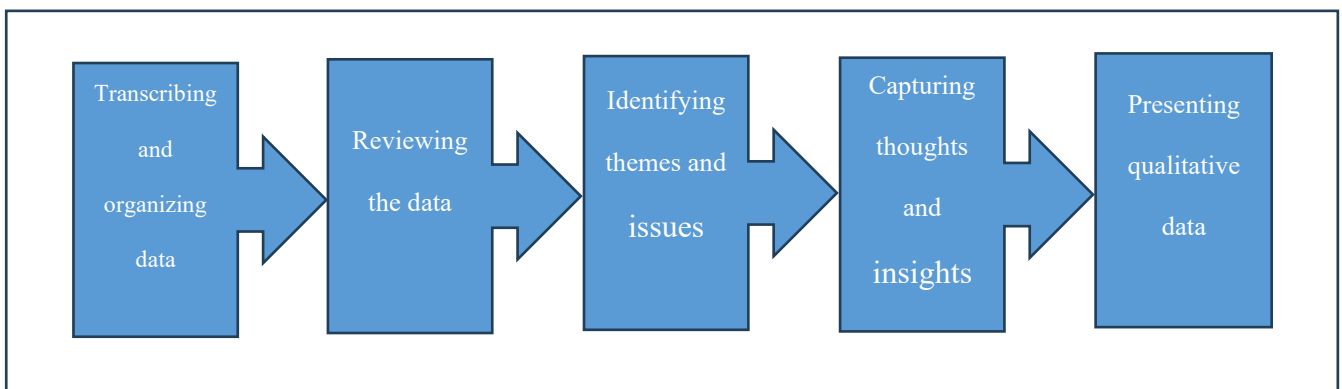


Figure 1: Data Analysis Plan

Validity & Reliability

To validate the authenticity of the research, a questionnaire and checklist were reviewed by both the thesis supervisor and members of the BRAC IED Academic Committee. In both IDI

and FGD, two types of research tools are used to ask respondents the same things in a reworded way. In addition, piloting was conducted to validate the tools. The tools were finalized after the piloting process. In addition to the recorded data, field notes were collected and transcribed as early as possible, which attains to the reliability of the study.

Ethical Issues

Ethical approval got approval from BRAC University and BRAC IED before conducting the study. Participants received a clear explanation of the purpose of the research before data collection, and written consent has been taken from all participants. All participants took part voluntarily, free from any pressure, and their rights, dignity, and autonomy were respected and protected. No physical, psychological, legal, or social harm occurred during the study. The participants got the proper information about the research procedure, purposes, and data storage without threat or inappropriate inducement. The participants could withdraw their responses from the research at any time. Participants' rights were upheld, including their dignity, privacy, and respect, commensurate with their age, vulnerability, and level of cognitive ability. Confidentiality was strictly maintained regarding the personal information provided by the participants. The study was conducted under the supervision of the expert faculty.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study has a small sample size, where only government pre-primary teachers are involved. Therefore, the findings may not reflect the views of all teachers working in comparable contexts all over Bangladesh.
2. Data were derived only from qualitative methods (interviews and group discussions). Although these approaches yielded rich insights, the absence of quantitative data restricts the possibilities for generalisation and statistical analysis of the findings.

3. It was difficult to get teachers to participate in focus group discussions due to their class schedule, and they were also busy with updating voter information.
4. The study focused solely on teachers' perspectives, without including feedback from other stakeholders — parents, school administrators, and children with special needs. A consequence of this narrow focus may have limited an understanding of the dynamics of inclusive education within pre-primary contexts.
5. The study was conducted within a specific timeframe, which might restrict the scope of exploration.
6. A classroom observation could not be conducted due to time constraints.

Chapter IV: Results/Findings & Discussion

Results

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the responses and findings from IDIs and FGDs conducted in two schools. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of teachers' perceptions regarding inclusive education in government pre-primary settings.

In the following section, the collected data will be thoroughly analyzed, considering the participants' responses, insights from group discussion, and the researcher's reflections. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings, along with recommendations based on the data and insights gained from the study.

Demographic Information

The study was conducted among teachers working in government pre-primary schools in urban and rural areas of Dhaka and Noakhali. A total of 4 participants were selected for IDI, and 12 participants were selected for FGD (6 participants for each group) using a purposive sampling method, ensuring diversity in their teaching backgrounds and school settings, and the participants included 1 male and 15 female teachers, with ages ranging from 30 to 51 years, representing different levels of experience in teaching pre-primary students.

The participants' educational qualifications varied, with the majority holding master's degrees except for two who hold bachelor's degrees. Most of the teachers had prior training in subject-based training, D.P.E.D., SEND, Plan SUROVI, leadership training, Room to Road, etc., while a smaller proportion had undergone specialized training in inclusive education. The sample also included teachers from schools with varying access to resources

and support systems, providing a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities in implementing inclusive practices at the pre-primary level.

Findings

This section delves into the primary findings of the study, with a particular focus on the insights gained from IDIs and FGDs. The data from the four IDIs and two FGDs were synthesized and analyzed, emphasizing the main research questions. The research findings are presented in the following paragraphs, organized under various themes and subthemes.

Theme 1: Pre-primary Teachers' Understanding of Inclusive Education Within Their Classroom

This theme is intended to explore pre-primary teachers' understanding of inclusive education within their classrooms, as it delves into how teachers at the foundational level perceive and implement inclusive practices. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the first theme aims to find out the teachers' perceptions and delves into various sub-themes, including the meaning of inclusive education, inclusive classrooms, examples of successfully practiced scenarios of inclusion, teachers' experiences that shaped their views of inclusive education, common wrong assumptions about inclusive education, and contrast and shared understanding among teachers.

Sub Theme 1.1: Meaning of inclusive education

All the participants agreed that inclusive education is perceived as a system where all children, irrespective of their differences, learn together under the same curriculum and platform. According to them, "Inclusive education, or unified education, is a milestone," and they emphasized the potential of children with special needs to excel if provided with the right opportunities. A participant stated:

"Inclusive education means that all boys and girls will study together on the same curriculum and platform, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity; there will be no discrimination. This is inclusive education or unified education." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Another participant highlighted that inclusive education extends beyond children with disabilities, incorporating those from various socio-economic backgrounds, and explained:

"Inclusive education means that not only children with disabilities are included but also children from various backgrounds, such as the child of a maid, a cobbler's child, a disabled child, and a rich child. Everyone will study together, and we will support this inclusively, giving every child equal rights." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

The necessity of equal treatment and opportunities for all children was emphasized by a participant who remarked:

"Inclusive education means that all students are under the same roof and treated equally without separating any child. All children must be brought under the same education system where every child has equal opportunities." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

They also stressed the responsibility of teachers to address the needs of introverted or inattentive children to ensure that no one is left behind.

During group discussions, the concept of inclusive education received unanimous agreement. In a focus group discussion, other participants (T2, T3, T4, T5, and HT) supported the idea of inclusive or unified education, as defined by participant T1:

"Inclusive education or unified education means teaching children from all classes together without any discrimination based on religion, caste, age, wealth, etc."

(FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Similarly, in another focus group discussion, the participants collectively agreed that inclusive education ensures equal opportunities for all children under the same curriculum, fostering integration and mutual understanding.

Despite the widespread agreement, some practical challenges were noted. A participant mentioned that younger children, particularly four-year-olds, struggled with the long duration of pre-primary classes. She remarked:

"The government's plan to include four-plus-year-olds seems less effective to me because four-year-olds find it hard to attend long classes." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-

primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Sub Theme 1.2: Inclusive classroom

All the participants agreed that an inclusive classroom is conceptualized as a space designed to accommodate the diverse needs of students, ensuring accessibility and engagement for all. One participant highlighted that classrooms are increasingly being adapted to support inclusive education. However, he acknowledged existing challenges, such as the absence of a ramp in their school, while expressing hope for improvements:

"Our classrooms are being built to support inclusive education. Although there are still some problems in my school, like the lack of a ramp... I hope that in the future, these facilities will be implemented in my school as well." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

The aesthetic and functional aspects of classrooms were also emphasized. According to a participant:

"An inclusive classroom should be very attractive in terms of decoration... If the class timing could be reduced, it would help as we can't control them for long periods."

(IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

This aligns with the idea that classrooms should inspire excitement and ease among students.

Another participant echoed this sentiment, adding that teachers should present lessons engagingly to hold children's interest. She stated:

"Classrooms must be attractive so that students feel excited to come to school.

Simultaneously, the teacher must present lessons engagingly to capture the children's attention, making them want to attend school for the teacher's engaging lessons."

(IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

For children with special needs, providing appropriate support within classrooms remains a priority. A participant mentioned that despite financial constraints, efforts are made to ensure students' needs are met. She emphasized:

"In the classroom, there should be enough paper and colors for children to use as they wish, to create and enjoy their work. Unfortunately, we lack the financial resources for this... For children with special needs, especially those from very needy families, our teachers notice that as they move up from grades one to five, their conditions often worsen. We ensure continuous support, even bringing them back for extra help if needed." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Sub Theme 1.3: Examples of successfully practiced scenarios of inclusion

Successful examples of inclusion in education highlight the practical implementation of inclusive principles and the transformative outcomes achieved for students with diverse needs. A teacher's experience demonstrates a specific strategy for inclusion. She recounted:

"I had a few very restless children in my class. Initially, I didn't put much pressure on them for writing. They didn't even want to sit down, so I provided coloring activities for them. Over time, their interest in drawing and writing grew, and they eventually started writing letters." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Another instance involved a child with special needs who initially avoided interaction and participation. The participant shared:

"Through counselling, giving extra time, prioritizing the child's thoughts, and listening to him, the child has shown significant improvement. Now, he comes to school every day, mingles with his peers, and has improved greatly." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

In a focus group discussion, several participants agreed on the broader societal impact of inclusive education, stating:

"Since everyone receives the same education, a social bond is created among them. This helps eliminate discriminatory mindsets and fosters social cohesion." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Another participant in the same discussion added:

"When children with disabilities are included in the class, it helps others understand and accept them as equals." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Such observations indicate a shared belief in the transformative potential of inclusion in fostering mutual respect and understanding.

However, there were occasional challenges cited by a respondent, such as the difficulty of providing consistent care due to limited resources. She said:

"However, keeping these children engaged and happy requires regular attention and care, which is challenging with our limited resources. When we do manage to give them consistent care, they become very fond of the teachers. They need a lot of love and attention, which is not always possible to provide consistently." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Another focus group discussion provided further insights into the benefits of inclusion. A participant shared,

"Children from various conditions and environments... can gradually improve when mixed with others in an inclusive system." (FGD#02, Dhaka, Teachers and Head Teacher, 10-02-2025)

Sub Theme 1.4: Teachers' experience that shaped their view of inclusive education

When it comes to sharing views on "teachers' experience that shaped their view of inclusive education," it reveals a dynamic evolution in teachers' perceptions, influenced by their personal and professional encounters. However, they mostly reflected a mix of challenges, revelations, and adaptability that together shape their approach to inclusivity. One respondent highlighted how training shifted their understanding of inclusive education:

"Yes, earlier I understood from the training that inclusive education meant having separate schools for children, separate everything, and separate systems. But after the training, I realized that no, they will stay with our children, they will learn from this

environment, and I will provide support here." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Another participant shared the practical challenges of implementing training methodologies in real classroom scenarios:

"The training we receive isn't always possible to apply exactly in the classroom... In pre-primary this year, we had five children with special needs. Despite what training suggests, managing them in class is very challenging. They break tables and create disruptions, making it hard to maintain a calm environment for everyone." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Furthermore, teacher expressed a strong commitment to providing individualized support for children with disabilities. According to her:

"I can create arrangements for someone who cannot hear, and I can do something else for someone who cannot see. Yes, I will do specific things for those who do not understand, but they will stay together." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Sub Theme 1.5: Common wrong assumptions about inclusive education

During the interviews and group discussions, the participants mentioned some common wrong assumptions about inclusive education, which reveal a variety of misconceptions held by teachers, which often affect their willingness and ability to implement inclusive practices effectively. However, their agreement on these misconceptions was widespread, as multiple participants in both focus groups identified and concurred with the commonality of these wrong assumptions. While acknowledging the challenges, respondents also displayed a strong willingness to overcome them through proper training, awareness, and adaptation.

One interviewee mentioned a shift in perspectives about socioeconomic biases, stating:

"Before the start of inclusive education, teachers had a prejudice between insolvent and solvent family children. Teachers used to be biased, showing more affection to children from solvent families and neglecting those from insolvent families. But now, with the start of inclusive education, they are gradually coming out of this superstition." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

In focus group discussions, teachers frequently identified misunderstandings about the scope of inclusive education. According to a participant in a focus group discussion, noted:

"I think one major assumption is that inclusive education is only about children with disabilities. Many teachers believe that if there are no children with disabilities in their class, they don't need to practice inclusion." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Another participant reinforced this by explaining that inclusive education should encompass all children, including those from marginalized communities, linguistic minorities, or even shy and introverted individuals.

Further misconceptions involve the perceived impact of inclusive education on teaching quality. A focus group discussion's participants stated:

"We often lack knowledge on how to handle children with autism or other challenges. We feel that with adequate knowledge and training, we can be more equipped."
(FGD#02, Dhaka, Teachers and Head Teacher, 10-02-2025)

Another comment highlighted concerns about resource constraints, such as a participant in a focus group discussion mentioning:

"Some teachers say inclusive education is too expensive and requires a lot of resources, like special equipment or additional staff. But in reality, many inclusive practices can be implemented with minimal cost." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Additionally, teachers from rural areas expressed concern that inclusive education is suited only for urban schools with better facilities, with FGD-01 participants noting their doubts about adapting these methods in resource-limited environments.

Theme 2: Inclusive Education Practices in the Pre-primary Classroom

The second theme is intended to explore inclusive education practices in the pre-primary classroom along with teachers' perception of inclusive education. This study seeks to uncover the methods employed to address diverse learners needs. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the second theme was further divided into various sub-themes, including strategies for implementation, teaching practices, activities to engage children, and collaboration to promote inclusion.

Sub Theme 2.1: Strategies to implement inclusive education in the classroom

All the participants agreed that strategies for implementing inclusive education in the classroom focus on ensuring logistical support, adaptive teaching methodologies, inclusive assessment techniques, and collaborative efforts among teachers, guardians, and the government. One interviewee highlighted the importance of logistical support, emphasizing:

"Without implementing and enforcing these supports, we will not achieve success. The government has already provided funds, which have been used to supply glasses for visually impaired children and resources for reading through Braille books."

(IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Additionally, children with disabilities and other students with special needs receive tailored support, showcasing an effort to address varied individual needs.

Another respondent discussed personalized teaching strategies for underprivileged students:

"Most of our students are poor, and their families often cannot afford even a single notebook. We sometimes provide them with notebooks and pencils from our school resources. Over time, guardians become more conscious of their children's education." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Teachers hold monthly meetings with guardians, especially for pre-primary students, to foster awareness and engagement. Activities like drawing and coloring are emphasized in early education, even when guardians view them as less productive.

Inclusive assessment practices were also underscored, as reflected in an interview:

"The assessment would adapt to what the child can do. If a child cannot write, they are encouraged to express verbally or in other ways they feel comfortable." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Tailored lesson plans ensure that content is neither too complex nor too simplistic, aiming to accommodate all students effectively. A participant mentioned:

"When preparing lesson plans, I focus on making them understandable for all students in the classroom, including those who are falling behind. I ensure the lessons are neither too challenging nor too simple, tailoring my teaching methods to make complex topics accessible to all." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

During focus group discussions, teachers shared their success stories in improving students' foundational skills. One of the focus group discussion participants stated:

"By the end of the year, out of 29 students, 27 could read on the board or from books focused on teaching them letters and practicing on the board. It's a great achievement." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

The participants unanimously agreed on the importance of training and engaging teaching methods to enhance inclusive education's effectiveness.

In another focus group, all participants agreed by emphasizing the role of inclusive learning materials. One participant outlined:

"Learning materials are designed inclusively for all students, including those with visual impairments, helping everyone understand better." (FGD#02, Dhaka, Teachers and Head Teacher, 10-02-2025)

The consensus was clear, with all participants agreeing on the value of accessible and engaging materials to support diverse learning needs.

Sub Theme 2.2: Teaching practices for diverse learners

Teaching practices for diverse learners focus on balancing the varied needs of students, adapting teaching methods, and maintaining flexibility in lesson planning. The gathered data highlights the challenges and efforts undertaken by teachers to ensure inclusivity and effective learning for all students during the in-depth interviews. One respondent shared the complexities of teaching students with varying levels of intellectual abilities. He stated:

"In our classes, there are students of various levels, different types, and different intellectual abilities. Teaching co-education on the same platform with the same curriculum is quite challenging. However, we are trying to provide as much as needed to adapt to the modern world." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Another teacher emphasized hands-on, personalized approaches to teaching. She explained:

"For those who have difficulty writing letters, I ask them to trace over my writing. I have them repeatedly write the letters they know. For the ones struggling the most, I sit with them, show pictures, and practice pronouncing and writing the letters together." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

The difficulty of balancing advanced and weaker students was also discussed by another respondent, as she mentioned:

"Among them, three or four may be strong, but the rest may not be. Tailoring teaching to each individual is very tough. I try to give different types of tasks to strong students while weaker ones stay at their pace. However, it is mentally and physically exhausting for teachers." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Despite these challenges, the commitment to addressing diverse learning needs is evident.

Flexibility in lesson planning emerged as another critical strategy. One of the interviewees of the in-depth interview emphasized:

"If I'm tasked with teaching a 12-line poem, but I notice that my students can't grasp it, I focus on 6 lines for the day. While I might have to adjust the plan to catch up on other lessons later, this flexibility ensures that the students aren't overwhelmed and can keep up with their studies." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

Sub Theme 2.3: Activities to engage special needs children in the class

All the participants shared their personal experiences about activities to engage special needs children in the classroom, which revolve around adapting teaching methods, fostering inclusion, and utilizing creative tools to capture their interest and encourage active

participation. According to the collected data during in-depth interviews, teachers employ varied strategies to ensure that these children feel supported and involved in the learning process.

One respondent explained the importance of grouping children with their peers, stating:

"For a child who is lagging, a strategy we use is to group them with a bright student. Teachers also keep in touch with their families and provide special time before and after school. This ensures that the child doesn't feel inferior in the classroom."

(IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Practical and hands-on activities were also emphasized. A teacher shared:

"Using colors, brushes, and crafts are excellent mediums. Toys also work, but children lose interest in toys after a while. In contrast, using brushes, colors, paper, glue, etc., remains engaging." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Additionally, seating arrangements play a crucial role in fostering engagement. One teacher detailed:

"When I enter a classroom, if there are special needs children, the first thing I do is check where they are seated. If they are sitting at the back or in the middle, I bring them to the front row so they are closer to me. I also explain to the other students that these children are a bit different and might need special attention. This helps the special needs children stay focused, listen to me better, and engage in lessons."

(IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

Sub Theme 2.4: Collaborations to promote inclusion

All the interviewees and participants have agreed that collaborations are crucial to promote inclusion, involving fostering partnerships among teachers, guardians, and the government to

create an inclusive educational environment. The compiled data through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, emphasized the significance of collective efforts and shared knowledge to address challenges and ensure that all students, including those with special needs, can access quality education.

One interviewee highlighted the benefits of collaborative practices, stating:

"All teachers have already received training in inclusive education. The government has taken a good step by bringing all teachers under training. If any gaps or lack of information exist, teachers can share ideas with experienced colleagues to fill those gaps and apply them in the classroom." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Another teacher underscored the practical aspect of collaboration, sharing:

"Sometimes I have to consult other trained teachers or refer to our new teacher's guide when I'm uncertain about certain activities or systems. I call my fellow trainers to share knowledge and refresh my memory about specific games or activities not found in our curriculum book." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

In one focus group discussion, teachers collectively recognized the importance of pairing stronger students with weaker ones as a strategy to promote inclusion and agreed with each other. One of the participants stated:

"We decided to pair stronger students with weaker ones to help them. For example, one student from Dubai could speak English fluently but struggled with reading Bangla. We paired him with a top student in our class to help him improve. We monitored and assisted them personally, and gradually the weaker student made progress." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Participants also acknowledged the challenges in securing guardian involvement in promoting inclusion. Another participant from the same focus group discussion noted:

"The education system is a combined effort of teachers, parents, and students. However, when we call for teachers-parents' meetings, they often don't show up. Parents don't realize the importance of these meetings." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

In another focus group discussion, a participant emphasized that training related to inclusion is also another effective way of collaboration. One of the participants mentioned:

"We had a Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) training. In that SEND training, we officially integrated inclusive education into our primary curriculum, which we had informally started for these children way back in 2009 or 2010." (FGD#02, Dhaka, Teachers and Head Teacher, 10-02-2025)

Theme 03: Felt Needs of the Teachers for Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education in the Classroom

The study expected to determine the felt needs of the teachers when implementing inclusive education, ensuring learning among diverse learners in the classroom. By exploring the felt needs of teachers through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, this theme is divided into some sub-themes, including challenges in implementing, support from school, required resources and training, crucial elements, required changes, and other comments.

Sub Theme 3.1: Challenges in implementing inclusive education

During in-depth interview sessions, teachers shared various challenges they face ensuring an inclusive environment for all learners. One interviewee highlighted the issue of limited class duration in rural and remote areas, stating:

"Children from various ethnicities and religions come here. Our class duration is 40, 45, or 50 minutes. Teaching all children together in such a short time is very challenging." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

While acknowledging the enormity of the task, the respondent expressed optimism that these challenges could be addressed with adequate support from authorities.

The complexity of teaching young children, who often face distractions, was another recurrent theme. One participant shared:

"Our teaching plans are predetermined, but it's not always possible to strictly adhere to the curriculum because the children are very young and often get distracted by toys or look for their mothers." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Addressing behavioral challenges among students was identified as a critical issue. A respondent described:

"A major challenge is managing children with tendencies to move around. For example, a child might leave the class without notice... Losing the child becomes a huge responsibility, which causes stress for the teacher." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Another teacher emphasized the home environment as a challenge for underprivileged students and stated:

"During our home visits, we see that these children coming to school itself is a significant achievement. Their home environment is often not conducive to studying. Some live in overcrowded rooms with seven to eight people in one space." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

Sub Theme 3.2: Support from the school in practicing inclusion

All the participants agreed that support from schools in practicing inclusion is fundamental to promoting an inclusive educational environment. One respondent highlighted the role of school authorities in addressing issues faced by teachers, stating:

"Since we are under an organization, an institution, we have an authority. We try to follow the guidelines given by our authority. If we face any problems during this process, we inform our authorities, and they try to solve the problems to the best of their ability." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Another teacher noted the absence of significant challenges when it comes to receiving support. According to her,

"Actually, I haven't faced any problems so far, so I can't really say. If there is any issue, I get the necessary support. I haven't faced any problems from guardians, school, teachers, or the office so far." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Focus group discussions also shed light on the structural limitations that hinder the provision of adequate support. For instance, a teacher explained:

"The government's allocation for schools is insufficient. We have long school hours from 9 AM to 4 PM, and young children often lose patience during this time. Infrastructure problems also hamper our efforts. We don't have enough support to keep students engaged and prevent them from dropping out." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Another respondent illustrated the efforts made by schools to support underprivileged students. She stated:

"During our home visits, we see that these children coming to school itself is a significant achievement. Their home environment is often not conducive to studying. Despite these circumstances, we strive to cover their lessons at school because they often cannot complete their homework at home." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

Sub Theme 3.3: Resources and training required to support inclusive education

During the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, all the interviewees and participants shared that resources and training are fundamental to supporting inclusive education, addressing the challenges faced by teachers, and enhancing their capacity to meet the diverse needs of students. One respondent emphasized the need for well-equipped classrooms, stating:

"Our classrooms need to be more attractive and equipped to meet the needs of special children. If the government provides the necessary supplies, I believe the barriers will be removed." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Another participant pointed out the necessity of specific materials, such as visual aids and creative tools, to engage students. According to her,

"Large, bound pictures that attract children are needed, along with more toys, multimedia, and sound systems for rhymes, poems, and songs. These resources help children enjoy and learn simultaneously." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Training was identified as a transformative element in preparing teachers for inclusive education. Again, she shared her experience, stating:

"The pre-primary training on inclusive education has been very enlightening. Before this, we had no knowledge of the techniques for teaching letters, rhymes, and poems. We learned all this from the training sessions, and it has been very beneficial."

(IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

The impact of innovative teaching methods observed in training sessions was another recurring theme. One respondent recounted attending a program that demonstrated hands-on learning techniques, such as using clay and sand for creative work. As she stated:

"BRAC's programs emphasized hands-on learning, unlike conventional methods where children have no enjoyment. Such an approach significantly benefits children and minimizes the teachers' efforts while keeping the environment joyful." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

In focus group discussions, participants unanimously agreed on the necessity of continuous learning for teachers. One of the participants mentioned:

"As the curriculum changes, books change, and the whole world changes, I need to be enriched first. The government should provide that opportunity so I can deliver the output." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

In another focus group discussion, the lack of specialized teachers for children with disabilities was also highlighted, with a suggestion for creating a community-based system where multiple schools can access such professionals (FGD#02, Dhaka, Teachers and Head Teacher, 10-02-2025).

Sub Theme 3.4: Crucial elements of inclusive education

All the participants shared their point of view about crucial elements of inclusive education, which included awareness among stakeholders, availability of resources, and collaboration

between teachers and guardians. According to the gathered data from interviews and discussions, these elements are essential in addressing the diverse needs of students and ensuring equitable education for all.

One respondent stressed the importance of stakeholder awareness, stating:

"Both teachers and guardians need to be aware. Teachers are somewhat aware, but many guardians show no interest. For example, they send their children to school without ensuring that their bag contains essentials like pencils, sharpeners, or erasers. I personally collect and keep these supplies available to provide them when needed because most of the time, guardians do not properly prepare their children."
(IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

The significance of resources was another recurring theme. A teacher mentioned:

"Our inclusive education includes various categories of students, such as special children, autistic children, children of hawkers, and children from insolvent families. They often cannot gain practical experience. If we have sufficient supplementary reading materials in the classroom, it will be beneficial for special children and inclusive education." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

In focus group discussions, participants echoed the necessity of resources and awareness, with one participant stating:

"If I'm aware of an imminent attack but have no equipment to defend myself, what good is my awareness? I'll need necessary tools to protect myself. Just being aware won't be enough; I need to know how to act in different situations and have the means to do so." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

All members agreed on this point, illustrating a shared understanding of the interplay between awareness and resource availability.

