

The status of un-served children in education  
**Children with Disability in Bangladesh**

A Situation Analysis

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## Preface

The *Status of Un-served Children in Education: Children with Disability in Bangladesh* has tried to analyze the status and situation of girl children in formal education at the primary and secondary levels. The report focuses on (i) salient statistics on disabled children, (ii) major policies, programs and affirmative actions taken by GoB, (iii) key constraints, and has recommended strategies and actions to overcome the constraints at the local and national levels.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used in preparing this report. Relevant data were gathered from secondary sources (BBS, BANBEIS, studies/reports done by experts in the field). The opinions of diverse stakeholders were sought through sharing meetings, focus group discussions and workshops with a view to reflect the stakeholder perception of the factors obstructing equal participation of disabled children as well as the strategies and actions for addressing the issues. In addition, members of teacher unions, Education Watch Groups women rights activists, education practitioners and researchers were also consulted on the issues.

The study has tried to identify both demand and supply side constraints of disabled children's equal access to and participation in education. The demand side constraints covered the socio-cultural constraints and financial constraints while the supply side investigation looked into inadequacies in provision of education and teaching learning process. Educational planning and management was found to be a special concern in terms of ensuring equity. The study has identified some short term and long-term steps that may be taken at both community, sub-national and national level.

The study suggested some advocacy intervention to promote education of children with disabilities. These include comprehensive effort to develop complementary policy and legislative measures, extensive motivation and sensitization to the school management, inclusive educational environment both infrastructure and behaviour, teachers capacity building, and appropriate teaching-learning materials.

We would like to express our gratitude to *Mr. A.H.M. Noman Khan and Dr. Md. Anisuzzaman* for carrying out the study and preparing the report. *Dr. Nafisur Rahman* deserves our special thanks for her valuable comments on the draft. Our

sincere gratitude to all those who participated in various sharing sessions during the study and on the enriched the draft report with their valuable suggestions. Their contribution to preparing the key messages and policy recommendations of this report is highly appreciated.

Our appreciation will remain incomplete if we do not acknowledge the contribution and wholehearted cooperation of the authorities of the sampled educational institutions, their teachers, students, parents and local and national education administration who provided the pertinent information for this study.

The report on the status of un-served children in education has been possible due to the generous support received from the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) through the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and Education International (EI). We acknowledge their assistance and express our deep appreciation for their continued cooperation.

Finally, we would like to request the readers, users and well wishers of CAMPE to send us their comments and suggestions regarding issue selection, improvement of the quality of research, presentation style and any other issue related to this. Our efforts will be worthwhile if this report could serve as a useful input into the key decision making process for improving quality of primary education in Bangladesh. Let us all work for building a better future, a Beautiful Bangladesh.

Dhaka  
28 November 2011

**Rasheda K. Choudhury**  
Executive Director, CAMPE

## Acronyms

ADL	: Activities of Daily Living
ASPBAE	: Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
BRAC	: A renowned NGO in Bangladesh
CAMPE	: Campaign for Popular Education, A national Coalition of NGOs
CBO	: Community Based Organization
CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSEF	: Civil Society Education Fund
CSO	: Civil Society Organisation
C-in-Ed	: Certificate in Education
DPE	: Directorate of Primary Education
DPO	: Disable People's Organization
EFA	: Education For All
EI	: Education International
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
GCE	: Global Campaign for Education
GoB	: Government of Bangladesh
ICF	: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICIDH	: International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps
IDI	: In-depth Interviews
IE	: Inclusive Education
LV	: Low Vision
MDGs	: Millennium Development Goals
NAPE	: National Academy for Primary Education
NFOWD	: National Forum of Organization Working with the Disabled
NGO	: Non-Government (voluntary development) Organisation
PEDP	: Primary Education Development Program
PTI	: Primary Teachers (Training) Institute
UEO	: Upazila Education Officer
UN	: United Nations
UNCRPD	: UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
URC	: Upazila Resource Centre
VI	: Visually Impaired
WHO	: World Health Organisation

## Executive Summary

CAMPE, under the CSEF initiative, conducted a study to analyze the status of enrolment of marginalized group of children with disability to generate evidences for influencing policy and practices towards achieving relevant target of EFA and goal of MDGs. Persons with disability are usually left out of development due to a lack of awareness among the people who design and manage developmental programs.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

With regard to situation of inclusion of children with disability in education, persons with disability are usually left out of development due to a lack of awareness among the people who design and manage developmental programs. The neglect that results from this lack of knowledge reinforces and multiplies the effects of the negative attitudes that already exist within families and communities.

Children with disabilities can be mainstreamed with the provision of reasonable accommodation in the school environment, changing the attitude of parents, teachers and other concerned people, ensuring training on inclusive education among the teachers, ensuring availability of education materials, and implication of existing policies. There are different types of educational setups exist in the country for children with disabilities like Special Education, Integrated Education and Mainstream Education. Besides all these setups, home-based education is largely seen when other options are not accessible.

In regards to exclusion of children with disabilities in education, a study in 2002 reflects that only 11% of children with disabilities within the school going age, with a simple majority of boys over girls have so far gained access to education. The served areas where the disability related activities have been carried out by development agencies showed an enrollment rate of 18%, while that for areas without disability

## Chapter 01: Introduction

activities showed a mere 4% enrollment. Common causes of non-enrollment among children with disabilities are: lack of adaptive ability with the school environment, no or low scopes of personal assistance, absence of accessible transportation, inaccessible infrastructure and environment, absence of implication of policy, negative attitude of the family, teachers and community. The rate of enrollment of children with disabilities in primary schools has been increased in the past few years because of policies and commitment of the Government of Bangladesh related to their education. Among the children being enrolled can't complete their primary education due to various reasons like lack of public transportation, inaccessible transportation, absence of trained teachers, absence of accessible toilet in schools, inaccessible school environment, negative attitude of parents, teachers and peer children, absence of specific policy, no or low implication of the existing policy related to education of children with disabilities etc. An unequal educational system, a rigid & unfriendly education curriculum, the ignorance and a lack of awareness of parents, compounded with the inadequate knowledge of teachers and the unfriendly environment existing in most of the institutions, has done very little to promote education of children with disabilities in Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh along with the development partners including NGOs, Disable People's Organization (DPOs) and civil societies have been taking a wide range of initiatives in implementing disability activities in the country but the access of children with disabilities to education is extremely limited.

