



DISABILITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND
COVID 19 RESPONSE:
BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

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Bangladesh Context

- Disability is a major social and economic phenomenon in Bangladesh. However, there is lack of reliable and comprehensive data available on persons with disabilities.
- In Bangladesh, there is a growing realization that the main constraint faced by children with disabilities is not the child's impairment, but widespread prejudice and discrimination (Source: UNICEF).
- According to the Situation Analysis on Children with Disabilities (2014), children with disabilities in Bangladesh are clearly among the most marginalized when it comes to education.
- Primary school enrolment rate in Bangladesh is 97 per cent while only 11 per cent of children with disabilities received any form of education.

Policies and Legislation

- Notable progress has also been made towards improving protection legislation, systems and services for children in Bangladesh.
- A National Coordination Committee on Disability established under the Ministry of Social Welfare in 1993, led to the adoption of the first National Disability Policy in 1995. Since then, the legal framework is progressively being harmonized with international standards.
- The country has also taken a number of legislative and policy actions towards nationalizing global commitments, including the Children Policy, adopted in 2011; the Children Act 2013, and the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013.

Disability Inclusive Education

- Different organizations in Bangladesh are working to ensure Inclusive education for children with disabilities so that they can attend mainstream schools alongside non-disabled children.
- GUK is also working to ensure inclusive education creating an enabling environment so that children with a range of abilities and disabilities – including physical, sensory, visibility impairment, intellectual and mobility impairments – can learn in the same classroom amongst their peers.
- But COVID19 pandemic is an unforeseen disaster that have never seen, thus, have a huge impact specially on ensuring inclusive education for children with disability.



Impact of COVID19

- Since 17 March, all the educational institutes in Bangladesh have remained closed. Undeniably, the direct and most immediate impact of the Covid-19 on the education sector is the loss in learning opportunities.
- In Bangladesh children with disabilities are at a greater disadvantage, experiencing significant difficulties at this time of COVID-19 pandemic.
- An assessment conducted by BRAC revealed that, 29% of students with disabilities expressed their fear. This experience is also higher among female students (17%) compared to male students (15%).
- Parents are also worried about this situation, particularly household living in the rural communities are often failed to take care of the children with disability during this tough time.

Impact of COVID19

- Children with disabilities are facing even greater challenges following the move to online teaching programmes including digital exclusion and the risk of being left behind due to the absence of appropriate assistive equipment, access to internet, accessible materials and support.
- Most of them do not have access to technology or not familiar with using them.
- Even many organizations working with children with disability did not have prior capacity in handling such situation.
- **ACCESS TO** and **COPING WITH** distance learning also poses a threat to the education of children with disability in Bangladesh

GUK Experience

GUK has implemented several projects to create a conducive environment for the promotion of inclusive education by working with children with disabilities, their parents, teachers, local schools and the education authorities.

The organization worked to ensure that children with disabilities are enrolled and retained in mainstream schools, achieving quality education.

Considering COVID19 context, we find that as the students are staying home to cut the spread of virus. It is found that, there is chance of them being traumatized as well as left behind because of their limitations to access to and cope with the **“New Normal”**

GUK Experience

When the lockdown started, GUK has taken several initiatives to take extra care of the children with disability in terms of their health and education maintaining social distancing and other COVID19 safety protocols, so that they do not feel traumatized and left behind.

- Visiting houses of poor families having children with disability to broadcast online teaching programmes with accessible materials and support.
- Counsel them with proper care, so that they can get rid of the fear.
- Keep continuing existing learning practice where possible in their houses maintaining social distancing and other COVID19 safety protocols.



Photos of some measures taken considering the COVID19 to ensure disability inclusive education for the children with disability.



Potential Solutions

- It is important to advocate for mainstreaming approaches and incorporates attention to disability-related issues across the lifecycle by ensuring programmes are gender, age, and child-sensitive and take into consideration, their disability-specific needs and capacities.
- Participation of the disability focused organizations and voluntary social organizations at the local level in designing and delivering of prevention and response plans considering the COVID19 context.
- Access to aid and devices for persons with disabilities during the lockdown should be made available. Support services, personal assistance, physical and communication accessibility must be ensured by public and private service providers for those persons with disabilities affected.

- Reaching out to all students with alternative methods not yet ensured as a result it is important to develop inclusive contents and adjust the teaching process so that the students with disabilities specially living in rural areas can be reached out equally effectively.
- Ensure that the teachers are also get trained and reach out the students at least once a week and guide them on how to continue education at home.
- Some arrangements of gifts and reading materials to help children with disability can be useful remain protected from psychological trauma and continue learning at home.
- Share different child-friendly recreational programmes so that, they can get rid of the fear. It is also important to revise the syllabus and simplify them as much as possible to reduce the burden.

Thank You