Collaboration was another key element. A respondent observed:

"The first step is raising awareness among guardians, as children are too young to understand on their own. If guardians take better care of their children, improvements can be achieved." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

Sub Theme 3.5: Changes required in implementing inclusive education in the classroom

During the interview sessions, all the interviewees emphasized the changes required in implementing inclusive education in the classroom, including addressing barriers related to teacher training, resources, and infrastructure while ensuring curriculum adjustments and a supportive environment. One respondent emphasized the necessity of extended training programs, stating:

"Inclusive education is a vast field, and it cannot be implemented in a short duration. We need to address the barriers and provide long-duration training, at least 15 to 20 days, to our teachers." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

The revision and updating of teaching methods were also mentioned as crucial by another participant, who explained:

"Block teaching in pre-primary needs to be revised. Teachers were trained a long time ago, and it would be beneficial to have another round of training or make it a continuous process to improve their skills. Additionally, I believe English should be included in the curriculum." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

Another respondent identified the lack of resources as a significant issue, stating:

"Many local schools lack sufficient resources and facilities. Toys or tools for block building are often insufficient for the number of children. Teachers are overburdened with both teaching and administrative responsibilities, which affects their ability to concentrate solely on teaching." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

Infrastructure improvements were highlighted as another pressing need. A teacher shared:

"In my pre-primary classroom, there are no benches. Students have to sit on the floor to study and write, which negatively impacts their handwriting. Providing benches in pre-primary classrooms would address this issue." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

Sub Theme 3.6: Other comments about the experiences of inclusive education

Experiences of inclusive education, as shared by participants, bring to light diverse perspectives about its practical implementation, challenges, and potential improvements during the sessions. One respondent pointed out the necessity of prioritizing those directly involved in implementing inclusive education. As he stated:

"Based on my 17 years of experience and discussions with various teachers, I have realized that the first step is to provide logistical support to the teachers. Otherwise, it will not be effective." (IDI#01, School 01, Head Teacher, 02-02-2025)

Another participant suggested revisiting pre-primary teaching methods to improve outcomes. According to her:

"Block teaching in pre-primary needs to be revised. Teachers were trained a long time ago, and it would be beneficial to have another round of training or make it a continuous process to improve their skills." (IDI#02, School 01, Pre-primary Teacher, 03-02-2025)

The issue of resource scarcity was also mentioned as a significant challenge. A teacher shared:

"Many local schools lack sufficient resources and facilities. For instance, toys or tools for block building are often insufficient for the number of children. Teachers are overburdened with both teaching and administrative responsibilities, which affects their ability to concentrate solely on teaching." (IDI#03, School 02, Head Teacher, 08-02-2025)

The absence of English in pre-primary curriculums was noted as a gap that needs to be addressed. A teacher emphasized:

"Guardians often complain that government schools don't teach English, unlike kindergartens that use multiple English books at the playgroup level. In government schools, children are introduced to English only in Class One, starting with word formation after the first term exams." (IDI#04, School 02, Pre-primary Teacher, 09-02-2025)

Focus group discussions further highlighted practical suggestions for enhancing inclusivity. One participant noted:

"There are children aged four plus and five plus in my class. The maturity level of these two age groups is different. Managing both groups in the same class creates various problems. In such cases, there should be two teachers in the class, or the classroom should be divided." (FGD#01, Noakhali, Teachers and Head Teacher, 04-02-2025)

Discussion

This qualitative study explored pre-primary teachers' perceptions regarding inclusive education in government pre-primary settings. The research aimed to explore teachers' understanding of inclusive education, practices in the classroom and their felt needs for effective implementation. Based on IDIs and FGDs with teachers in two government schools in Dhaka and Noakhali, the study identified themes related to teachers' understanding, classroom practices, and barriers to inclusive education implementation. This discussion expands on the key findings of each theme, linking them to existing literature and considering their implications for improving inclusion practices in early childhood education.

Theme 1: Pre-primary Teachers' Understanding of Inclusive Education Within Their Classroom

Understanding inclusive education is crucial for pre-primary teachers, as they play a pivotal role in shaping early learning environments that cater to all children. This theme, 'Pre-primary Teachers' Understanding of Inclusive Education Within Their Classroom', explores key aspects of their perspectives, including their interpretation of inclusion, the challenges they face in creating accessible classrooms, examples of successfully implemented inclusive practices, the experiences that shape their views, and common misconceptions. By addressing these subthemes, the discussion sheds light on both the progress and gaps in teachers' awareness, preparation, and application of inclusive strategies. These insights aim to inform future interventions, such as targeted training and resource optimization, to strengthen inclusive education practices in pre-primary classrooms.

Subtheme 1.1: Meaning of inclusive education

The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions regarding the meaning of inclusive education revealed a shared understanding among participants that it is an educational system where all children, irrespective of differences, learn together under the same curriculum, promoting equity and integration. These findings align with the article ‘Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Policy and Practice’, by Malak et al. (2013), which emphasized that inclusive education in Bangladesh is influenced by initiatives like the Education Policy 2010 and the Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act 2001. A study titled ‘Enacting inclusion: A framework for interrogating inclusive practice’ by Florian & Spratt (2013) emphasized that teachers worldwide have gradually developed an understanding of inclusive education where all students have different capabilities with their open-ended learning potential.

Both the IDI and FGD responses echoed similar sentiments, with participants highlighting how inclusivity extends beyond disabilities to socio-economic diversity and fosters equal rights and opportunities. These responses align with the article ‘Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices’, where Sharma et al. (2012) discussed that teachers who have a positive perception of inclusion are more willing to help create a learning environment for all students. However, unexpected observations, such as the difficulty faced by younger children with extended class hours, highlight the need for adaptable policies, warranting additional research to refine inclusive education practices tailored to government pre-primary settings.

Subtheme 1.2: Inclusive classroom

Interviews and discussions indicated that participants conceptualized an inclusive classroom as one that accommodates diverse student needs, emphasizing accessibility, engagement, and aesthetics. While the inclusion of decoration and engaging teaching methods aligns with the

article ‘Enacting inclusion: A framework for interrogating inclusive practice’ by Florian & Spratt (2013), highlighting the importance of inspiring learning spaces. The IDI responses consistently underline the necessity of support for children with special needs and emphasize that inclusive classrooms should offer personalized resources, which resonates with the article ‘Succeeding in the inclusive classroom: K-12 lesson plans using universal design for learning’ by Metcalf (2010), which emphasized that inclusive classrooms lead to improved social interactions among students with and without disabilities.

The participants align closely with the article ‘Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices’, reflecting shared challenges and aspirations for inclusive classrooms. For instance, IDI participants emphasized aesthetic elements, such as classroom decoration, to inspire students, which resonates with broader global practices that focus on engaging and inclusive environments (Sharma et al., 2012). Unexpectedly, some participants highlighted the creative use of limited resources to support special needs students, showcasing innovative approaches despite constraints. For example, efforts to provide extra help for needy families indicate a proactive attitude that deserves further exploration.

Subtheme 1.3: Examples of successfully practiced scenarios of inclusion

During the interviews all the respondents highlighted innovative strategies, such as adapting activities to suit children's needs, counseling, and prioritizing student thoughts, leading to meaningful engagement and improvements among students with diverse needs. For instance, engaging restless children through creative activities like drawing and colouring will eventually encourages their participation in writing tasks. Similarly, personalized approaches such as counseling and prioritizing a child's feelings fostered social and academic growth. This aligns with a study titled ‘How inclusive interactive learning environments benefit students without special needs’, which underscores the academic and social benefits of

inclusive practices for both students with and without special education needs (SEN), as noted by Molina Roldán et al. (2021) and also aligns with an article by Yerliyurt Günay et al. (2021) named ‘Effect of inclusive practices on attitudes: A meta-analysis study’.

These findings of this subtheme suggest that inclusion not only fosters mutual respect and understanding but also facilitates the academic and social development of children. They underscore the importance of addressing teacher preparedness and resource adequacy, as highlighted in the research titled ‘Addressing Barriers to Inclusion: Challenges and Recommendations for Inclusive Primary Education in Bangladesh’ by Sarker and Unzum (2023). While the findings support the assumption that inclusive education promotes social cohesion, the challenges encountered call for future research on sustainable resource allocation and professional development programs. Unexpectedly, some data revealed the difficulty of providing consistent care, emphasizing the need for innovative strategies to address resource constraints.

Subtheme 1.4: Teachers’ experiences that shaped their view of inclusive education

The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed a dynamic transformation in teachers' perspectives of inclusive education, influenced by both personal experiences and professional training. For instance, one teacher initially perceived inclusion as requiring separate facilities but later embraced the idea of integrating children within the same environment with appropriate support. Another teacher highlighted the practical challenges of implementing training methodologies, emphasizing the complexity of managing diverse needs in real classrooms. These insights align with the article ‘Exploring pre-service teachers perceived teaching efficacy, attitudes and concerns about inclusive education in Bangladesh’ by Ahsan et al. (2012), which acknowledges the impact of teachers' professional development and societal attitudes on their readiness for inclusive practices. The IDI responses confirm

that training and experiential learning significantly shape teachers' attitudes, resonating with a study by Florian & Spratt (2013) named 'Enacting inclusion: A framework for interrogating inclusive practice' that underscores the importance of ongoing support and professional development.

Unexpected challenges, such as managing disruptive behavior, reflect the necessity for innovative strategies and adaptive classroom management techniques which align with the article 'Teacher preparation for inclusive education: Increasing knowledge but raising concerns' by Forlin and Chambers (2011), reinforcing the importance of equipping teachers with both practical tools and emotional resilience to navigate inclusive settings effectively.

Subtheme 1.5: Common wrong assumptions about inclusive education

Through the interviews and discussions, all the respondents highlight common misconceptions about inclusive education, such as the assumption that it solely involves children with disabilities or requires excessive resources, as shared in both IDI and FGD responses. For instance, focus groups noted the widespread belief that inclusive education is not necessary for classes without children with disabilities, while interviews revealed shifts in teachers' perspectives on socioeconomic biases. These observations align with the studies 'Exploring pre-service teachers perceived teaching efficacy, attitudes and concerns about inclusive education in Bangladesh' by Ahsan et al. (2012) and 'Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices' by Sharma et al. (2012), which identify similar misconceptions stemming from inadequate training and societal attitudes. While the findings support the idea that misconceptions can be addressed through awareness and training, they also suggest the need for systemic support to dispel these misunderstandings effectively.