The study suggested some advocacy Intervention to promote Education of Children with Disabilities. These includes comprehensive effort to develop complementary policy and legislative measures, extensive motivation and sensitization to the school management to consider such issues, inclusive educational environment both infrastructure and behavior, creating new provision for teachers in each school, comprehensive awareness raising initiative, adaptation of infrastructure for accessibility, support services, teachers capacity building through training and exposure, development and dissemination of appropriate teaching- learning materials and education materials. The study also suggested some role of CAMPE in facilitating education of children with disabilities.

It is noteworthy that Interventions on disability issues have been expanding at a rapid pace in recent years soon after the adoption of the UNCRPD. Especially in the field of education for children with disabilities, interventions need to be comprehensive and combined with all stakeholders concerning mainstream and special education.

### 1.1. Background

Education is a key to enhancing human capability and socioeconomic development. Bangladesh faces constraint with high rate of poverty along with income and wealth inequity. Quality in Education is a serious issue across South Asia. Special program needs to be designed for identifying the excluded zones and bring the children at school.

The Civil Society Education Forum (CSEF) in Bangladesh aims to strengthen civil society groups including NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, Teachers' Unions, Researchers, Academia, Media and Community to influence the education policy and monitor the state performance towards Education for All (EFA) through evidence based advocacy. Specific objectives of CSEF are to (i) enabling civil society to help "mobilize strong national political commitment to education, develop national action plans and enhance investment" through perspective building and evidence based advocacy; (ii) facilitating the "engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development" at different levels towards EFA; and (iii) capacity building of relevant stakeholders to monitor the state performance in education that lead to strengthened GO-NGO-civil society collaboration.

With regard to marginalization and exclusion, CAMPE under the CSEF initiative, aims to analyze the status of enrolment with specific focus on Girls' Education, Child Labour and Children with Disability based on the information collected through other research/studies (e.g. Education Watch, Community Watch, educating children with difficult circumstances, mainstreaming education, study on disability prevalence, situation of the women with disability, etc.) and generate evidences for influencing policy and practices towards achieving EFA and relevant MDGs. This study is focused on the education of children with disability in Bangladesh.

### 1.2. Definition of Disability

Disability work has been viewed over the centuries as a charity and then as a welfare issue. It is only in the last decade that it began to be recognized as a development issue. With more organizations gradually shifting into the rights based perspective, Disability work is just gaining some momentum to be recognized as a rights-based & equity-based issue.

The development of the WHO International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH) was an important & critical step in better understanding the concept of disability. However, since its first publication in 1980, there has been considerable debate over its formulation & about its practical application in a world, which refuses to fit into neat and definitive classifications.

It needs to be recognized that disability, in part, is an experience of oppression and of difference. Without an acknowledgement of this experience, no definition or concept of disability will ever fully reflect the real issues faced by people with disabilities.

After nine years of international revision efforts coordinated by the WHO, the World Health Assembly in May 2001, approved the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). ICF is a classification of health & health related domains that describe: (a) body functions & structures; (b) activities & participation; and (c) environmental factors. The domains are classified from body, individual and societal perspectives as follows:

**Impairment:** *Impairment is the loss or abnormality of a body structure or of a physiological or psychological function.*

**Activity Limitation:** *Activity is the performance of a task or action by an individual including physical and mental functions (Grasping, seeing, remembering past events etc). When a person is unable to do any of these activities or may do them only with discomfort, this denotes activity limitation.*

**Participation:** *Participation is an individual involvement in life situations in relation to health conditions, body functions and structures, activities and contextual factors.*

In Bangladesh however, the Disability Welfare Act adopted in the National Parliament in April 2001 has provided a set of national definitions and classifications of disability, which still, almost entirely, adheres to a medical rather than social model.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental

freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (e) Recognizing that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

### 1.3. Objective of the Study

The key objective of the study is to explore the situation of children with disabilities in education, barriers to inclusion, the consequence of exclusion and to identify the possible ways and means to overcome the situation. It is expected that (i) numbers of Government agencies and development partner will use the research findings as source of information that would facilitate the planning process; (ii) a constructive debate would be initiated among the stakeholders including concerned government agencies, development partners, NGOs, Teachers' Union and other civil society groups to raise awareness and for strengthening education system through engage in advocacy initiatives towards policy and practice change; (iii) contribute in generating further information for use by the regional and international platforms along with educational institutions as reference for evidence in their advocacy initiatives; and (iv) strengthen governance through participation of local level stakeholders.

### 1.4. Methodology

Qualitative method was used for the study. Secondary data was also collected to compare with the current situation in the country. The researcher had freedom to use the appropriate methodology to accomplish the task. Respondents were selected purposively from two districts, one from North- west and another from South-east. The major methodologies followed in the study were: i. Review and analysis of relevant documents, ii In-depth Interview with concerned stakeholders, and iii Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

**In-depth Interview:** A checklist was developed and used for in-depth interviews on specific issues related to barriers of inclusion of persons with disabilities.

**Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with the different groups of people. The FGDs have covered the discussion on the following areas related to the situation of education of children with disabilities at different levels, the barriers in inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schooling, possible way to overcome the challenges etc.

Following table shows area wise methods and the respondents of the qualitative survey:

Area	Method	Respondents
Gaibandha	FGD	Persons with Disabilities, Parents/ Family members, TEO/ ATEO
	IDI	Teachers, District Primary Education Officers, Consultant DPE, Journalist, Teachers Association Secretary, Education Watch Group representative,
Chittagong	FGD	Persons with disabilities, Parents/ Family members, Teachers (Primary and Secondary),
	IDI	Social Services Officer, Head Teacher,

## Chapter 02: Study Findings

### 2.1. Situation of inclusion of children with disability in education

Persons with disability are usually left out of development due to inadequate understanding and awareness among the general people and also the people who design and manage developmental programs. They are often not aware of the extreme difficulties faced by persons with disabilities and most do not have access to gain the skills and knowledge that would enable them to include persons with disability and their families in development programs. The neglect that results from this lack of knowledge reinforces and multiplies the effects of the negative attitudes that already exist within families and communities. And most of the times it is not the impairment rather the attitudinal and environmental factors that a person with disability encounters in everyday life that cause his or her exclusion from society.

