Administrators' Preparedness for Inclusive Education Reform in Bangladesh

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NOTE TO USERS

DECLARATION

In accordance with Monash University Doctorate regulation 17: Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Philosophy regulations the following declarations are made.

I do hereby declare that the preparation of this thesis contains no material which has been previously accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and behalf, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Approval to conduct the research (Project No: CF12/1079-2012000514) was obtained (on 10 May 2012) from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee, Melbourne, Australia and the Directorate of Primary Education, Bangladesh.

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ABSTRACT

Background: In Bangladesh, Inclusive Education (IE) is a national priority following the government's commitment to international forums to ensure education for all children within the inclusive framework. The policy and programme initiatives of the government to develop primary education indicate a commitment to enacting reform in the education system consistent with the principles of IE. This research study is an attempt to know how primary education administrators understand IE and how committed they are in implementing IE policy in Bangladesh.

Design: This study was conducted in two phases and employed a mixed methods design. In Phase 1 a semi structured interview method was employed to collect data which was followed by Phase II where a survey method was employed to collect data. A total 18 administrators took part in individual interviews and 735 administrators completed a survey that was specifically designed for the study.

Findings: This study revealed widespread confusion in understandings of IE with many contradictory views among administrators, influenced by cultural understandings of disability as well as by inadequacies of reform processes in Bangladesh. The study found that primary education administrators in Bangladesh had not yet formed strong opinions either in favour of or against IE. The background variables such as work location, gender, special education qualification, duration of professional development training, administrative experience, teaching experience, highest level of education, and perceived administrative support for implementation of IE were found to be significant predictors of administrators' attitudes toward IE.

Implications: The present study revealed that shared moral purpose of providing quality education to all children, common understanding of IE reform initiatives with clear mandates and through the provision of professional development training and systemic approach with involvement of the whole system are crucial for IE reform to be effective in Bangladesh. This study has implications for IE reform in Bangladesh as well as in other developing countries.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a good education – Nelson Mandela, 2007

Internationally, Inclusive Education (IE) has been established as a significant reform effort focusing on the rights of all children to be included in quality education, regardless of their circumstances or disadvantage. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation(UNESCO) defines inclusive education as a "process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination" (UNESCO, 2008b, p. 18).

IE reform has been catalysed by a number of international policies such as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All (UNESCO, 2000). IE was strongly advocated in the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) which emphasised the commitment of education systems to child-centred pedagogy, and recognition of the diversity of individual needs and patterns of development among primary school children. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) marked the most significant declaration of the present approach to IE calling on governments to adopt the principles of inclusive education as a matter of law or policy to enrol all children in regular schools (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix). It expanded the notion of 'all', stating that:

> …schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas and groups. (UNESCO 1994, p.6)

Accordingly, international policies have continued to develop IE as a reform effort (e.g. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2011; Handicap International, 2012; UNESCO, 2005, 2008b, 2009, 2012; UNICEF, 2012). Along with the responses to the Salamanca Statement in the West, developing countries have increasingly adopted IE policies and government initiatives for education system reform (Forlin, 2013; Paul, 2011; Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler, & Guang-xue, 2013; Singal, 2006a; Srivastava, de Boer, & Pijl, 2013; Sunardi, Yusuf, Gunarhadi, Priyono, & Yeager, 2011). In Bangladesh, the *National Education Policy (*NEP*) 2010* has included IE as a national priority to ensure the access of all children to general educational institutions. In this policy, IE is recognised as a strategy for including disadvantaged children such as girls, socioeconomically under-privileged children, children from ethnic communities, and children with special needs into the mainstream education system (MOE, 2010). The NEP also charges the school system with ensuring that all children participate in the general education system and providing support and the necessary resources to meet the demands of children with special education needs (those with disabilities, from different ethnic backgrounds, girls, and socially disadvantaged children).