These findings of this subtheme underscore the importance of redefining inclusivity to encompass all forms of diversity, including linguistic and socioeconomic differences. Malak

(2013) highlighted in his research ‘Inclusive education reform in Bangladesh: Pre-service teachers’ responses to include students with special educational needs in regular classrooms’ that the potential of inclusive practices to create equitable learning environments with minimal resources challenges the notion that inclusion is inherently expensive.

To conclude, this theme highlights the significance of pre-primary teachers’ understanding of inclusive education and the essential components required to implement it effectively. By exploring their perceptions, successful practices, personal experiences, and misconceptions, the study reveals both progress and areas for improvement. These insights can pave the way for improved educational practices that embrace diversity, benefiting students, teachers, and society as a whole.

Theme 2: Inclusive Education Practices in the Pre-primary Classroom

Inclusive education practices in pre-primary classrooms form the foundation for nurturing diverse learners in their early years. This theme, ‘Inclusive Education Practices in the Pre-primary Classroom’, delves into strategies for implementing inclusivity, teaching practices tailored to diverse needs, activities for engaging children with special needs, and collaborative efforts to promote inclusion. The discussion highlights practical approaches, such as adaptive teaching methods, resource optimization, peer-group activities, and parental involvement, which collectively foster a sense of belonging and equity. By addressing challenges like limited resources, the study emphasizes the importance of creative solutions and collaborative frameworks. These insights aim to bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that inclusive education thrives in government pre-primary settings.

Subtheme 2.1: Strategies to implement inclusive education in the classroom

Throughout the interviews and group discussions, the participants mentioned some teaching techniques that they think can be used to ensure learning for children with special needs.

Most of them have mentioned particular teaching strategies for students who are falling behind, while others emphasized on learning materials and resources. This aligns with the article ‘Teacher professional development around the world: The gap between evidence and practice’ by the World Bank (2018) that highlights students with disabilities perform academically much better in integrated classrooms than in the segregated ones.

During interviews and group discussions, most of the participants mentioned providing extra time for spelling, reading, and writing tasks is a significant technique for children with special needs. Teachers also believe in and practice flexibility in spontaneous modification of classroom content when a child with special needs or disabilities shows reluctance or struggles to accomplish the task. A study by Yerliyurt Günay et al. (2021) titled ‘Effect of inclusive practices on attitudes: A meta-analysis study’ found that inclusive practices have a positive effect on attitudes and this effect is at a large level, indicating that inclusive practices have been strongly influenced by positive attitudes to yield favorable results.

All the participants expressed their support of lesson consistency for classrooms inside the framework of an inclusive education system; nevertheless, they concurred that instructional methods would vary according to the students' requirements.

Subtheme 2.2: Teaching practices for diverse learners

While sharing teaching practices for diverse learners, the participants emphasized personalized teaching approaches are crucial, as evidenced by one teacher who assists students with difficulties in writing letters by providing hands-on support, such as tracing over her writing and using visual aids. During the interviews, the teachers mentioned that managing weaker students is challenging, and it came out that tailoring tasks to suit advanced and weaker learners simultaneously demands considerable mental and physical effort, often leaving teachers exhausted. This aligns with the article ‘Training and support for inclusive

practices: Transformation from cooperation in teaching and learning' by Muñoz-Martínez et al. (2021), which highlights that teachers express being overwhelmed by the demands of inclusive education.

Moreover, flexibility in lesson planning is also another critical aspect, with teachers adapting their plans based on students' understanding, such as focusing on smaller portions of a poem when students are unable to grasp the entire piece. Malak (2013) emphasized in his study titled 'Inclusive education reform in Bangladesh: Pre-service teachers' responses to include students with special educational needs in regular classrooms' that lack of flexible curriculum policies can facilitate the implementation of inclusive practices. Despite challenges, the participants agreed that teachers' efforts at inclusivity and their ability to modify teaching practices reflect a strong commitment to supporting diverse learners and fostering a positive learning environment.

Subtheme 2.3: Activities to engage special needs children in the class

Through interviews and group discussions, participants shared that to engage children with special needs, focusing on strategies such as grouping with peers, hands-on activities, and adaptive seating arrangements. These methods not only foster inclusion but also ensure active participation and a sense of belonging among those with special needs. For example, interviewees shared that pairing a child who is lagging behind with a high-performing student helps the special needs child feel valued and supported while also providing an opportunity for peer learning, which aligns with Molina Roldán et al.'s (2021) article 'How inclusive interactive learning environments benefit students without special needs', which states that collaborative learning improves social interactions and promotes mutual respect in inclusive settings.

The teachers expressed that practical and hands-on activities, such as using colors, brushes, crafts, and other creative tools, are particularly effective in capturing the interest of children with special needs. Teachers have found that while toys may lose their appeal over time, activities involving art materials like brushes, glue, and paper continue to engage children actively. Additionally, seating arrangements play a crucial role in promoting focus and participation. For example, bringing children with special needs to the front row and explaining their unique needs to other students fosters an environment of understanding and inclusion. This positioning enables these children to stay attentive and better engage with lessons.

Subtheme 2.4: Collaborations to promote inclusion

Teachers consistently emphasized the importance of partnerships among teachers, parents, and the government to create and sustain inclusivity during interview and discussion sessions. It appeared from the interviews and the group discussions that teachers, having undergone training in inclusive education, often consult colleagues to bridge gaps in knowledge, share ideas, and implement practical strategies effectively in the classroom. Teachers expressed the importance of seeking guidance from experienced peers or referring to resources such as the teacher's guide to refresh knowledge about activities and systems. Participants agreed that collaborating with fellow teachers creates a shared pool of expertise that benefits students across the spectrum of abilities. The participants mentioned practical examples, such as pairing stronger students with weaker peers or consulting fellow teachers for support, reflecting a collaborative culture that enhances teaching practices. These observations resonate with Cowley's (2011) study titled 'Teacher education for inclusion: changing paradigms and innovative approaches, which emphasized that teachers benefit from workshops, peer collaboration, and mentorship programs that enhance their knowledge of inclusion practices. Respondents also emphasized the challenges of involving guardians,

noting that their participation is often limited due to a lack of awareness about the importance of teacher-parent meetings. Addressing this issue requires efforts to enhance communication and engagement between teachers and families.

Additionally, during the sessions, it came out that collective training initiatives like the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) program showcased in the findings reaffirm Molina Roldán et al.'s (2021) assertion titled 'How inclusive interactive learning environments benefit students without special needs' that shared knowledge and professional development are crucial to the success of inclusive education.

Ultimately, this theme provides valuable insights into fostering equity and belonging among diverse learners. Through an exploration of strategies tailored to implement inclusivity, teaching practices that address varied intellectual abilities, engaging activities for children with special needs, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders, the findings underscore the importance of creativity, dedication, and adaptability in educational settings. Despite challenges such as resource limitations and teacher fatigue, the study showcases the dedication and creativity of teachers in promoting equity and belonging. It underscores the importance of resource optimization, and collaborative efforts to bridge the gap between policy and practice, paving the way for a more inclusive early education system.

Theme 03: Felt Needs of the Teachers for Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education in the Classroom

The effective implementation of inclusive education in classrooms remains a critical focus for fostering equity and accessibility in education. Teachers play a crucial role in this process, and understanding their felt needs is pivotal for meaningful progress. This theme explores key areas, including the challenges teachers face, the support they require from schools, the resources and training essential for inclusivity, and the systemic changes needed for success.

By discussing these aspects, the study sheds light on the lived experiences of teachers, offering insights into the barriers they encounter and potential strategies to empower them. These discussions aim to bridge the gap between policy and practice, paving the way for sustainable and inclusive educational environments.

Subtheme 3.1: Challenges in implementing inclusive education

The interviews and discussions revealed the challenges in implementing inclusive education are multifaceted and deeply rooted in systemic, societal, and practical barriers. Teachers shared that they face significant difficulties in ensuring an inclusive environment for all learners, particularly in rural and remote areas where class durations are limited to 40-50 minutes. This constraint makes it challenging to address the diverse needs of children within such a short timeframe. Additionally, the participants emphasized the complexity of teaching young children, who are often distracted by toys or seek their mothers, further complicating the implementation of inclusive education. This echoes Sarker and Unzum's (2023) article 'Addressing Barriers to Inclusion: Challenges and Recommendations for Inclusive Primary Education in Bangladesh' that teachers are unprepared to address diverse learners in their classrooms related to inclusive pedagogies.

During sessions it came out that behavioral challenges among students also pose a critical issue. Participants emphasized that managing children with tendencies to move around or leave the class without notice becomes a significant responsibility for teachers, causing stress and anxiety. They also highlighted the home environment of underprivileged students adds another layer of difficulty. Many children live in overcrowded spaces with seven to eight people in one room, making studying at home nearly impossible and teachers often find that merely getting these children to attend school is a considerable achievement.