#### 2.1.1. Mainstreaming education for children with disabilities

Researches indicate that children with disabilities can be mainstreamed with the provision of reasonable accommodation in the school environment, changing the attitude of parents, teachers and other concerned people, ensuring training on inclusive education among the teachers, ensuring availability of education materials, and implication of existing policies. Since Ministry of Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education are the concerned ministries to ensure the education of all children in the country to reach the goal of Universal Primary Education MDG. It is assumed that more numbers of children with disabilities are getting enrolled in mainstreaming education after getting the National Education Policy 2010 approved.



On the other hand, since the Ministry of Social welfare is the nodal ministry to ensure protection of rights of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh, education of children with severe or profound disability could be ensured by building more provision of special schools to meet special educational needs of these children, ensuring teachers' training on special education and ensuring availability of

teaching learning materials and education materials in alternative formats. Children with severe and profound disabilities are referred to any special school and/ or education programme run by the Department of Social Services or NGOs.

### 2.1.2 Access to education for children with disabilities in Bangladesh

There are different types of educational setups exist in the country for children with disabilities. These include mainly;

- Special Education
- Integrated Education
- Mainstream Education

Besides all these setups, home-based education is largely seen when other options are not accessible. Home-based education is mainly depending on parents and family members to provide education for their disabled children at home.

#### Special Education

Special education is an environment where particular types of disabled children are enrolled in educational setups. The total structure of such education along with teaching curriculum, methods, teaching and learning materials etc are focused on addressing the needs and requirements of those particular types of disabled learners. In most cases, the special education are being run with residential setups with total care of learners by the trained professionals.



#### Integrated Education

This approach refers to a system where opportunities are created for special care of disabled learners in a mainstream school. There are resource teachers who provide special care services for the disabled learners separately and facilitate the same learners to participate in the mainstream school. The school

offers residential facilities for disabled learners along with other educational support material and other technical assistance.

### Mainstream education for disabled learners

Mainstream schools, run by the government, non-government and private sectors, which includes all learners including systematic or casual inclusions of learner with disabilities. There are influence of inclusive education approach to prepare learners oriented education environment irrespective of disabled non-disabled as well as all other marginalized group of learners. This allows enrollment of learners with disabilities up to certain degrees in mainstream educational setups. The approach intends to accommodate disabled learners by creating disability friendly educational environment.

A study titled “Educating children in difficult circumstances: Children with disabilities” conducted by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Bangladesh reflects the situation of education of children with disabilities. Major findings of the study indicate that, only 11% of children with disabilities within the school going age, with a simple majority of boys over girls have so far gained access to education. The served areas where the disability related activities have been carried out by development agencies showed an enrollment rate of 18%, while that for areas without disability activities showed a mere 4% enrollment.

### 2.1.3. Exclusion of Children with Disabilities in Education

Education of persons with disabilities is the state obligation, since the state party has signed and ratified the UNCRPD and signed the Optional Protocol of UNCRPD. A large percentage of persons with disabilities are still out of education. The rate of enrollment among persons with disabilities is very low. Common causes of non-enrollment among children with disabilities are: lack of adaptive ability with the school environment, no or low scopes of personal assistance, absence of accessible transportation, inaccessible infrastructure and environment, absence of implication



of policy, negative attitude of the family, teachers and community.

*Quote: ‘Parents are becoming aware on the importance of education of their disabled children. Teachers are becoming positive towards the education of*

*children with disabilities and children with disabilities are visible in mainstream educational facilities.....' (An UEO, Gaibandha)*

All the children who enroll in the primary education can't complete their primary education or secondary education. Survey revealed that children with mild disability usually complete their primary and secondary education. Some of them also complete higher education with minimum support from the family and educational institutes. Children with moderate disability are able to continue their education if they get an inclusive learning friendly environment in the school except the children with moderate intellectual disability. Children with disabilities are mainly dropped out from primary or secondary education due to absence of accessible transportation, inaccessible infrastructure and environment, absence of trained teachers on Inclusive education, unavailability of education materials in alternative formation, lack of toilet facilities etc.

*Quote: Stipend plays a vital role in enrollment in education. Once a child is not given any stipend for his or her disability s/he can't continue her/ his education. (Teachers, Gaibandha)*

#### **2.1.4. Enrollment and continuation in mainstreaming education**

Survey revealed that children with mild to moderate disability could easily be mainstreamed and they are getting enrolled in mainstream education facilities. Children with disabilities not enrolled in mainstream educational facilities are mainly due to mobility restriction among the physical and visual impairment, rigidity in curriculum, inaccessibility in education materials, unavailability of accessible transportation facilities, unwillingness of family members, difficulty to extend personal assistance from the family and or educational institutes, lack of skill and confidence of teachers to manage the children with disability etc.

*Quote: 'Children with mild to moderate disabilities are getting enrolled in mainstream education facilities. Our attitudes on the education of children with disabilities have been changed after participating the training on Inclusive Education in the Centre for Disability in Development.' (Teachers from Gaibandha).*



Survey revealed that all children do not have equal access to primary education facilities in Bangladesh. Having the Compulsory Primary Education Act 1990, all children are not enrolled in primary education in Bangladesh. Most of primary schools are trying to enroll all children from their catchment area due to recent instruction from the department of primary education. In recent years enrollment in primary education has been remarkably increased in Bangladesh after introducing stipends for girl children and children with disabilities (MDG report 2009). Among the children who are out of primary education are mainly children with severe disability, multiple disability, working children (support family in agriculture or other income-generating activities), street children, children of different ethnic community, migration within the country, etc.

