



EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges faced by special education teachers and the coping strategies they adopt to address these challenges in a special education school in Bangladesh. This qualitative case study employs semi-structured interviews with six special education teachers, focusing on their experiences teaching students with visual and hearing impairments. The research identifies the specific challenges these educators face, including difficulties in teaching learning, classroom management, using teaching aids, assessment, infrastructural and lack of administrative support. It also investigates their coping strategies, such as personalized teaching methods, classroom management approaches, using assistive technology, teacher training, administrative and colleague support. The study offers actionable insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and teacher training programs, emphasizing the need for improved resources, professional development, and systemic support to enhance the efficacy and well-being of special education teachers.

Keyword: Special education, special education teachers, challenges, coping strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Special education describes specialized curricula created to address the special requirements of students with disabilities which includes a variety of supports and services meant to help students to learn, who might need extra help because of mental, emotional, or physical difficulties (Hakiki, 2023). Special education is a formal educational program offered to individuals (adults and children) who struggle with learning due to various forms of disabilities, blindness, deafness, mental retardation, difficulty adjusting to social situations, physical impairments, health issues, or accidents that occur later in life (NPE 2004). According to Akinade and Suleiman (2010), special education refers to instruction tailored to each student's unique requirements and individual peculiarities. According to HS Chindo (2021) special educational needs may benefit from additional educational services like special equipment, alternative teaching and learning pedagogies, the use of technological devices, and other special interventions tailored to meet their demands and expectations. The schools serve four types of disabled children in Bangladesh: those with autism, intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, and visual impairments (NFDD, 2013). People with special needs are typically categorized as follows:



Hearing impairment refers to a range of hearing loss, including deafness as defined by IDEA, which severely hinders linguistic processing and academic performance, with deaf individuals primarily relying on vision for communication. (Akinade & Sulaiman, 2010). According to HS Chindo (2021) visual impairment encompasses conditions ranging from partial vision loss to blindness, with visual acuity measured by the ability to see at specified distances on a Snellen chart, where 20/200 defines blindness. Special education teachers support students with disabilities by providing personalized instruction, creating individualized education plans, and fostering an inclusive learning environment in collaboration with educators, parents, and administrators. (CareerExplorer, 2023).

The problems that special education teachers encounter when assisting students with varying learning requirements are referred to as their challenges (Soo, 2023). She added that, teachers' professional experiences and well-being are greatly impacted by the particular problems that are specific to the field of special education. Further mentioned that, teachers in special education face a range of challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, disruptive classroom management, and issues with the teaching-learning process, these issues can significantly impact the quality of instruction provided and the general learning outcomes of students with disabilities. According to Herman et al. (2023) and Garwood et al. (2017), educators experience greater stress and feelings of professional isolation due to the complexity of teaching students with disabilities, which frequently requires specific skills and resources that are not always readily available. The emotional and psychological demands imposed on special education teachers are significant, according to research. The need for individualized instruction, dealing with challenging behaviors in students, heavy caseloads, and the emotional strain of teaching these students all lead to high levels of stress and burnout (Alamdarloo et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2019). Moreover, these problems are made worse by a lack of administrative support and professional development opportunities, which leaves teachers feeling overworked and unprepared (Guo-qiang et al., 2022; Garwood, 2022).

Beaty-O'Ferrall et al. (2010) discovered several techniques or strategies that help teachers effectively control the behavior of their students. They added that, empathy-building techniques, such as fostering understanding, praising positive traits, and setting aside personal ego, enable teachers to connect with students and address their behavioral issues without blame. Further mentioned that, employing indirect strategies and avoiding power dynamics, educators can guide students toward positive behavior changes effectively. According to this study, teachers must establish a connection with all of their students from the most driven to the most challenging in order to effectively manage the classroom.