These findings highlight the critical need for targeted training and resource allocation to overcome these challenges. Addressing behavioral issues, as described in the findings, requires specific classroom management strategies, which align with the article ‘Teacher preparation for inclusive education: Increasing knowledge but raising concerns’ by Forlin and Chambers (2011) to provide teachers with autonomy and professional development opportunities. Furthermore, understanding the influence of students' home environments, as mentioned in the research, is essential for designing supportive interventions. These findings confirm earlier studies titled ‘Inclusive education reform in Bangladesh: Pre-service teachers’ responses to include students with special educational needs in regular classrooms’, by Malak (2013), that emphasized the importance of systemic reforms to enable inclusive practices.

Subtheme 3.2: Support from the school in practicing inclusion

Participants consistently highlighted that schools play a fundamental role in promoting an inclusive educational environment during the sessions. The cooperation of school authorities serves as a backbone for teachers when implementing inclusive practices, teacher emphasized this, mentioning that when issues arise during the inclusion process, authorities attempt to resolve them to the best of their ability. Teachers also generally expressed satisfaction with the support received from schools, stating they had not faced significant challenges in this regard.

The findings emphasize the significance of school support in practicing inclusive education, highlighting both structural limitations and efforts made by institutions. Teachers noted the role of school authorities in addressing classroom challenges, with some teachers receiving adequate assistance while others pointed out issues like insufficient government allocations and infrastructure problems. For instance, long school hours often lead to disengagement among young learners, and underprivileged students struggle due to non-conducive home

environments. These findings align with Jardinez & Natividad's (2024) article 'The Advantages and Challenges of Inclusive Education: Striving for Equity in the Classroom' that the funding and resource shortage is one of the biggest barriers to inclusive education.

The findings suggest that while some schools actively support underprivileged students through initiatives like home visits, broader systemic changes are required to ensure consistent inclusivity. Addressing infrastructure gaps and providing logistical support could alleviate teacher workloads and enhance engagement among diverse learners. These findings emphasize the role of institutional support in fostering inclusivity while also revealing overlooked challenges like sustaining student patience during long hours.

Subtheme 3.3: Resources and training required to support inclusive education

The findings emphasize the critical role of resources and training in equipping teachers to implement inclusive education effectively in pre-primary classrooms through interviews and discussions. Teachers have highlighted the need for well-equipped classrooms, including visual aids, creative tools, and multimedia systems, to engage diverse learners, reflecting Yadav's (2024) assertion 'Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes towards Inclusive Education: A Global Perspective' that without specific training, teachers tend to fall back on outdated techniques that target only one learning style, not allowing for a holistic approach to learning for each student. Additionally, hands-on learning techniques, such as using clay and sand, are considered transformative for fostering student engagement. Training programs, such as those led by BRAC, have demonstrated the benefits of innovative teaching methods, aligning with the UNESCO (2020b) article 'Inclusive teaching: preparing all teachers to teach all students' that training that includes inclusive teaching methods, classroom management, and collaboration with special education professionals empowers teachers to confidently enact inclusion practices.

These findings suggest that targeted investments in teacher training and resources can address existing gaps in preparedness and improve inclusivity in classrooms. For example, the focus group discussions highlighted the lack of specialized teachers for children with disabilities, suggesting a need for community-based systems, as Forlin & Chambers (2011) recommend in her study ‘Teacher preparation for inclusive education: Increasing knowledge but raising concerns’, to ensure broader accessibility to expertise. While the findings confirm assumptions about the importance of resources, they reveal gaps in sustained government support and curriculum flexibility, which impact practical implementation. Additionally, investigating the long-term impact of professional development initiatives, such as ongoing training and mentorship programs, could provide valuable insights into improving inclusive education practices in resource-constrained environments.

Finally, the effective implementation of inclusive education requires a multifaceted approach, addressing the felt needs of teachers, systemic barriers, and resource gaps. The challenges highlighted, such as managing diverse classrooms and the influence of students' home environments, underline the need for tailored training and systemic reforms. Support from school authorities plays a pivotal role, yet broader structural changes are essential for consistency. Equipping teachers with adequate resources and innovative training methods can empower them to foster truly inclusive environments. By bridging the gap between policy and practice, this study emphasizes the importance of targeted interventions, collaboration, and sustained investment in education systems. Together, these efforts can pave the way for a more equitable and accessible educational future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided valuable insights into the perceptions of pre-primary teachers regarding inclusive education within government schools in Bangladesh. By

analyzing the findings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, it became evident that teachers possess a fundamental understanding of inclusive education, emphasizing the importance of equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. Furthermore, the research revealed the challenges faced by educators in implementing inclusive practices, including resource constraints, logistical barriers, and the need for adequate training. These findings make a significant contribution to the discourse on inclusive education, highlighting the progress achieved while also identifying areas that require further development.

Reflecting on the purpose of this research, it is evident that the study successfully achieved its objectives of exploring teachers' perceptions as well as identifying the challenges and support needed to promote inclusivity in classrooms. The diverse perspectives of participants provided a comprehensive understanding of the current state of inclusive education in government pre-primary settings, offering practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders. The findings underscore the potential of inclusive education to foster social cohesion and mutual understanding among students from varied backgrounds, thereby promoting an equitable and unified learning environment.

On a personal note, conducting this research has been a transformative experience, offering profound insights into the complexities and potential of inclusive education. The journey of engaging with educators and analyzing their experiences has deepened my appreciation for their dedication and resilience in addressing diverse learners' needs. This study has also reinforced the significance of collaboration, adaptability, and continuous professional development in achieving inclusive educational goals. Ultimately, this research has not only enriched my academic understanding but also strengthened my commitment to advocating for inclusive practices that ensure every child's right to quality education.

These reflections not only encapsulate the essence of the research but also provide a pathway for future exploration and action in the field of inclusive education. While challenges persist, the findings of this study serve as a foundation for designing targeted interventions and strategies to create a more inclusive and supportive educational system.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of teachers' understanding, practices, and challenges related to inclusive education, it is evident that several critical areas require attention for the effective implementation of inclusive practices in government pre-primary settings. These recommendations aim to address the felt needs of teachers, enhance the support systems, and foster a sustainable and inclusive learning environment for all children.

- **Enhance teacher training programs:** Conduct comprehensive and continuous professional development sessions for pre-primary teachers, focusing on the practical implementation of inclusive education strategies to address diverse learners' needs. Teacher training needs to be designed to enable the teachers to address the individual differences, like different learning styles, personality, and temperament traits of the learners.
- **Provide adequate classroom resources:** Equip classrooms with accessible learning materials, such as tactile tools, multimedia resources, and visual aids, to foster an inclusive learning environment.
- **Strengthen collaboration with guardians:** Initiate regular teacher-parent meetings and awareness programs to ensure active parental involvement in supporting inclusive education practices.

- **Address infrastructure gaps:** Improve school facilities, such as building ramps and reducing classroom overcrowding, to create an environment conducive to inclusive education.
- **Encourage further research:** Explore additional studies on effective teaching practices and interventions for children with special needs to enrich the body of knowledge on inclusive education.
- **Promote inclusive policy-making:** Advocate for policymakers to allocate adequate funding and prioritize inclusive education in the national curriculum, emphasizing support for underprivileged and special needs students.

Reference

- Adedoyin, O. B. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods*. ResearchGate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340594471_Qualitative_Research_Methods
- Ahsan, M. T. (2014). *Pre-service Teachers' Preparedness for Inclusive Education Contexts in Bangladesh* (Doctoral dissertation, Monash University).
- Ahsan, M. T., Sharma, U., & Deppeler, J. M. (2012). Exploring Pre-Service Teachers' Perceived Teaching-Efficacy, Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education in Bangladesh. *International Journal of whole schooling*, 8(2), 1-20.
- Ahsan, M. T., Tanjilut Tasnuba, Mukta Akter, Md. Khairul Islam, Abu Said Md. Juel Miah, Asgar Ali Sabri, & A Plus Communication. (2016). *Teacher Education Programme in Bangladesh: Inclusiveness for Children with Disabilities* (pp. 4–7) [Book].
https://actionaidbd.org/storage/app/media/teacher_education_programme_2.pdf
- Ali, A. D. (2020). A framework for an inclusive education professional development program. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 44(3), n3.
- Ali, M. Z. (2017). INCLUSIVE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH FOCUSING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. In *Proceedings of the World Disability & Rehabilitation Conference* (Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 21-32).
- Ambia, S. J. M. U., & Rahman, Md. S. (2021). Challenges in Primary Level Inclusive Education in Bangladesh. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*, 9(11), 14–20. <https://doi.org/10.31686/ijer.vol9.iss11.3453>
- Amran, H. M., & Obaydullah, Dr. A. K. M. (2019). *Inclusive Practice and Barriers in the Primary Education of Bangladesh*.
https://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/Inclusive_Practice_and_Barriers_in_the_Primary_Education_of_Bangladesh_ijariie10689.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOooYn69P8nSMYv7fYU8PL0Xq4wkS1rfTCjQfwLoGgr4Qti6gZ9vD
- Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17(2), 129-147.
- Bani Odeh, K., & Lach, L. M. (2024). Barriers to, and facilitators of, education for children with disabilities worldwide: A descriptive review. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1294849. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1294849>
- Bindhani, S., & Gopinath, G. (2024). Inclusive Education Practices: A Review of Challenges and Successes. In *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*, *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)* (Vol. 6, Issue 2, pp. 1–2).
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ed8d/1d6726065046d80774fe5b27685b4e5d5c07.pdf>