*Quote: Currently Government of Bangladesh is keen to reduce the exclusion of all children by increasing the rate of enrollment upto 100%. We have reached the target of enrollment in Gaibandha district. (District Primary Education Officer, Gaibandha).*

#### **2.1.5. Causes of non- enrollment in the primary education**

Large percentages of persons with disabilities are still out of education. The rate of enrollment among persons with disabilities is very low. Common causes of non-enrollment among children with disabilities are: lack of adaptive ability with the school environment, no or low scopes of personal assistance, absence of accessible transportation, inaccessible infrastructure and environment, absence of implication of policy, negative attitude of the family, teachers and community.

According to the respondents there are some key causes of non-enrollment in the primary education in Bangladesh which include:

**Poverty:** Low family income restrains the family to send their children to primary school. Some of the children are involved in assisting family in daily labours. Neither the parents nor the children express their willingness to get enroll in education. The percentage of this group of children is decreasing due to Government Initiatives to include 100% children in the primary schools

**Disability:** disability of the children decrease the interests and confidence of the family to get their children enroll in primary schools. Distance of the schools is one of the key barriers of every child especially for the girl child and children with disabilities. Some children especially children with disabilities may require

some assistance from his or her family and community in his or her mobility. Low cooperation from the family or community restrict the children with disabilities from the enrollment in education.

**Inaccessible environment:** Infrastructural accessibility in the School Buildings and overall accessible environment is required for children with disabilities. A number of children with disabilities are out of education only due to the infrastructural barriers.

**Negative Attitude** of the family, community and School: Negative attitude may be one of the major barriers of enrollment from primary school. It is more prevalent among the children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

**Language:** Although large majority of the population speak Bangla in Bangladesh there exist around 40 different languages among the people of different ethnicity. Bangla is the only medium of instruction in all of the government and non-government primary schools including non-formal education programmes of different NGOs. Schools in the ethnic communities mostly face difficulty to get Bangla spoken teachers. Children also face difficulty to learn Bangla as a second language which is the key cause of their out of education.

**In addition,** a considerable numbers of children with disabilities, especially in the case of girls, parents have chosen home based education and in case of boys it's Hafezia Madrashahs.

### 2.1.6. Dropout of children from primary education

The rate of enrollment of children with disabilities in primary schools has been increased in the past few years because of policies and commitment of the Government of Bangladesh related to their education. Among the children being enrolled can't complete their primary education due to various reasons like lack of public transportation, inaccessible transportation, absence of trained teachers, absence of accessible toilet in schools, inaccessible school environment, negative attitude of parents, teachers and peer children, absence of specific policy, no or low implication of the existing policy related to education of children with disabilities etc.

### 2.1.7. Dropout of children from secondary education

Department of Primary Education of the Government of Bangladesh has

introduced Primary School Completion examination from 2009. It is assumed that this examination may have reduced the rate of enrollment of children with mild intellectual disability into secondary education. A large majority of children are dropped out from the secondary education due to various reasons. Key reasons of dropout from secondary education are almost similar to the reasons of dropout from primary education. Besides the above mentioned reasons of drop out, following are distinctive causes of drop out from the secondary education:

Unavailability of education materials in alternative format: Education materials in alternative format including Braille materials, reading materials for persons with low vision and other related materials are mandatory to continue education. These materials are not available in the market. A little percentage of persons with visual impairment, low vision, hearing impairment get access to the materials in alternative format with the support of some specialized organizations.

Exclusion in classrooms: Almost all the teachers at secondary schools are not trained to use sign language to communicate with persons with hearing and speech impairment. Students having the speech and hearing impairment face difficulty to follow the classes and obtain required achievement scores in their examinations.

### 2.1.8. Teachers' training and education curriculum

Children with disabilities need to have access to school, and classroom infrastructure which will enhance their easy movement in classrooms. Accessibility however, is not restricted to physical infrastructure and goes much beyond passageways, stairs, land marks & rails for true blind, contrasts for LV children and ramps to recreational areas, paved pathways, and door handles as well as it concerns attitudinal and behavioral factors existing within the human environment (head teachers, teachers, fellow students, school management committees, parents of sighted and non-disabled children and children with disabilities). Many of these barriers could be easily reduced with appropriate teachers training curriculum and education curriculum.

Many schools have large numbers of student in each class and some teachers are reluctant to work with marginalized groups considering it an additional and unrecognized workload. Modification of teacher training is a must to ensure quality of education and promote IE. It's also necessary to strengthen the supportive supervision to ensure accountability and continued educational

needs of teachers and schools. It should result in the creation of child-centered teaching-learning environments that are both welcoming and responsive to learning, which is different for different children. Just knowing theoretically that all children have the same right to education based on equal opportunities is not enough. Implementing such principles requires pro-actively creating equal opportunities in inclusive teaching-learning environments together with children, teachers, parents and communities.

### **2.1.9. Suitability of the education method for persons with disabilities**

Since different methods exist in every society to ensure education of persons with disabilities as suggested by concerned experts the study tried to explore those options. Majority of the respondents of FGDs and IDIs opted for Inclusive Education to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities in education. Majority of the respondents indicated diverse prerequisite for mainstreaming children with disabilities in education which include adequate arrangement to accommodate different types of children with disabilities in one class room, appropriate teaching learning materials, proper educational materials, and other preparations required for inclusion. Education cost decreases in inclusive education setting. Additional supports required to promote inclusive education include individual education planning, lessons planning and using teaching learning materials teaching methods and techniques, appropriate seating arrangement etc. have positive and underneath effect on the education methods for persons with disabilities in mainstream educational settings.

### **2.1.10. Feature of common barriers of inclusion**

As indicated earlier one of the key barriers of inclusion is attitudinal barrier. Main reasons of persisting negative attitude among parents, family members, teachers, policy makers, and other stakeholders towards persons with disabilities are due to the lack of knowledge and understanding about the potentials of persons with disabilities.

*Quote: 'The attitude is gradually changing among the teachers towards the persons with disabilities after receiving training and having the skills to address the requirement of persons with special educational needs' (Education Advisor, DPE, Gaibandha)*

Infrastructural barrier is also one of the key obstacles for inclusion of children with disabilities in education. These restrict the mobility of children with disabilities.

A large number of families of children with disabilities can't afford the costs of assistive devices of persons with disabilities. Without the medical care and rehabilitation exercises some of the children with disabilities can't move on their own. When there are no accessible roads, schools, and transportation then it becomes very challenging for a child with disability to participate in education. Although there are policies and acts favorable to the education of persons with disabilities, a large number of children are out of education due to lack of applications of those policies.