In Bangladesh, children with impairments have very little opportunities to attend special government schools (USAID, 2005). They added that, many obstacles prevent Bangladeshi special education teachers from effectively providing high-quality instruction to pupils with disabilities. Further mentioned that, these difficulties include systemic impediments that prevent the adoption of inclusive education techniques, a lack of resources and inadequate training. High levels of stress and burnout are caused by the existing educational framework's inadequate response to the special education teachers' unique requirements, which eventually has an impact on student performance and job retention (Ambia & Rahman, 2021; Rahman, 2020). Similar difficulties, such as inadequate infrastructure, a lack of administrative assistance, and problems with classroom management, are faced by special education teachers worldwide. (Wardany & Herlina, 2023; Zulkifli et al., 2019). In underdeveloped nations like Bangladesh, where infrastructure constraints are common, the issue is made more difficult by the lack of access to training and technology (Dutta & Smita, 2020; Al-Amin et al., 2021). Further marginalizing these educators is the prevalent views toward special education, which frequently show a lack of comprehension and support from the community as well as educational authority (Sutarni et al., 2022). For special education teachers and their pupils in Bangladesh to have better educational opportunities, a thorough framework that tackles these problems is essential.



However, there aren't many studies that concentrate on the unique difficulties faced by teachers in this subject, and special education in Bangladesh is still in poor shape. There is a lack of literature that addresses Bangladesh's unique situation, especially in smaller areas like Khulna. A substantial knowledge vacuum exists about how to support and enhance the efficacy of special education in Bangladesh as a result of the lack of targeted research on how these teachers overcome such challenges.

In Bangladesh, special education teachers play a vital role in helping kids with a range of requirements. The unique difficulties experienced by special education teachers in Bangladesh are still not adequately addressed, despite increased global awareness. If the challenges of special education teachers are not removed, the diverse needs of students with disabilities will not be fulfilled. It will not achieve the goal of special education. With the aim of retaining these kids as much as possible in general education classroom activities, special education teachers give them the degree of assistance they require (Fikes, 2022). It is essential to comprehend the coping mechanisms these educators use since this might provide information about possible treatments and policy modifications that could enhance their working environment and in turn, the standard of instruction given to students with special needs. Research indicates that, lack of access to professional development, training and effectiveness of teaching practices among special education instructors (Baldiris et al., 2016).

This study intends to clarify the current situation of special education in Bangladesh and offer suggestions for enhancing the support network for teachers in this crucial area by examining these issues and approaches. This study is important to Bangladesh because it aims to analyze and identify the challenges faced by special education instructors in Bangladesh, thereby providing a deeper understanding of their experiences. Insightful knowledge that could improve instructors' overall wellbeing and job satisfaction will also be obtained from researching coping strategies. The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of special education teachers in Bangladesh, focusing on the challenges they face and the coping strategies they adopt. My research objectives are:

1. To explore the challenges faced by special education teachers.
2. To explore the coping strategies employed by special education teachers to overcome these challenges.

Literature Review

Challenges of Special Education Teachers

According to Rosemary and Fideli (2016), negative behavior is defined as student conduct that directly or indirectly compromises the efficiency of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. According to Ali et al. (2021), one of the biggest obstacles to giving these pupils fair access to education is a lack of resources.

Teachers in special education (SE) contexts, in particular, deal with emotional and behavioural issues and must establish effective classroom management strategies (Timor 2011). She added that, their biggest struggle is encouraging their children to perform in ways that are socially competent. According to Freundlich et al. (2018), students with sensory impairments frequently struggle with attention. Teachers themselves face the biggest obstacle when it comes to controlling the behavior of children with learning difficulties (Collier-Meek et al., 2018; Toran et al., 2016). This is because there aren't enough training programs to give educators the know-how and abilities, they need to work with pupils who have special needs (Cheng & Toran, 2022).

The use of several senses, including sight, sound, touch, and movement, to aid in learning and teaching special education techniques to assist pupils retain information is known as multisensory learning (Fikes, 2023). He added that, students who struggle with typical teaching approaches, such as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or learning difficulties, benefit greatly from this approach. Further mention that, to help children grasp concepts, a special education teacher may



employ visual aids such as diagrams or images. Additionally, they might use movement to teach social skills or mindfulness, for example, through yoga or dancing. Al-Fadhli (2020) discovered that a major obstacle is the absence of adequate funds for the creation of local adaptations as well as the purchase of suitable instructional materials.