- Cowley, D. M. (2011). Teacher education for inclusion: changing paradigms and innovative approaches. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 58(3), 332–334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2011.598683>
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2017). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches. In *The Open Library*. SAGE Publications, Incorporated. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL28633749M/Qualitative_Inquiry_and_Research_Design
- Fharia Tilat Loba. (2012, December 30). *Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Trend or requirement?* | *Bangladesh Education Article*. Bangladesh Education Article. <https://bdeduarticle.com/inclusive-education-in-bangladesh-trend-or-requirement/>
- Florian, L., & Spratt, J. (2013). Enacting inclusion: A framework for interrogating inclusive practice. *European journal of special needs education*, 28(2), 119-135.
- Forlin, C. (2010). Teacher education for inclusion. In *Confronting obstacles to inclusion* (pp. 173-188). Routledge.
- Forlin, C., & Chambers, D. (2011). Teacher preparation for inclusive education: Increasing knowledge but raising concerns. *Asia-Pacific Journal of teacher education*, 39(1), 17-32.
- Jardinez, M. J., & Natividad, L. R. (2024). The Advantages and Challenges of Inclusive Education: Striving for Equity in the Classroom. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 12(2), 57-65. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v12i2.7182>
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational Research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA71205674>
- Khatun, F., & Saadat, S. Y. (2020). Focus Group Discussion (FGD). In F. Khatun & S. Y. Saadat, *Youth Employment in Bangladesh: Creating Opportunities—Reaping Dividends* (pp. 77-88). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1750-1_6
- Körner, I. (2007). *Towards inclusive education: examples of good practices of inclusive education*. Inclusion Europe.
- Malak, M. S. (2013). Inclusive education reform in Bangladesh: Pre-service teachers' responses to include students with special educational needs in regular classrooms. *International Journal of Instruction*, 6(1).
- Malak, M. S., Begum, H. A., Habib, M. A., Shaila, M., & Roshid, M. M. (2013). Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Policy and Practice. *Australian Association for Research in Education*.

- Malak, Md. S., Md, H. A. B., Habib, A., Banu, M. S., & Roshid, M. M. (2014). Inclusive Education in Bangladesh. In H. Zhang, P. W. K. Chan, & C. Boyle (Eds.), *Equality in Education* (pp. 107–124). SensePublishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-692-9_9
- Mehtab, S. (2014). *Inclusive education for children with disabilities in Bangladesh: Implementation and challenges* (Doctoral dissertation, BRAC University). <https://dspace.bracu.ac.bd/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10361/4012/12263004.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Metcalf, D. (2010). *Succeeding in the inclusive classroom: K-12 lesson plans using universal design for learning*. Sage Publications.
- Ministry of Education. (2010). National Education Policy 2010. Government of Bangladesh.
- Ministry of Education. (2019). *Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Framework*. Directorate of Primary Education. Retrieved from https://www.dpe.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dpe.portal.gov.bd/publications/0f89ca8d_7273_4a3e_aea8_804448fdaf4e/SEND%20Framework_Dec%202022_Final%20%281%29.pdf
- Ministry of Social Welfare. (2001). Bangladesh Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act 2001. Government of Bangladesh.
- Molina Roldán, S., Marauri, J., Aubert, A., & Flecha, R. (2021). How inclusive interactive learning environments benefit students without special needs. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 661427.
- Mostafa, A. T. (2023, July 8). Inclusive education: Ensuring accessibility for children with disabilities. *The Business Standard*. <https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/inclusive-education-ensuring-accessibility-children-disabilities-661934>
- Muñoz-Martínez, Y., Gárate-Vergara, F., & Marambio-Carrasco, C. (2021). Training and support for inclusive practices: Transformation from cooperation in teaching and learning. *Sustainability*, 13(5), 2583.
- OECD. (2021). *Starting Strong VI: Supporting Meaningful Interactions in Early Childhood Education and Care*. OECD. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/starting-strong-vi_f47a06ae-en.html
- Popova, A., Evans, D. K., Breeding, M. E., & Arancibia, V. (2022). Teacher professional development around the world: The gap between evidence and practice. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 37(1), 107-136.
- Prothom Alo. (2025, March 23). *Inclusion of children with disabilities in govt primary schools: Prospects, realities and actions*. Prothomalo; Prothom Alo English. <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/roundtable/4t89tmwzoc>
- Raisa, F. A. (2020). *The reality of inclusive education in Bangladesh focusing on LBLD* (Doctoral dissertation, Brac University).

- Roundtables. (2023, July 17). Opportunities and Challenges to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Bangladesh. *The Daily Star*.
<https://www.thedailystar.net/roundtables/news/opportunities-and-challenges-inclusive-education-children-disabilities-bangladesh-3371986>
- Saloviita, T. (2017). How common are inclusive educational practices among Finnish teachers? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22(5), 560–575.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1390001>
- Sarker, A., & Unzum, T. (2023). Addressing Barriers to Inclusion: Challenges and Recommendations for Inclusive Primary Education in Bangladesh. *Journal of Education Review Provision*, 3(2), 87-98.
- Shakiba, N. (2020). *Pre-school teachers' perception on inclusion of children with learning disabilities in early childhood education* (Doctoral dissertation, Brac University).
- Sharma, U., Loreman, T., & Forlin, C. (2012). Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices. *Journal of research in special educational needs*, 12(1), 12-21.
- Strati, P. (2024). PRESCHOOL PEDAGOGY AND TEACHING PRACTICES IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS: A RESEARCH STUDY ACCORDING TO THE CURRICULUM PROGRAM IN GREECE. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 11(10).
- Sultana, N., & Hasan, Md. J. (2024). Classroom Practices of Social Inclusion According to the Acts and Policies of Secondary Level Education in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, VIII(XI), 2804–2818.
<https://doi.org/10.47772/ijriss.2024.8110215>
- UNDP, (2015). *Sustainable development goals*. UNDP. Retrieved from
<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>
- UNESCO. (1994). *The salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*. Unesco; UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000098427>
- UNESCO. (2005). *Guidelines for inclusion: ensuring access to education for all*. Unesco.org.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000140224>
- UNESCO. (2009). *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*. Unesco.org; UNESCO.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000177849>
- UNESCO. (2020a). *Global education monitoring report, 2020: Inclusion and education: all means all*. Unesco.org. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718>
- UNESCO. (2020b). *Inclusive teaching: preparing all teachers to teach all students*. Unesco.org. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374447>
- UNICEF. (2021). *Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in Bangladesh*. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- United Nations. (2024). *Goal 4: Quality Education*. The Global Goals.
<https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/4-quality-education/>

- World Bank. (2018). *Teacher professional development around the world: The gap between evidence and practice*. Policy Research Working Paper 8572. World Bank
<https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/349051535637296801/pdf/WPS8572.pdf>
- Yadav, A. (2024). Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes towards Inclusive Education: A Global Perspective. In *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)* (Vol. 12, Issue 7, pp. i518–i519).
- Yerliyurt Günay, N. S., Elaldı, Ş., & Çifçi, M. (2021). Effect of inclusive practices on attitudes: A meta-analysis study. *South African Journal of Education*, 43(1), 1-12.
- Zulfiqar, B., Shahinujjaman, M., & Hossain, N. (2018). Inclusive education in Bangladesh: Digging deeper into educational prospects of children with disabilities in Bangladesh. *European Journal of Education*, 1(1), 36-48.
<https://doi.org/10.26417/ejed.v1i1.p36-48>

APPENDICES

Research Tools (English)

i. In-depth Interview (IDI) Guideline

a) Demographic Information

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Educational Background:

Years of teaching experience:

Any training received for professional development:

b) Understanding of Inclusive Education

1. In your own words what does inclusive education mean to you? Can you share with us an example that shows your understanding of inclusive education?
2. In your view, what does an inclusive classroom look like?
3. Can you give an example of a scenario where inclusion was successfully practiced?
4. What aspects of your background do you think shape your view of inclusive education?
5. What are the most common wrong assumptions that teachers make about inclusive education?

c) Practices in the Classroom

6. What are some strategies you implement inclusive education in your classroom?
7. How do you adjust your teaching practices for diverse learners?
8. Can you give examples of some activities you do in your classroom during the class to engage special needs children in the class?
9. How do you collaborate with other teachers or specialists to promote inclusion?

d) Felt Needs for Effective Implementation

10. What are the challenges you meet while implementing inclusive education?
11. In what ways does your school support your efforts toward inclusion?
12. In what ways does your school hinder your efforts toward inclusion?
13. Are resources or training required to support inclusive practices in the classroom? If yes, what type of resources and training are required?
14. What additional support could be provided to better enable you to teach inclusively?
15. What is the most crucial element of inclusive education according to you?
16. Reflect on any professional learning that you have engaged in linked to the concept of inclusive education.
17. Is there anything you would change about the way inclusive practices are applied in your school?
18. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about your experiences of inclusive education?

ii. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) Guideline

a) Demographic Information

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Educational Background:

Years of teaching experience:

Any training received for professional development:

b) Understanding of Inclusive Education

1. As a teacher, what does inclusion mean to you?

2. Can you share a positive experience related to inclusive education?
3. How does your understanding of inclusion contrast with your colleagues? Is there shared understanding among teachers?
4. What are the most common wrong assumptions that teachers make about inclusive education?
5. Does everyone agree on the definition of inclusive education? If so, what are their definitions?

c) Practices in the Classroom

6. Which successful practices have you implemented in inclusive education?
7. How are you encouraging one another to adopt these practices? Can you give me some examples?
8. How do you work with other teachers or specialists to help diverse learners? How does collaboration influence our understanding and implementation of inclusive practices?
9. What kind of support do you need from the school administration to enhance your own inclusive practices?
10. How do we foster a community of support among teachers regarding inclusive practices?

d) Felt Needs for Effective Implementation

11. What kind of support do you think the school administration needs to further develop and promote inclusion within the school?
12. What would professional development include to effectively meet the requirements of teachers in inclusive settings?
13. What learnings or professional development opportunities do you think would support your understanding and practice of inclusive education?
14. What is the most crucial element of inclusive education according to you?
15. What advice would you have to help support inclusivity within pre-primary settings?