### **2.1.11. Respondent's opinion to overcome the barriers of inclusion**

To overcome the barriers of inclusion it is necessary to identify the causes of exclusion. Then it will be easy to facilitate better inclusion of children with disabilities in education. According to the responses of teachers, education officers and technical experts, necessary measures need to be taken to reduce teacher- student ratio in school set-up. Teachers need to be trained to address the needs of children with various types and degrees of disabilities. It is necessary to take initiatives to sensitize concerned stakeholders about the education of persons with disabilities. It is also necessary to develop the educational materials in alternative format within affordable price. The government should ensure distribution of the education materials to all learners with disabilities. It is essential to make the school buildings accessible by making reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. Accessible roads, transportation need to be ensured for the persons with disabilities. Provision to create access on medical and rehabilitation care is mandatory for persons with disabilities. Appropriate assistive devices are required to ensure mobility of persons with disabilities and participation in education.

## **2.2. National commitment in addressing education of children with disabilities**

Bangladesh has made significant gain in terms of enrolment of children into schools over the last few years in-line with the MDG. Children with disabilities have just started coming to the schools. A vast majority of them are still out of mainstream schools.

Education is the fundamental human right for all children. It has been more than a decade since the declaration of the United Nations "Education for All" in 1990. Government of Bangladesh made declaration of "Education for All" and

introduced Compulsory Primary Education through constitutional means.

The United Nations granted the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” to facilitate education for all children. Article 23 of the convention stated that children with disabilities should have right to special care and assistance to ensure their fullest possible inclusion in development. Bangladesh is committed both nationally and internationally for its proper implementation.

“Education for All” was also emphasized in the Salamanca Declaration in 1994 in the World Conference on Special Needs considering a huge number of people including people with disabilities are out of education, not even basic education.

The Dakar Framework for Action has called for a commitment to the achievement of education of all (EFA) goals and targets for every citizen and for every society. It has further committed to ensuring that all children have access to complete, free and compulsory education of good quality by 2015.

Bangladesh Disability Welfare Act 2001 provides legislative support to ensure education of children with disabilities. The Bangladesh National Policy on Disability 1995 indicated creation of options for proper education of children and people with disabilities.

Bangladesh has endorsed the goals and strategies as set out in the World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000 wherein a commitment was made to the achievement of Education for all (EFA) goals and targets for every citizen and for every society. There are other international agreements linked to inclusive/ responsive quality EFA ratified by the Government of Bangladesh.

### **2.3. Initiatives to promote education of children with disabilities in Bangladesh**

The Government of Bangladesh along with the development partners including NGOs, Disable People’s Organization (DPOs) and civil societies have been taking a wide range of initiatives in implementing disability activities in the country. Access of children with disabilities to education is extremely limited. An unequal educational system, a rigid & unfriendly

education curriculum, the ignorance and a lack of awareness of parents, compounded with the inadequate knowledge of teachers and the unfriendly environment existing in most of the institutions, has done very little to promote education of children with disabilities in Bangladesh.

Ministry of Social Welfare is the lead ministry to coordinate interventions towards addressing the disability issues in Bangladesh. The Department of Social Services has taken-up schemes and program with specific agenda of intervention. The government has undertaken long term and short term schemes to support intervention addressing disability. A National Foundation for the Development of Disabled Person has been established to provide necessary guidance and support to the government and NGOs regarding disability issues. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has included Inclusive Education in Primary Education Plans. Followed by an instruction from the office of the Prime Minister of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, all government ministries and departments have designated a Focal Point Person to address the issue of disability. Parliamentary Caucus has been formed to reinforce policy and legislative guidance to promote rights of persons with disability.

With regards to special education, the Government is operating 13 primary schools for people with disabilities - seven schools for those with hearing impairment, five for visually impaired children, and one school for those with intellectual disabilities. Private voluntary organizations are also involved in institutional based educational rehabilitation through five schools for people with hearing impairment, one for those with visual impairment, and three schools for those with intellectual disabilities, along with their branches in different districts.

At the high school level, the Government is running 64 integrated programs attached to regular schools, while private voluntary development organizations are operating a number of schools each for those with visual and hearing impairments.

While the country has an estimated 1.6 million children with disabilities within the primary school-going age, the total number of children enrolled in special & integrated education programs is estimated to be far below 5,000. In terms of manpower in special education, 15 post-graduate teachers are trained each

year through the Department of Special Education under Dhaka University. Several other teachers' training programs are also being offered by other private/voluntary organizations. The Government has also developed a National Center for Special Education, and it is likely that there will be a significant increase in the numbers of teachers trained in special education.

A study findings in 2002 reflects that with all these efforts combined, only 4% of children with disabilities within the primary school-going age have so far been enrolled in education<sup>1</sup>.

Bangladesh has two independent ministries catering to education – the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education – which are striving to meet the goal of “Education for all by 2015”. Yet the education of the children with disabilities is under the purview of the Ministry of Social Welfare, which plays no part to achieve the universal goal. Among the staggering 96% children who are still out of education, a major (70%) portion could have been enrolled in the regular national education program with very little effort. This could be brought under a planned Inclusive Education Program. The remaining 30% could be enrolled under Integrated and Special Education Programs. This has not happened as yet.

Along with the formal education program, Bangladesh has a very strong and vast non-formal education structure, mostly operated by the NGOs. The largest stakeholder in this area is a NGO popularly known as BRAC which operates 35,000 schools itself, and also supports an estimated 25,000 more operated by other different NGOs, following a curriculum developed by BRAC. A recent development in this area is a policy level decision adopted by BRAC to proactively include at least 3 disabled children in each of their own 35,000

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<sup>1</sup>*Educating Children in Difficult Circumstances: Children with Disabilities, (ESTEEM-2). The study was conducted by Center for Services & Information on Disability (CSID) for the Primary & Mass Education Division (PMED) under the Department of Primary Education, Government of Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Cambridge University Consortium. The PMED has since become a separate Directorate under the independent Ministry of Primary & Mass Education.*

schools. The number will gradually be increased. This one decision alone will ensure access of 105,000 disabled into education, and if all the other schools supported by BRAC also follow suit, another 75,000 children will gain access to education without much hindrance. This could then be followed up with other NGOs operating non-formal education programs across the country.