Schools must deal with a number of issues in the assessment of students with special needs because of the technical nature of inclusion, the different specific talents, competencies, resources, and staff expertise. Since each student is different, they should each be evaluated separately, taking into account their particular situation (Bahr et al., 1999). They added that among many other needs, dyslexia, mental retardation, hearing impairment and deafness, vision impairment and blindness, and gifted students are among the difficulties teachers have when identifying and evaluating specific learning needs in the classroom.

Many educational institutions lack the resources and infrastructure required to support students with various disabilities, despite this acknowledgment (Posso-Pacheco et al., 2024). Barrett et al. (2019) discovered that unsuitable physical settings, such as classrooms with poor ventilation, dim lighting, a lack of space, broken furniture, deteriorated recreational areas, and no special access to educational facilities, lead to inequality and impede inclusion. These circumstances have an impact on the standard of educational services, indicating a discrepancy between the laws ensuring sufficient facilities and educational materials for all students and the reality of Ecuador's educational system (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2023; Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador, 2023).

Teachers in special education may have to deal with administrative difficulties such as paperwork, bureaucratic roadblocks, and severe workloads sometimes extra duties take away from the time and effort they could devote to engaging students directly (Varlikar, 2023). According to research, special education teachers' primary reasons for quitting were a lack of administrative support, heavy caseloads, the demands of IEP (Individual Education Program) paperwork, isolation, an excessive amount of student needs diversity, and a lack of gratitude from administrators and coworkers for all of their hard work (PratherJones, 2011). Luekens et al. (2004) found that among the 263,500 special education teachers polled, 41.9% gave reasons for moving to a different school or quitting the field entirely as being dissatisfied with administrative support, and 33.9% gave reasons for dissatisfaction with working conditions.

Teachers who taught kids with emotional disorders showed higher levels of burnout than those who taught students with intellectual disabilities (Banks & Necco's, 1990). According to Nichols and Sosnowsky (2002) in self-contained classes, the percentage of students with emotional problems who displayed challenging behaviors was linked to greater levels of teacher burnout. Language, adaptive behavior, and IQ scores among students had a negative impact on teacher satisfaction and necessitated more help in schools (Hastings & Brown, 2002; Ruble & McGrew, 2013). In particular, Embich (2001) showed that team-teaching teachers who were younger, less educated, and less experienced had higher levels of burnout than other teachers.

Coping Strategies of Special Education Teachers

Mahvar et al. (2018) assert that in order to better control students' behavior and minimize the challenges they encounter; educators must adopt a variety of strategies. To effectively regulate behavior, teachers should be knowledgeable about creating and putting into practice suitable solutions (Iberahim et al., 2017).

The way a teacher handles classroom management is one of the main areas where their function is clearly seen (Gyasi et al., 2020). The seating arrangement, teaching strategies, lesson plans, and activities are all taken into account in a classroom management scenario (Shaddock et al., 2007). According to Gyasi et al. (2020) the instructor must determine whether students require extra assistance, such as with vision, and ensure that they have a suitable seat. They added that, these students are typically positioned in front so they can see clearly. Once more, if they have hearing loss,



the similar seating arrangement might be constructed, allowing them to sit in front so they can hear well because of the possible near proximity between their seat and the teacher.

Children with impairments may benefit greatly from the use of suitable technology in the classroom (Malak, 2014). Although a range of educational and assistive technologies are acknowledged as essential components for advancing students with disabilities, their accessibility appears to be limited in Bangladesh (USAID, 2005). According to Huq (2005), government organizations didn't know much about how technology was developing for kids with impairments. As a result, government initiatives to provide educational and assistive technologies for kids with disabilities are unlikely to satisfy real need (USAID, 2005).

In order to help children with learning disabilities develop positive behavior and enhance their academic performance, special education teachers must employ suitable tactics or practices while managing their behavior (Deshmukh, 2016; Ahmad & Abu Hanifah, 2015; Rumfola, 2017). According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), effective teacher preparation programs that incorporate useful techniques like sign language and braille are crucial for raising student achievement. Teachers who work with pupils who have visual impairments need to receive this kind of training since it is equally vital (Tara & William's, 2005). They also highlighted the importance of assistive technology training.

Administrators and teachers are seen as essential to putting inclusive education into practice. Since they are seen as key players in the process of integrating students with disabilities into regular courses, they were essential to the successful implementation of inclusive education (Dalonos, 2013). Administrators promoted a cooperative atmosphere in addition to being helpful and encouraging (Combee, 2014). Their research suggests that the effectiveness and job satisfaction of special education instructors may depend on the establishment of an administrative support system.