Any reform in the educational context is challenging. In particular, inclusive education (IE) reform has been characterised by “many conflicting positions” and “contradiction” (Miles & Singal, 2010, p.1) and there are doubts about the effectiveness of IE due to “confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion” (Allan, 2008, p.9). One of the key challenges for IE reform is various “competing discourses” (Kearney, 2011, p.4) that result in various meanings and understandings of IE (Graham & Slee, 2008; Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2011), including one of the most tenacious discourses: many still regard IE as special education (Barton, 2003; Dunne, 2009; Slee,2001b). IE is viewed as social justice by many inclusive education researchers (Crockett, 2011; Pazey & Cole, 2013; Shepherd & Hasazi , 2008; Theoharis, 2009) and others see it as dependent on developing policies and practice in context (Miles & Singal, 2010; Pather, 2008). Other researchers have investigated teachers’ beliefs about the success and failure of children in inclusive classrooms (e.g. Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2011; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaret, 2011; Florian & Linklater, 2010; Forlin & Chamber, 2011; Sharma, 2012).

Most inclusive education researchers, however, appear to agree that those engaged in inclusive school reform should attend closely to: a) understanding the cultural and social institutional contexts of schools (Carrington, 1999; Carrington & Robinson, 2004), b) valuing diversity and increasing the participation of students in a range of cultures (Booth & Ainscow,2011; Bourke & Carrington, 2007), c) reducing exclusionary pressures to achieve a way of life in schools where people are valued and treated with respect for their varied knowledge and experiences(Slee, 2005; Slee & Allan, 2001), and d) ensuring educational leadership take responsibility at all levels, including administrators, and most importantly, principals(Fullan, 2007).

With regard to leadership Fullan (1992) suggests that the school principal is the primary agent of change and a key figure in promoting or blocking change. According to Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004), leaders who promote inclusive education are seen as strong individuals with a firm commitment to inclusive values and collaborative practice through actions including building a shared culture of inclusive practices across the system and schools (Kugelmass & Ainscow , 2004). When leaders do not play their role in building such a culture, inclusive education is not going to happen. Considering this significance, then, of a common culture of inclusive education within the education system, it is critical to understand key stakeholders' (e.g. leaders) views regarding IE. This research study therefore investigated Bangladeshi primary education administrators' views regarding IE to explore what is or is not working in relation to the Bangladesh government's initiative to provide quality education to all children, regardless of their circumstances or disadvantage in Bangladesh.

Rationale for the study

Bangladesh is a developing country in which inclusive education (IE) is still at an early stage of development (Mullick, 2013). While commitment to the ideal of achieving 'Education For All' (EFA) is an obvious aspect of educational policies in Bangladesh, the reality of achieving IE reform still remains a challenge. Confusion regarding the broad concept of IE is prevalent in Bangladesh (Ahsan et al., 2011), and the way it is presently implemented in primary schools is qualitatively different to the goals outlined in the policy documents relative to IE (Mullick, 2013; Sarker & Davey, 2009).

Under the government's *Second Primary Education Development Programme* (PEDP II) initiative, an IE reform strategy was devised and professional development training was provided to stakeholders during 2003 to 2011 with a specific focus on promoting the IE philosophy in Bangladesh's primary school system (MOPME, 2003a). Following PEDP II, the *Third Primary Education Development Programme* (PEDPIII) started implementation with an expanded commitment to create an inclusive culture based on the principle that all learners have a right to education, irrespective of their individual characteristics or differences (MOPME, 2011). All these government initiatives imply that key primary education stakeholders, including administrators, have accepted the responsibility of reforming schools so they can respond to IE related policies in Bangladesh. To date, there is no research that has attempted to examine how primary education administrators understand inclusive education (IE) and how committed they are in implementing IE policy in Bangladesh. This research study was undertaken to address these key research questions.

Aim of the study

The overall aim of this study was to investigate educational administrators' perceptions of IE reform in the context of Bangladesh. And specifically to:

- investigate primary education administrators' understandings of inclusive education in Bangladesh;
- identify primary education administrators' views regarding facilitators of inclusive education in Bangladesh;
- identify primary education administrators' opinions about challenges in implementing inclusive education in Bangladesh;
- identify primary education administrators' views about possible strategies to address identified challenges;

- determine what attitudes primary education administrators hold toward inclusive education in Bangladesh; and
- determine whether the attitudes held by administrators toward inclusive education are significantly related to their background variables.

Study context

Being a signatory to many international declarations and treaties, the government of Bangladesh is committed to international forums to ensure education for all children within an inclusive framework. It undertook a number of initiatives both in terms of policy and programmes to implement inclusive practices in schools. Some of the most prominent initiatives are: the *Compulsory Primary Education* (CPE) *Act 1990*, The *National Plan of Action II* [NPA II](2003–2015), *Primary Education Development Programmes* (PEDP), *Reaching Out of School Children* (ROSC),and *Primary Education Stipend Projects* (PESP).