Research Tools (Bengali)

i. In-depth Interview (IDI) Guideline

a) জনসংখ্যা সংক্রান্ত তথ্য

নাম:

বয়স:

লিঙ্গ:

শিক্ষাগত পটভূমি:

শিক্ষাদানের অভিজ্ঞতার বছর:

পেশাগত উন্নয়নের জন্য প্রাপ্ত প্রশিক্ষণ:

b) ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার বোঝাপড়া

1. আপনার নিজের ভাষায় ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষা আপনার কাছে কী অর্থ বহন করে? আপনি কি আমাদের সাথে একটি উদাহরণ বর্ণনা করতে পারেন যা ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষা সম্পর্কে আপনার বোঝাপড়া প্রদর্শন করে?
2. আপনার দৃষ্টিতে, একটি ইনক্লুসিভ শ্রেণীকক্ষ দেখতে কেমন?
3. আপনি কি এমন একটি পরিস্থিতির উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন যেখানে ইনক্লুসন সফলভাবে অনুশীলন করা হয়েছিল?
4. আপনার পটভূমির কোন দিকগুলি ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষা সম্পর্কে আপনার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি গঠন করে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
5. ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষা সম্পর্কে শিক্ষকদের সবচেয়ে সাধারণ ভুল অনুমানগুলি কী কী?

c) শ্রেণীকক্ষে অনুশীলন

6. আপনার শ্রেণীকক্ষে ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষা বাস্তবায়নের জন্য আপনি কী কী কৌশল প্রয়োগ করেন?
7. আপনি কীভাবে বিভিন্ন শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য আপনার শিক্ষাদানের অনুশীলনগুলি সামঞ্জস্য করেন?
8. আপনি কি আপনার শ্রেণীকক্ষে বিশেষ চাহিদাসম্পন্ন শিশুদের সম্পৃক্ত করার জন্য ক্লাস চলাকালীন সময়ে করা কিছু কার্যক্রমের উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন?

9. ইনক্লুসন প্রচারের জন্য আপনি অন্যান্য শিক্ষক বা বিশেষজ্ঞদের সাথে কীভাবে সহযোগিতা করেন?

d) কার্যকর বাস্তবায়নের জন্য অনুভূত প্রয়োজন

10. ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষা বাস্তবায়নের সময় আপনি কী কী চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হন?
11. কোন উপায়ে আপনার স্কুল ইনক্লুসনের দিকে আপনার প্রচেষ্টাকে সমর্থন করে?
12. আপনার স্কুল কীভাবে আপনার ইনক্লুসনের প্রচেষ্টাকে বাধা দেয়?
13. শ্রেণীকক্ষে ইনক্লুসিভ অনুশীলনগুলি সমর্থন করার জন্য কি সম্পদ বা প্রশিক্ষণের প্রয়োজন? যদি হ্যাঁ, তাহলে কী ধরনের সম্পদ এবং প্রশিক্ষণের প্রয়োজন?
14. আপনাকে ইনক্লুসিভভাবে শেখানোর জন্য আরও ভালভাবে সক্ষম করতে অতিরিক্ত কী সমর্থন প্রদান করা যেতে পারে?
15. আপনার মতে ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ উপাদান কী?
16. ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার ধারণার সাথে সম্পর্কিত যে কোনো পেশাগত শিক্ষার প্রতিফলন করুন যা আপনি সম্পন্ন করেছেন।
17. আপনার স্কুলে ইনক্লুসিভ অনুশীলনগুলি প্রয়োগ করার পদ্ধতি সম্পর্কে আপনি কিছু পরিবর্তন করতে চান কি?
18. ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পর্কে আপনি কি অন্য কোনো মন্তব্য করতে চান?

ii. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) Guideline

a) জনসংখ্যা সংক্রান্ত তথ্য

নাম:

বয়স:

লিঙ্গ:

শিক্ষাগত পটভূমি:

শিক্ষাদানের অভিজ্ঞতার বছর:

পেশাগত উন্নয়নের জন্য প্রাপ্ত প্রশিক্ষণ:

b) ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার বোঝাপড়া

১. একজন শিক্ষক হিসেবে, আপনার কাছে ইনক্লুসন কী অর্থ বহন করে?

২. আপনি কি ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার সাথে সম্পর্কিত একটি ইতিবাচক অভিজ্ঞতা শেয়ার করতে পারেন?
৩. আপনার সহকর্মীদের সাথে ইনক্লুসন সম্পর্কে আপনার বোঝার পার্থক্য কীভাবে করেন?
শিক্ষকদের মধ্যে কি একটি ভাগ করা বোঝাপড়া আছে?
৪. ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষা সম্পর্কে শিক্ষকদের সবচেয়ে সাধারণ ভুল অনুমানগুলি কী?
৫. ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার সংজ্ঞা সম্পর্কে সবাই কি একমত? যদি হ্যাঁ, তাহলে তাদের সংজ্ঞাগুলি কী?

c) শ্রেণীকক্ষে অনুশীলন

৬. ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষায় আপনি কোন সফল অনুশীলনগুলি বাস্তবায়ন করেছেন?
৭. আপনি কীভাবে একে অপরকে এই অনুশীলনগুলি গ্রহণ করতে উৎসাহিত করছেন? কিছু উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন?
৮. আপনি কীভাবে বিভিন্ন শিক্ষার্থীদের সাহায্য করার জন্য অন্যান্য শিক্ষাবিদ বা বিশেষজ্ঞদের সাথে কাজ করেন? সহযোগিতা কীভাবে আমাদের ইনক্লুসিভ অনুশীলনের বোঝাপড়া এবং বাস্তবায়নকে প্রভাবিত করে?
৯. আপনার নিজস্ব ইনক্লুসিভ অনুশীলনগুলি উন্নত করতে স্কুল প্রশাসনের কাছ থেকে কী ধরনের সমর্থন প্রয়োজন?
১০. ইনক্লুসিভ অনুশীলন সম্পর্কে শিক্ষকদের মধ্যে একটি সমর্থন সম্প্রদায় কীভাবে গড়ে তোলা যায়?

d) কার্যকর বাস্তবায়নের জন্য অনুভূত প্রয়োজন

১১. স্কুলে ইনক্লুসনকে আরও বিকাশ ও প্রচার করতে স্কুল প্রশাসনের কী ধরনের সহায়তা প্রয়োজন বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
১২. শিক্ষকদের ইনক্লুসিভ সেটিংয়ে প্রয়োজনীয়তাগুলি কার্যকরভাবে পূরণের জন্য পেশাগত উন্নয়নে কী অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা উচিত?
১৩. কোন শিক্ষা বা পেশাগত উন্নয়নের সুযোগ ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার বিষয়ে আপনার বোঝাপড়া এবং অনুশীলনকে সমর্থন করবে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
১৪. আপনার মতে ইনক্লুসিভ শিক্ষার সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ উপাদান কী?
১৫. প্রাথমিক সেটিংয়ে ইনক্লুসন সমর্থন করার জন্য আপনার কী পরামর্শ থাকবে?

Consent Form

TITLE OF THE TOPIC RESEARCH

Teachers' Perception of Inclusive Education in Government Pre-primary Settings

Introduction

Participants are invited to participate in a research study on teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in government pre-primary settings. This study will be conducted as a part of my master's degree requirements from the Institute of Educational Development - BRAC University. This consent form is to inform participants about the study and to get their consent to participate.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore how teachers perceive inclusive education, particularly for children with diverse learning needs in government pre-primary settings. Participants inputs will help to identify the factors of inclusive practices in early childhood education.

Participation Requirements

If participants agree to take part, they will be asked to:

- Take part in an **In-depth Interview (IDI)** or **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**, which will take around 30-90 minutes.
- Participants will share their experiences of challenges and successes with inclusive practices.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants can choose not to take part or withdraw at any time without any penalty. If any participant withdraws, his/her data will not be included in the analysis.

Confidentiality

All data collected in this study will be kept confidential. Participants' responses will be de-identified and no personal information will be attached to their data. Results may be published, but participants will not be identifiable.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There are no major risks to participating in this study, although talking about personal experiences may elicit certain emotions. Their knowledge should be shared so as to influence and enhance inclusive education practices for the better for both teachers and children with diverse needs.

Contact Information

For any questions or concerns about this study or participation, please contact:

[Researcher's Name]

[Institution/Organization]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

Consent Statement

Participants who sign below indicate that they have read and understood the information outlined above and agree to participate in this study. Individuals will also receive a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your consideration of participating in this important research. Your experience is crucial for the development of inclusive education practices in pre-primary education.