Employees within the school, including coworkers, administrators, and support staff, are crucial in helping new teachers understand the demands made of them (Jones et al., 2013). There is evidence that informal support from mentors and colleagues is linked to increased commitment among new special educators, and special educators are likely to rely extensively on their peers for instructional support (Billingsley et al., 2004; Whitaker, 2000).

In the school community, parents and students with disabilities can be greatly empowered by a successful partnership between the home and the school (Stanley, 2008). According to research, collaboration between the family and school is beneficial for students with disabilities (Sheridan et al., 2012; Sointu et al., 2012). The state-supported services remained less functioning, despite the fact that several NGOs engage with families through different programs such home-based rehabilitation and CBR (USAID, 2005).

METHOD

Nature of the Study

The current study uses a qualitative research approach to explore the challenges and coping strategies faced by special education teachers. The challenges and coping strategies that special education instructors face is the central phenomenon of this study. A case study methodology is employed to look into this issue in more detail. According to Creswell (2014) A case study is a thorough investigation of a bounded system that enables researchers to investigate one or more cases in order to obtain understanding of complicated problems. This study chooses exploratory research because it aligns with the research objectives of gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by special education teachers and how they coped with those challenges, a field where limited prior knowledge exists. This study employs purposeful sampling, a strategy widely used in qualitative research to select special education teachers they can provide rich and relevant information about the phenomenon. Furthermore, quota sampling employed to guarantee sample variety. Quota sampling,



according to Creswell (2014), The ratio of responder selection is the same as that of the general population. This approach is relevant for my study, as it ensures the inclusion of both three teachers of visually impaired students and three teachers of hearing-impaired students, allowing me to capture a comprehensive range of experiences and perspectives related to the challenges and coping strategies in special education.

Data Collection

Six teachers make up the sample size for this study. Given its nature, this qualitative study does not require a large sample size in order to generalize. Sorkari Dristi O Bak-Sro bon Protibondhi Bidhyalay (PHT Center) teachers in Khulna are included in the study's population. Six special education teachers will make up the sample; three of them will focus on teaching students with visual impairments and three on teaching students with hearing impairments. As the site of my research, I have chosen Sorkari Dristi O Bak-Srobon Protibondhi Bidhyalay (PHT Center) in Khulna.

I have since used my mobile phone to speak with the head teachers of the schools. They instructed me to visit the school in order to gather data when classes were in session. After that, I went to school with the intention of gathering information through interviews at a specific time. After that, I presented the head teacher with the letter requesting permission to gather data, and they granted it. Before I went to the interview, I had taken consent from the respondents. Give the permission form to each of the six participants one at a time. I begin by letting them know why I'm there. With their assistance, I conducted interviews with them using a signed letter of consent. In order to collect information, I phone-recorded the entire interview with the participant consent.

In the study, participants were provided with detailed information about the goals, scope, methods, and their involvement. Signed consent was secured to ensure clarity and voluntary participation. They were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without needing to justify their decision. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by anonymizing data and restricting access to sensitive materials, such as audio recordings and transcriptions, to the researcher alone. Participation was voluntary, and teachers were assured that their decision to participate or not would bear no negative professional or interpersonal consequences. The data was reported accurately, maintaining integrity by avoiding any distortion or bias. To maintain privacy, I have denoted the teacher as T1, T2 and T3 for teachers of visually impaired students and T4, T5 and T6 for teachers of hearing-impaired students.

Data Analysis

I used thematic analysis to examine the participant data that I have obtained. The procedures of thematic analysis will be as follows: getting acquainted with the data; creating preliminary codes; looking for themes; evaluating themes; defining and labeling themes; and at the end, creating the report, in accordance with Creswell's recommendations. For my research, I chose to conduct my research using an inductive approach to thematic data analysis. According to the inductive technique, which can be characterized as a bottom-up process, the themes, patterns, or codes that are found are closely related to the data itself and without pre-existing assumptions (Patton, 1990; Braun & Clarke, 2006). For my research, I chose to conduct my research using a semantic method to thematic data analysis.