The Compulsory Primary Education* (CPE) *Act 1990: In Bangladesh, the *Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) Act 1990* was enacted as a move towards free and compulsory education for all children. This Act specified that unless there are valid grounds, the guardian of each child living in an area where primary education has been made compulsory shall have his/her child admitted to the nearest primary education institution located in that area (MOPME, 1990).

The ***National Plan of Action II* (NPA II):** In relation to IE reform, one of the most significant policy initiatives by the Bangladesh government was the enactment of the *National Plan of Action II* (NPA II). *The* NPA II was formulated to be implemented during 2003–2015 to ensure that *all* primary school-aged children (6 to 10years) in

Bangladesh, including those from different ethnic groups, the disadvantaged, and those with disability, should be enrolled and complete primary education successfully (MOPME, 2003). This plan of action played an important role in encouraging the implementation of IE in primary schools in Bangladesh (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013).

***Primary Education Development Programmes*:** The Bangladesh government undertook three large scale Primary Education Development Programmes with an aim to ensure access and quality in primary education in Bangladesh. These were: *Primary Education Development Programme* (PEDP), Second *Primary Education Development Programme* (PEDP II) and *Third Primary Education Development Programme* (PEDP III). The PEDP (1997–2003) focused on ten specific objectives embracing enrolment, completion, quality inputs and monitoring issues. Building on the achievements of PEDP, PEDP II focused on quality improvement, institutional capacity building, and systemic reform. The latter programme ran from 2004 to 2011, putting emphasis on inclusive education and better learning of all students including students with disabilities. Inclusive education was incorporated as one of the major components of PEDPII, which aimed to directly address equity issues. In particular, component 4 of the programme focused on promoting and facilitating access to quality schooling for those students who have never undertaken formal primary schooling, or dropped out before completing Grade 5.

Under PEDPII, an Inclusive Education Framework was developed in 2004 with specific strategic action plans for children with special needs, indigenous children, vulnerable children and gender issues (MOPME, 2003a). Some activities, including training, were conducted with the goal of implementing the action plans designed for addressing IE, and to create an inclusive culture based on the principle that all learners

have a right to education, irrespective of their individual characteristics or differences(DPE,2011).In order to reach the excluded students from mainstream education, one significant intervention under the PEDP II was an innovation grant, designed to support school level innovative programmes based on collaboration between communities, government and civil society (MOPME, 2003a).

At the close of PEDP II, the government of Bangladesh implemented the *Third Primary Education Development Programme* (PEDPIII) in July 2011, with an expanded commitment to create an inclusive culture based on the principle that all learners have a right to education, irrespective of their individual characteristics or difference. "Learning in the classroom" was the major focus in PEDP III (DPE,2011, p.xvi) that aimed to achieve the goal of establishing an efficient, inclusive and equitable primary education system to deliver effective and relevant child-friendly learning for all children (DPE, 2011; MOPME, 2011).

***Reaching Out of School Children* (ROSC) and *Primary Education Stipend Projects* (PESP):** Two other important initiatives in Bangladesh supplementing the PEDPs to support achieving the government's goal of Education for All (EFA) are the *Reaching Out of School Children* (ROSC) project and the *Primary Education Stipend* Project (PESP). The ROSC project was undertaken by the government of Bangladesh in 2004 to educate children who had dropped out of school and/or those who had never received primary education. This project particularly aimed to provide access to primary education and ensure retention of disadvantaged children who were out-of-school, and to improve the quality and efficiency of primary education, especially for those children, and finally to strengthen the capacity and building of learning centres and associated organisations (GOB, 2014).

In 1993, the government of Bangladesh introduced the *Food for Education* (FFE) programme using food transfers as an instrument to encourage poor families to send their children to school. The main objective of the FFE was to enhance enrolment, retention and completion in primary education. In 2002, the FFE was replaced by *the Primary Education Stipend project* (PESP), a cash based educational transfer programme with an objective similar to the FFE. The PESP aimed to: a) increase the number of children into primary schools from poor families, b) increase attendance and reduce the dropout rate from primary schools, c) increase the rate of completion of the primary education cycle, d) control child labour and reduce poverty, and e) enhance the quality of primary education (GOB, 2013).