The National Forum of Organization Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) (the coordinating body at NGO level) is concerned with the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities as well as protects and safeguards against any infringements of the existing rights and privileges. The NFOWD is also concerned for coordination with NGOs and facilitate liaison with Government and NGO intervention at both central and local level. Disability Right Watch Group has been formed to facilitate better implementation of the national policies including UNCRPD.

There are significant roles played by the DPOs in the country to strengthen the voice of persons with disability for equal rights and participation. Self help groups are formed at different levels facilitated by the DPOs. National and local network bodies of individual categories of disability exist in the country like Association of Visual Impaired Persons, Deaf Federation, Parents Society of Intellectually disabled etc. Besides, centres are operated by NGOs addressing needs of individual categories of disability like Autism, Mental health problems, Cerebral Palsy, etc.

## Chapter 03: Suggested Intervention to Promote Education of Children with Disabilities

### General Policy Issues

The first step is to change policy to support learners with disabilities along with other students. Educational policies at different levels, national and local should include options for inclusion of eligible learners with disabilities in nearby schools. Concerned stakeholders should take initiatives to reduce contradiction in legislative and policy mandate in different national acts and policies like National policy on Disability, National Education policy, Employment policy etc.

Comprehensive effort should be made to develop complementary policy and legislative measures to facilitate education for learners with disabilities and special needs. The mandates and national plans for achieving goals of Education for All should include children with disabilities in mainstream education practices. To promote the mainstreaming education of learners with disabilities, it is essential to initiate process to include the education of children with disabilities in the existing compulsory primary education act 1990.

Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has strategically included the concept of inclusive education which has accommodated in primary education development plan. The inclusion of learners with disabilities in primary schools has been initiated in some schools but still in limited scale and confined with mild disability. These schools require special needs support targeting all learners with special needs.

The Education Board needs to be involved as it is concerned with the system of education and rules of examination for all learners including learners with special needs. It requires at least a reasonable extra time for some severe type of disability like Cerebral palsy, visual impairment, etc.

The National Curriculum and Text book Board is concerned with the development and supplies of text books for all students from primary to higher secondary education. The regular media of the text is the print media. Recently the electronic version has been introduced where the texts are available in the internet. But none of the media is accessible for the Visually Impaired (VI) learners. The NCTB should take the responsibility to provide text in Braille for the VI student

### School management

School management is the major concern for inclusion of children with disabilities in regular school. Presently the management is not adequately aware on the situation of children with disabilities. The school management policy should include the issues of education of learners with disabilities. Extensive motivation and sensitization would enable the school management to consider such issues. National policy for management of primary education should create options to enroll eligible learners with disabilities.

### Education environment

The educational environment both infrastructure and behavioral should consider the handicapping situation of learners with disability. Positive attitude throughout the school community with effective cooperation of the people concerned, like the teachers, peers, school staff etc are the vital factor for inclusion. The teachers have the significant role to initiate and establish such environment.

### New provision to facilitate inclusion

The provision for six teachers in each school has developed which creates opportunity to designate one teacher with disability to promote inclusive education knowledge and skills. The 'degree' or 'level' of a person with disability is not defined clearly to the concerned authority, which creates misunderstanding in many areas particularly during the time of enrollment in schools. Due to this gap, children with various types of special needs are mostly excluded from mainstream schooling.

### Awareness raising

Provide disability awareness to parents groups, community members and leaders to support inclusion of disabled children in schools is essential for inclusion of children with disabilities. Massive community awareness, sensitization and motivation are critical to successful inclusion. The disability concerned organization and community development organization could play vital role in awareness rising on the issues. Systematic inclusion of disability issues in general awareness activities through development and mass media is the single most strategy to raise people's awareness.

### Information dissemination and research

There is still lack of proper information on education of disabled children within concerned agencies and actors. Agencies like ministry and departments of

education are even in dark of information, which resulted negative attitude and made reluctant of inclusion of disabled learners in mainstream primary education. Adequate information on good practices of inclusive education would encourage such inclusion. There had been few research on inclusive education but not widely disseminated. Some new research initiatives have been undertaken by both government and non-government sectors, which needs wide circulation to all concerned. There should be information flow to both planners and implementing actors to enhance common understanding.

Children with disability have enormous skill and potential, which requires precise exposure and appropriate demonstration. Their illustration of talent can be exhibit through developing a documentary of successful cases. This will work as a strong tool of sensitization and motivation for others about the productivity of children with disabilities.

### **Accessibility**

For any inclusive education setup, the issue of accessibility and its adaptation is the foremost pre-requisite, which needs to be included in guideline and instruction manual of training. The purpose of this guideline is mainly to provide clear information about what type of accessibility and similarly an adaptation a child with special needs require based on his/her indispensable necessity. In this regard, the study team observed that there is no specific guideline and instructions for such accessibility and adaptation for special needs children at different concerned level.

Children with disabilities need to have access to school, and classroom infrastructure which will enhance their easy movement in classrooms. Accessibility however, is not restricted to physical infrastructure and goes much beyond passageways, stairs, land marks & rails for true blind, contrasts for LV children and ramps to recreational areas, paved pathways, and door handles as well as it concerns attitudinal and behavioral factors existing within the human environment (head teachers, teachers, fellow students, school management committees, parents of sighted and non-disabled children and children with disabilities). Many of these barriers could be easily reduced with appropriate teachers training curriculum and education curriculum

### **Facilities and support services**

The facilities and support services although minimal in general schooling, it is usual to have misconception that inclusion of disabled learners in

regular school will extensively enhance the support requirement. The findings from practices indicate a nominal enhancement of support services for creation of options for disabled learners in regular school. Providing trained teachers to deal with learners with special need is a priority support requirement for such inclusion. This can be made available by providing short courses of training to existing teachers or involving resource teachers from integrated schooling. Inclusion of disability issues in regular teacher's training curriculum will enrich skills of teachers to deal with learners with special needs. A minimum level of support materials is required to create access to learning of disabled learners such as Braille, large print, frames etc. There is a need for creating accessibility for learners with physical and visual impairment which involves little cost and could be managed by mobilizing community people.