Validity and Reliability

Interviews were conducted in order to gather thorough and in-depth information regarding the experiences of special education teachers. The semi-structured interview style was selected for this study because it supports the goal of examining the difficulties encountered by special education teachers and how they overcame them. This study employs In-Depth Interviews (IDIs). I have shown the interview schedule to an expert to confirm the tool's validity. Two people participated in a tool pilot to verify the instrument's reliability. According to Creswell & Miller (2000) triangulation is a validity approach used by researchers to combine data from several sources. They added that triangulation is a technique or strategy used to improve the validity and reliability of studies or the



assessment of results. I have conducted method triangulation through document analysis and interview to enhance the validity and reliability of my data.

RESULTS

Themes and Sub-themes

Based on the concepts generated by the findings, the themes were inferred. The main concept of the study is:

- I. Challenges of special education teachers
- II. Coping strategies of special education teachers

The sub-themes of challenges of special education teachers are challenges in teaching learning process, challenges towards classroom management, challenges of using teaching aids, challenges of assessment, infrastructural challenges, administrative challenges and burn out. The sub-themes of coping strategies of special education teachers are personalized teaching methods, classroom management approaches, using assistive technology, teacher training, administrative support, Support from the Colleagues and engaging with parents and community.

Table 1. Major themes and sub-themes of the study.

Theme	Sub-theme
Challenges of special education teachers	Challenges in teaching learning process Challenges towards classroom management Challenges of using teaching aids Challenges of assessment Infrastructural challenges Administrative challenges Burn out
Coping strategies of special education teachers	Personalized teaching methods Classroom management approaches Using assistive technology Teacher training Administrative support Support from the Colleagues Engaging with parents and community

Theme 01: Challenges of Special Education Teachers

Challenges in Teaching Learning process

The teachers stated that the visually and hearing-impaired learners pose so many teaching-learning challenges to special education teachers especially in the area of teaching-learning materials and lack of teacher training. They are as follows: lack of resources including Braille, tactile devices, interpreters, and technologies and lack of ways to render complex concepts comprehensible. In case of visually impaired students according to T1,

There has Braille, though not all students have mastery over it. This means that I have to endure and adapt lessons in a manner that makes them low-paced, and less complex as it would be needed for other students with vision.

Regarding hearing impaired students T5 noted that, “One of the challenges I have faced is my school's lack of teacher training and interpreter scarcity.”

Challenges towards Classroom Management

The teachers expressed that some of the issues that teachers who handle special needs classes, particularly those with visual and hearing-impaired students have to deal with. Some of the concerns include: attention problems, transitions from one task to another, access and accommodation as well as individual differences versus group requirements. Regarding visually impaired students T1 noted that, “To gain their attention or to steer their attention without using signs is a challenge.” In case of



hearing-impaired students T6 observed that, “Hearing-impaired students cannot hear the sound signals normally used to maintain order.”

Challenges of Using Teaching Aids

The findings enunciated that the learning process of the visually and hearing-impaired students shows the problems of scarcity of resources, culturally responsive materials and financial limitations. Teachers face the problem of selection of resource that can be universal, appropriate, and readily available; as a result, there are imitative methods used and therefore limited gains. In case of visually impaired students T3 highlighted that, “The majority of the teaching aids available are developed with the ordinary students in mind, especially the ones with no visual impairments.” Regarding hearing impaired students T4 stated that, “It is hard to search for images and sign to use during communication in particular, in Bengali.”

Challenges of Assessment

The findings revealed that evaluating learners with hearing and visual impairment is always a challenge since they are exceptional learners. For instance, teachers say that assessment of abstract knowledge is a challenge, and that putting the tests in accessible formats like braille or tactile tests is challenging. Moreover, there are communication barriers, the slower rate of learning due to language disability that make it difficult to assess their understanding and abilities. Regarding visually impaired students T2 observed that, “Ordinary tests are ineffective in their case... the resources are not fully accessible, it is very difficult to determine if the student has fully understood the topics in question.” In case of hearing-impaired students T4 noted that, “Many of my students are likely to lose some of the verbal instructions that I give, hence making assessments difficult.”