Along with these initiatives in 2001 a working definition of inclusive education was developed in Bangladesh through a consultative workshop organised by UNESCO-Dhaka involving different stakeholders. Inclusive education was defined as:

> …an approach to improve the education system by limiting and removing barriers to learning and acknowledging individual children's needs and potential. The goal is to make a significant impact on the educational opportunities of those who attend school but who for different reasons do not achieve adequately, and those who are not attending school but who could attend if families, communities, schools and the education system were more responsive to their requirements(Consultative workshop, 2001 cited in Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006, p.6)

In 2007, the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), the central implementing agency of the primary education system, mandated that primary schools in Bangladesh

include and provide appropriate education for all children. This mandate meant that schools were not only expected to ensure that all children have access to their local school, but they were required to ensure that schooling would support and ensure the educational success of those children. In order to ensure support for schooling to promote inclusive primary education the government of Bangladesh undertook several other "supply-side and demand-side" policy steps, such as infrastructural development of primary schools, free text books, abolition of school fees for students and training of primary school teachers (GOB, 2013, p.2).

Taken together, various efforts in Bangladesh primary education clearly show government's commitment to ensure education for all children within an inclusive framework. As an impact of various efforts by the government, there have been noteworthy achievements in primary education, particularly in school enrolment and closing the gender gap. Enrolment increased from 60% to 97% during 1990–2011 and, most importantly, girls' enrolment overtook boys', nearly reaching the EFA goal (99.40%) by 2011. Primary school attendance also increased from 49.7% to 77% during 2001–2011 (GOB, 2013, p.2). However, despite an impressive advancement, there have been serious concerns in primary education regarding access and success for all children in Bangladesh. For example, approximately 5 million children are still out of school (World Bank, 2013,p.xvii) and about 40% of enrolled children (approximately 5.97 million primary school aged children)have not completed the full five-year primary schooling cycle (UNICEF, 2012b). This scenario in the context of Bangladesh suggests that the IE reform journey is troubled with many challenges to address.

Various challenges for effectiveness of IE reform in Bangladesh were identified in the literature. A number of studies indicated that the way IE is implemented in

primary schools is not consistent with the goals outlined in IE policy documents(Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014; Ahsan, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2013; Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006; Malak, 2013; Mullick, Deppeler & Sharma, 2012; Sarker & Davey, 2009). Although existing policies in Bangladesh support a rights based approach to education for all children, and various initiatives have been taken to create an inclusive culture based on the principle that all learners have a right to education irrespective of their individual characteristics or differences, a vast portion of children still do not have access to any kind of education in Bangladesh. There are limited schooling opportunities for specific groups such as working children, disabled children, indigenous children and those in remote areas or living in extreme poverty (UNICEF, 2009). The report by UNICEF argued that Bangladeshi school culture is far from fully inclusive as disadvantaged children (i.e. children with disabilities or children from ethnic minorities) in particular are vulnerable to exclusion from educational opportunities (UNICEF, 2009).

Most importantly, research studies have indicated that the education system is not supportive of children with special needs in Bangladesh (Ahmmed, 2013; Malak, 2013; Mallick & Sheesh, 2013; Mamun, 2000; Mullick et al., 2012a). As a result, despite all government initiatives, a huge number of children are still excluded from school. Most out-of-school children are somehow disabled or belong to another marginalised group. Those who somehow enrol are gradually and intentionally pushed out of the school system because schools are not prepared to serve them, according to their learning styles and needs (Ackerman, Thormann, & Huq, 2005). Although the Annual Sector Performance Report of Primary Education (DPE, 2009) shows the number of ‘disabled children’ enrolled in school has increased from 45,680 in 2005 to 77,488 in 2008, most children with disabilities are still out of the regular schools in

Bangladesh (see also UNICEF, 2009). This overview provides a general idea that children with special needs along with other marginalised groups are not sufficiently and adequately included in the regular education system in Bangladesh. It implies that education system in Bangladesh is faced with the "challenge of providing effective education for all children" (UNESCO, 2008b, p. 1). Thus, it was critical to study the process of inclusive education reform, devised a few years ago to ensure all children have a right to education in Bangladesh.