### **Teacher's training**

Disability should be included it in the curriculum in basic training of teachers. It can also be provided as a refresher or in-service training. Both teachers and supervisors will require training. A short-term basic course can be given which is followed up with more advanced course on specific techniques such as simple sign language or special techniques for working with the visually impaired. Children with multiple disabilities such as cerebral palsy, intellectual disability and problem behavior are more challenging and the teacher will need to have more skills and motivation. Teachers only focus on developing lesson plans considering the general standard of learners without addressing the needs of children with special needs. Teachers do not practice to develop lesson plans addressing special needs children with other children. The most critical aspect of the current educational set up is the ratio of teacher and students.

The ratio currently follows over 1:50, which is not convenient to maintain the regular pace of education. Under this situation, it will create a more complex situation if children with disabilities are there in the class. This demands a serious attention to minimize the number of students and teachers ratio.

It is important to focus and create a positive mindset and environment about the education of children with disabilities in relevant training module. In order to execute, there is the need to include topics on attitude change in training content of relevant training courses.

There is insufficient application and dissemination of knowledge, skills and

learning on disability concerned issues in URC instructor training which limits the transformation of knowledge to the teachers on the issue.

### Teaching curriculum and materials

Teaching curriculum should be adjusted with addressing the need of all children including the need of learners with disability. Additional instructional support needs to be provided to the learners with disabilities. Assessment procedure and tools needs to be adopted based on the special need of group of learners with disabilities.

NAPE is presently reviewing the curriculum and action plan based on the level of an individual's competency. During the review process, the issue of disability needs to be considered adequately.

NAPE has already taken initiative to restructure its existing C-in-Ed curriculum in required areas and will continue in upcoming Program III. This gives an opportunity to put forth the issue of disability and inclusive education for inclusion in respective policy issues.

20000 teachers receive C-in-Ed training every year. Systematic inclusion of disability concerned issues in all C-in-Ed and training curriculums/manual could play a significant role in promoting Inclusive Education for children with special needs country wide.

NAPE and PTI intend to include children with special needs in an inclusive setup but no master trainer has yet been developed to deal the process with. The trained master trainer could facilitate better role for such systematic inclusion.

### Method of assessment

The issue of disability is not included yet in the assessment guideline. On the other hand, government has already introduced 15 mins, additional time for persons with disabilities during the examination period which has no practical manifestation in the assessment guideline so far.

### Suggested role of CAMPE in facilitating education of children with disabilities

CAMPE is a forum where different actors involved in education programs exchange ideas and experience, debate issues and disseminate information on

issues of mutual interest. Research campaign and advocacy are considered to be effective instrument for achieving this goal.

CAMPE during its regular meetings / workshops / seminars / dialogues / round tables / conferences / national consultations with professional bodies and people's representatives may discuss the issue of education of children with disabilities, existing barriers of inclusion and make people aware on the process to overcome the barriers.

Since policy advocacy with the Government, NGOs and aid partners is one of the two key tasks of this unit. CAMPE may play a vital role for the promotion of mainstreaming education of children with disabilities in Bangladesh. To make the inclusion effective CAMPE may contribute to the promotion of education materials published in alternative formats by specialized organizations.

CAMPE also need to focus on developing and maintaining linkage and network with national and international forums and institutions related to education of children with disabilities. CAMPE it need to concentrate on developing/ Producing Advocacy and Motivational materials on promoting rights of education of persons with disabilities.

Observance of national and International days and events on disability at national and regional / divisional levels to promote social awareness and reinforce cooperation of NGOs involved in similar programs may expedite the issue of education of persons with disabilities to the government and other relevant stakeholders.

### Conclusion

Interventions on disability issues have been expanding at a rapid pace in recent years soon after the adoption of the UNCRPD. Over the last few years, a platform has been created in Bangladesh with the collaborative efforts and resource generation among the Government and the NGO sectors to address the issues of disability. Under this drive the issues concerning the education of learners with disabilities also been touched. There had been some progress undoubtedly, but its extent is still too inadequate in comparison to the population of people with disabilities and the magnitude of the needs and demands on these issues.

Especially in the field of education for children with disabilities, interventions need to be comprehensive and combined with all stakeholders concerning mainstream and special education. General sensitization on the barriers and potentialities of disable children/people require to be accelerated more.

The government of Bangladesh is committed to ensure equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities by declaring solidarity with international treaties and its constitutional obligations. Education is the rights of all citizens that include persons with disabilities. The complexity of education of children with disabilities has to be considered equally as others. The basic principle of inclusive education is to create a positive environment of learning together wherever possible regardless of difficult circumstances or differences. The situation of enrollment of children with disability is in a positive change process. The rate of enrollment in non-formal primary, pre-primary and primary education has significantly increased over the last 10 years. The enrollment of new learners in different set-ups is also increasing. The educational institutions need to be adequately prepared to address the challenges of continued increase of enrollment of learners with disabilities. . It has been proved as commendable that a larger percentage of children with special need or disability are eligible and accessible to inclusive education. It needs systematic and comprehensive initiative concerning all levels of national education management.

In such a situation, if relevant policies are not formulated and adopted to create an enabling environment for inclusion, if the mainstream education programs are not inclusive of opportunities for children with disabilities, and if specific proactive measures are not taken up to ensure the enrollment of children with disabilities into mainstream education, Bangladesh, as a Nation, shall never be in a position to achieve its mandate of educating all by the year 2015.

## Case Study-1

### Asif's journey to a new life

Asif is a 10 year old child suffering from CP since he was 3 months old. His mother left him when he was a 2day old baby and his grandmother is taking care of him. He resides in a remote village of Pabna district of Bangladesh. In such condition where it was difficult for him to do his everyday work with minimal hassle, the dream of getting onto his feet and obtaining normal education was beyond his and his family members. A physically challenged boy like Asif could only lie in one corner of the veranda and stare outside watching his friends play and go to the school in a group. He was identified by one of the rehabilitation worker of project when he was seven and half years old. The Rehab Worker talked to Asif's family that proper therapy could help improving the impairment condition of Asif and allow him to go to school. Asif's family members did not pay heed to the Rehab worker as they have consulted many physicians who could do very little for his treatment. Hence his inclusion into education was also nothing but a dream for them.