Infrastructural Challenges

The findings exposed that barrier showed that schools for special education are poorly equipped for visually and hearing-impaired students. They are as follows: There are no tactile paths, poor lighting, echoic classrooms, and limited facility to assist a child with learning aids or equipment. Such shortcomings are the ability to become independent, mobile, and effectively learn for students. In case of visually impaired students according to T1, “Tactile paths of travel or paths with braille are crucial for the students with impaired vision but unfortunately our school building is not equipped with them.” Regarding hearing impaired students T4 stated that, “As it is seen in our school, there are no drawing or graphic means, no interactive white board which is necessary for the hearing-impairment students.”

Administrative Challenges

The teachers disclosed that apparently, some administrative concerns that affect the teaching profession in special schools of Khulna are; Less resource availability like Braille textbooks, teaching objects using touch sensation, and assistive technologies, insufficient training for the teaching staff, and financial deficits. Failure to respond timely to the provision of essentials like sign language interpreting technology/ interpreters also worsens the problem, and quality education is denied to students with learning disabilities. Regarding visually impaired students T1 mentioned that, “The administrative body fails to provide sufficient crucial items such as Braille texts and tactile teaching aids, which hinders the full interaction with students.” In case of hearing-impaired students T6 highlighted that, “The school administration reduces our budgets most of the time; this hinders us from purchasing good equipment that includes visual displays, relevant software and hearing aid sets.”

Burn Out

The teachers affirmed that the study of burnout on special education teachers indicates considerable emotional, physical and system-related concerns. Teachers get emotionally drained most of the time because they are overworked, inadequately equipped, plus the stress that comes with handling students with disabilities. These burnout cycles are increased by deficient tools, the absence of support



staff, and systemized obstacles that mean that fighting for resources is a never-ending battle. Regarding visually impaired students T2 observed that,

I believe that my type of burnout is mainly the emotional burnout. With visually impaired students, I get so much challenged and working with them demands so much time and concentration, especially when there is little time for a break.

In case of hearing-impaired students T5 highlighted that, “To me, burnout is all about having to fight for the children I teach and who I have befriended against a system that simply does not care.”

Theme 02: Coping Strategies of Special Education Teachers

Personalized Teaching Methods

The teachers claimed that the instructed way of special education teachers used in Khulna reflects that the main focus of teaching learning activities is based on differentiated teaching learning methodologies to teach every learner differently. Teachers use visual and auditory teaching aids and visually and tactually displayed items and activities for the instruction of visually and hearing-impaired students, as well as individual teaching transactions. Regarding visually impaired students according to T1, “I try to determine how fast every child grasps the information and with what kind of approaches.” In case of hearing-impaired students T6 observed that, “I concentrate on one-on-one sessions so as to allow me to incorporate their individual learning difficulties.”

Classroom Management Approaches

The teachers exposed that special education teachers raise discipline through rewards and incentives strategies, student organization and cooperation, and structured and adapted language skills. These approaches focus on trying to bring an initiative, well-ordered and well-suited environment at school for teaching-learning process for normal children as well as disabled children. In case of visually impaired students T2 mentioned that, “Due to the fact that majority of the students with visual impairment require special attention, I use the sense of touch and hearing to manage students’ conduct and enforce discipline.” While speaking about managing the hearing-impaired students T4 stated that, “I use a lot of hand signals and sign language to address indiscipline in the classroom.”

Using Assistive Technology

The research findings showed that technological aids used by special education teachers include, the screen reader, the braille display, the video magnifier, and the interactive white board for students with visual and hearing impairments. These are strategies to encourage independence, self-esteem as well as acquire technology competence through gradual systematic routing and real-world experiences. Regarding visually impaired students according to T1,

I look at helping students learn and going through the operation on a computer using short cuts along with touching the screen. Besides, it also helps to develop their confidence as well as enable them to search for any relevant information using the Internet on their own.

In case of hearing-impaired students T6 highlighted that, “Every lesson is accompanied with interactive whiteboards and we use speech to sign translation apps.”

Teacher Training

Most of the teachers argued that the training programs improved teachers training on makings modifications of teaching and communication strategies for students with visual and or hearing impairments. These sessions provided teachers with realistic strategies including braille, sign language, and strategies regarding the application of assistive technologies in encouraging participation and self- management among students. Regarding visually impaired students according to T1, “The training workshops exposed me to real-life skills such as Braille and Screen reader... I am in a better position now, and I can face any challenges that come my way.” In case of hearing-impaired students T2 mentioned that, “Managing failures was made less challenging as I incorporated



rigorously learned methods from the training... It also provided the teachers with a peer support group, something that I can run to.”

Administrative Support

A remarkable emphasis has been found out to be attached with the administrative support offered to special education teachers so as to mitigate the level of stress and working efficiency. A major point made in the study is the lack of enough administrative help for special education teachers, this further affects the stress levels of these teachers and also deteriorates their working effectiveness. As critical issues, consequent was lack of resources, limited professional development opportunities and lack of management support which resulted in lack of support for their roles and responsibilities. In case of visually impaired students T3 shared that, "Sometimes we don't have tools necessary for teaching Braille, so we can't match the needs of students well." Regarding hearing impaired students T4 stated that, "Resource requests are frequently delayed or overlooked."

Support from the Colleagues

The teachers expressed the social interactions among special education teachers in Khulna, which described not only the sharing of experiences and strategies among the teachers but also the better management of problems faced in class. Employees share common experiences and be-surrounded themselves by people that can offer them emotional, practical and professional help leading to decreased sense of loneliness. Regarding visually impaired students T2 mentioned that, "They either provide recommendations or materials such as braille texts. They also give words of encouragement and tips on how to deal with certain circumstances that is so relatable that it makes me stop feeling so alone." In case of hearing-impaired students T6 observed that, "We have regular communication, and they're always eager to tell us how they address challenging circumstances. This constant pull and push keep me on my toes and better placed to handle daily issues."

Engaging with Parents and Community

The results showed that the school administration urges the teachers to involve the parents and the community for the improvement of the environment of the learning for the special needs students. The participants opined that a direct contact with parents helps the teacher to understand the child's home background and possibly special needs while interaction with the community ensures the students feel wanted and welcomed. In case of visually impaired students according to T1, "Allowing that bridge to be built with parents also lets students know that we are on the same side." Regarding hearing impaired students T4 stated that, "Other ways through which we wake up consciousness in the community are conducting the workshops to make people appreciate the difficulties that the students go through."

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

Major Finding and Comparison with Existing Literature

Objectives 1: To explore the challenges faced by special education teachers.

This study explores the challenging experiences of special education teachers. The challenges of special education teachers include barriers in the teaching learning process, challenges of classroom management, challenges of using teaching aids, challenges of assessment, infrastructural challenges, administrative challenges and burn out.

The findings revealed that the teaching of visually and hearing-impaired learners is especially difficult for on account of lack of specialized teaching learning materials and inadequate teacher training. Specific problems include insufficient resource of free aids like Braille, tactile devices, interpreters and assistive technologies; or of strategies aiding in simplifying the explanation of difficult concepts for those with disabilities. These results are consistent with those of Ali et al. (2021), who emphasized that resource constraints are among the main barriers to providing equitable learning opportunities for these students.



Special education teachers find it difficult to hold the attention, assist in a smooth transition from one task to another, provide for accessibility and proper adaptation and ensure balance of individual attention and group dynamics. These findings are in line with those of Freundlich et al. (2018), who point out that the attention difficulties are common among students with sensory impairments.

The study reveals that teaching aids for special education are either inadequate, unavailable or outdated. Lack of funding compounds this problem and inhibits the ability of teachers to acquire good teaching materials or translate existing ones into locally understandable media. This is consistent with Al-Fadhli, (2020) who found that a significant barrier is the lack of sufficient funding for both the acquisition of appropriate teaching materials and the development of local adaptations.

The finding of this study also revealed that standard assessment practices are frequently ineffective, and having a child with such a disorder poses a significant challenge to the teacher, who cannot devise fair, more appropriate means of testing the student. This result supports the findings of Bahr et al. (1999), who point out that teachers struggle to identify and assess particular learning needs in the classroom of special students having hearing impairment and vision impairment.

The respondents stated that the absence of tactile paths, ramps, noise decrease classrooms and learning spaces proved to be the major challenges. Ineffective infrastructural arrangements are not only Interacting socially but they also compromise the self- reliance and confidence of the learners. These results are consistent with those of Posso-Pacheco et al. (2024), who discovered that, many educational institutions lack the infrastructure and resources needed to accommodate students with a range of disabilities.