After a long conversation, the project Rehab Worker and Social Communicator managed to convince Asif's family and made them agreed for therapeutic service for their son. Asif was provided with physiotherapy, a knee gaiter for sustained stretch to the knee flexors and a walker. Asif started to improve gradually and learned to walk within 6 months continued support.

Now the question to get him admitted in a nearby school. The teachers of the Govt. Primary school didn't want to admit him, showing the excuse of physically challenged child. The Rehab Worker organized meetings with the School Management Committee, Education Officer and the school teachers and finally motivated them for enrollment of Asif in the school. That was possible as the government has recently announced inclusion of learners with disabilities in its Primary Education Development Plan II.

After enrollment, Asif confronted two major problems that the school being too far away from his residence and secondly the toilet was not accessible. The management allowed him to use the teachers toilet which was adopted by the project. The project has made necessary adaptation in school infrastructure. The project has also made arrangement for training of teachers, provided

education materials to teach learners with disabilities. There had been series of dialogues with community people and peer learners to inform Asif's enrollment in the school and his potentialities to be one of other children in the community that resulted to a positive attitude towards children with disabilities. At one stage, Asif's residence was shifted to another place closure the schhol.

During last three years five more learners with disabilities had been enrolled in the school. Asif is now studying in class three and has become an iconic example in the community in spreading the awareness that children with special need should no longer be treated as a burden.

## Case Study-2

### Mst. Sumi is a little girl of eight years

She was born with her one limb shorter than her other one. This congenital problem caused her to crawl on her knees right from her childhood. Her parents could not do anything for her due to their poverty. She used to face lot of problems to transfer her own self from one place to another and her ADL activities. All her friends used to address her as KHORA (Lame) and avoid her. They did not want to take her in any of the sports and her withdrawal from all kind of social activities was inevitable till the day the that a rehabilitation worker from the organization ANUVAB saw her and felt the need to help her. First he provided her with an axillary crutch and ensured her mobility by providing her with proper training regarding gait training with the help of those crutches. Then they took her to the nearby MOYDAN DIGHI PRIMARY SCHOOL and ensured her admission in class II. Her class mates used to avoid her and didn't want to take her in any of the sports at the beginning. But afterwards by the help of the school teachers, her classmates started to realize their mistake and began behaving more friendly with her and help her in every aspect they could.

This caused a dramatic change in her (Shumi) mental state and confidence and she started to behave more positively as a result of this. Her classmates don't address her as KHORA (Lame) and accompany her in their way to and back from school. The rehabilitation worker follow her up regularly and do the needed exercises in her home. Now Sumi dreams of becoming an accountable being of the society and her parents allows her in every way she can. Her request to the organization was, to help other special need child in her village who are in need of this kind of special help from the development organization and thus give them with the glimmer of hope to be an accountable part of the society rather than live with their crippling deformity.

## Enclosure 1

### A Conceptual Frame of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education is a recognized approach all over the world. Special and integrated education is essential for learners with special needs. But it has the limitation in covering the bulk number of disabled learners through out the country. A big percentage of disabled learners are eligible to be included in mainstream education. A systematic approach with minimal adaptation in the learning environment could create access of many disabled learners in mainstream education.

The Inclusive Education approach is well defined and has proven experience as a functional approach of education of learners with disabilities. Conceptual aspect of Special Education and Integrated Education and its correlation is well defined and established as complementary to each other.

Inclusive education is commonly associated with the mainstream participation of learners with impairments and those categorized as having 'special educational needs'. Learners with impairments continue to be excessively excluded from any form of education,

Inclusive Education is an approach, which addresses the need of all learners in classroom situation including learner with special need, creates effective classroom environment where the educational needs of all children irrespective of ability, socio-economic or cultural consideration.

Inclusive Education means improving the learning environment so that all children can learn successfully. The school and the teachers accept that educational environment is flexible and could find ways to meet the needs of all children. Teachers must have knowledge to help all children in the class when they face learning problem. There should be spontaneous acceptance of learner with disability so that they can learn with all other children in the class.

The fundamental principle of an inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties they may have. The Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse need of their student, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangement,

teaching strategies, resource use and partnership with their communities. Within inclusive school, children with special educational need should receive whatever the extra support they may require to ensure their effective education. Inclusive schooling is the most effective means of building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers.

Inclusive Education enables children with disabilities for inclusion in mainstream society. All children have the right to learn together. Education by sending them away from their own society being disabled or learning difficulties is considered as discrimination in our social context. Inclusive settings allow children for better learning and social sense.

Inclusive Education has been practiced widely in many countries, even in neighboring countries, which indicates as the most effective approach to bring all children in the same educational process. Research finding obtained from other countries and also in Bangladesh context reports that inclusive education is a better source for reaching children with disabilities by quantity and quality measures with cost effectiveness.

Inclusive Education system includes all children who are left out or excluded from school. Inclusive education system facilitates inclusion of children with disability, children who do not speak the language of the classroom, children who are at risk of dropping out because they are sick, hungry, or not achieving well, girls and boys who should be in school but are not, or street children, and children who may be enrolled in school but may feel excluded from learning in the classroom. An inclusive school is not simply one, which educates children with disabilities; rather inclusive education is about reducing all barriers to learning and developing ordinary schools, which are capable of meeting the needs of all learners. The development of an IE system means that we have to change the focus of our work so that we can support children in their ordinary schools and maintain them in the communities.

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Inclusion is not only about philosophy but more importantly about the practical changes that must be brought about in order to help the children with special needs and all other children in our school systems to excel and unfold their potential. The shift and the changes will not merely benefit the children we often single out and label as “children with special needs” but all children, all teachers all parents, and all headmasters. Effective teaching research has shown that good teaching is good teaching for all children irrespective of individual differences, and that improved teacher training and on-going professional teacher support may be one of the most important strategies to improve quality education for all.

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