Teachers are observed to get inadequate administrative support, which is in the areas of teaching aids, funding and professional development support. These constraints limit them in addressing the need of students to the optimum level. Research indicates that the main reasons special education teachers were a lack of administrative support, a high caseload, the demands of IEP (Individual Education Program) paperwork, isolation, a high number of students with diverse needs, and administrators for their efforts (PratherJones, 2011).

The results of this investigation unveiled that emotional and physical burnout resulting from a lack of resources, emotional labor, and systematic erasure was a common point brought out. One of the signs was that teachers said they were helpless and that there was always a need to defend students' rights. This is consistent with Embich (2001), who found that special education teachers' burnout levels were positively connected with their increased workloads, which included managing classrooms, acting as case managers for IE program meetings, and monitoring students' progress.

Objectives 2: To explore the coping strategies employed by special education teachers to overcome these challenges.

This study explores the coping strategies of special education teachers and how such teachers manage the challenges. The coping strategies of special education teachers include personalized teaching methods, classroom management approaches, using assistive technology, teacher training, administrative support, colleague support and engaging with parents and community.

Teachers adopt individualized strategies to address the unique learning traits of each student. Individual attention, use of touch and visual displays, and the use of special learning approaches are typical to increase interest and focus. This result is supported by a study of Mahvar et al. (2018) that emphasizes the need for teachers to use a range of tactics to better manage students' behavior and reduce the difficulties they face.

The finding of this study indicates that signs, hand signals, and use of proper voice, combined with a set down procedure and use of tangible reinforcement help in disciplining of the classroom. Shaddock et al. (2007) support this finding that, in a classroom management scenario, seating arrangements, lesson plans, teaching styles, and activities should all be considered.



The results of this study showed that assistive technologies such as Braille display, screen reader or sign-to-speech translator were employed to teach the students. But, implementing these tools involved much training time and was a process of iteration. Research indicates that a variety of assistive and instructional technologies are recognized as crucial elements for the advancement of students with disabilities (USAID, 2005).

The data of this study showed that training was effective to assist teachers for dealing with visually and hearing-impaired students who completed braille, sign language, and other technologies. This finding supports the claim made by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) that well-designed teacher training programs that include practical strategies like braille and sign language are essential for improving educational outcomes.

The results of this study showed that administrative support greatly reduces stress and increases the work efficiency of special education teachers. It also notes that lack of adequate administrative help is associated with both high stress level and low teacher effectiveness. According to Combee (2014) administrators should encourage a collaborative environment in addition to being supportive and helpful.

The teachers claimed that logistic support from peers was fundamental for teachers to reduce stress and create new solutions. This aligns with findings by Jones et al. (2013) who highlighted the importance of school personnel, such as administrators, support staff, and coworkers, in assisting new teachers in comprehending the expectations placed on them.

Teachers also reported that the role of parents and teachers as well as other members of the society in the learning process. This finding aligns with a study of Stanley (2008) revealed that a successful relationship between the home and the school may substantially empower parents, children with disabilities, and the school community.

This research explored the challenges and coping strategies of special education teachers in Khulna in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Key challenges identified include inadequate training, insufficient instructional aids, poor infrastructure, lack of administrative support and burnout aligning with findings from previous studies. To cope, teachers employed strategies such as individualized teaching, integrating assistive technologies, pursuing professional development, collaboration with peers, administrative support and parental and community involvement. Evidence of this research is limited to special education teachers in the Khulna region and may not be relevant to the context of other places in Bangladesh as well as other similar contexts around the world. Further research in this field might be done to comparative study between urban and rural areas of Khulna might reveal the deeper aspects of resource disparities in educating the people and their effect on the teaching. This study contributes to wider knowledge of the special education teacher experience and offers actionable insights to policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders to close existing gaps in the current system, and to enable teachers working with special education students to achieve their students' needs in extremely skillful ways.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The authors of the study acted in accordance with ethical rules in all processes of the research. There are no individuals or financial relationships that could be perceived as potential conflicts of interest related to this study.

Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the research.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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