Organisation of the thesis

Chapter one provided an account of the background and need for the present study. The chapter then introduced the conceptual framework that guided the present study, and the rationale for the study was described. This chapter concluded with a presentation of the aims of this study.

Chapter two begins with a discussion on the research literature in conceptualising inclusive education. The next section presents an analysis of the review of conceptual literature regarding change in education, followed by a section that presents the conceptual framework for IE reform which guided this study. Then, a discussion on the inclusive education (IE) reform literature is presented with reference to the literature on the implementation of IE which is organised based on the key components of the conceptual framework for IE reform. This chapter concludes with an examination of research literature regarding administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and the factors influencing these attitudes.

Chapter three discusses the methodology employed to conduct this two-phase study. The detailed descriptions of the methods employed for each phase are presented

in two sections: Phase 1 and Phase 2. The first section presents outlines the procedures used to select participants for interview and the method used to develop the interview instrument. This is followed by a presentation of the procedures used to collect data, transcription and translation processes and data analysis for Phase 1 data. Similarly, in the section on Phase 2 the procedures used to select participants and to develop the survey instrument are outlined. This is followed by a description of the reliability of the survey instrument used for this study. This chapter concludes with a description of the procedures used to analyse the survey data in Phase 2.

Chapter four presents Phase 1 results of the study, reported under the following section headings: a) conceptions of 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha'(Inclusive Education), b) challenges to Inclusive Education (IE) reform, and c) IE reform: moving forward.
In Chapter five, Phase 2 results are presented in three sections: a) characteristics of study participants, b) attitudes toward inclusive education, and c) facilitators of and barriers to IE reform.

Chapter six provides a discussion of the findings from both phases of this study under the following headings: a) understandings of inclusive education (IE), b) barriers to and facilitators for IE reform in Bangladesh, c) key elements for strategic IE reform in Bangladesh, and d) administrators' commitment to IE reform.

Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter, discusses the implications of the findings of this study for government inclusive education (IE) reform and makes recommendations for moving the IE agenda forward in Bangladesh. In light of the limitations of the study, the contribution to knowledge is outlined along with directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature related to the aim of providing all children with equitable access to and participation in quality schooling more commonly known as inclusive education (IE).The literature relative to educational change and IE reform is reviewed too. The first section of the chapter attempts to identify what IE *is* and *is not*, and identifies and reviews the literature regarding IE for students internationally. The next section presents a discussion on educational change followed by a conceptual framework for IE reform which is developed based on the review of literature regarding educational change in general. In the concluding part of this chapter, administrators' attitudes toward IE reform and the influencing factors are discussed from the contemporary literature.

Inclusion and inclusive education have been used interchangeably in the research literature. The term 'inclusive education' became popular when it appeared in publications such as the *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. This term has been selected for use throughout this literature review because of the associated specific focus on education, which is relevant to this study's context: primary school education.

Conceptualising Inclusive Education

What is inclusive education?

Inclusive education (IE) is arguably one of the most contested educational terms (Graham & Slee, 2008). Roger Slee, one of the prominent writers in the field of

inclusive education, highlights the viewpoint that any discussion of the conception of IE must involve discussion of exclusion. He argues that "Exclusion is ingrained into the global fabric in general and education in particular" (Slee, 2013, p. 3). Slee and Allan (2005) have described inclusive education as a social movement against exclusion in education. They warned that inclusive education term(s) can be hijacked, which can lead to inappropriate and inaccurate use. Researchers in the field pointed out that such misuse has led to extensive confusion about what inclusive education means (Ainscow, Dyson,& Weiner, 2013; Cologon, 2013; Kearney, 2011). There are many examples of those who appropriate the term in ways that represent various forms of exclusion. Some examples of inappropriate use of IE include exclusion as:

i) The reshaping of special education

ii) Physical presence in the local school

iii) Exclusion as labelling of ideology.

Exclusion as reshaping of special education. When the terms "inclusive education" or "inclusion" are misused by those committed to perpetuating systems of "special" education this creates problems for the realisation of inclusive education (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor & Valle, 2011; Cologon, 2013; D'Alessio, 2011). Such perspective of inclusive education follows many of the principles and practices related to special education. "Special education" however does not suggest equal participation; rather it suggests exclusion (Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A.C., & Spandagou, 2011). Many inclusive education scholars (e.g. Adams, Swain & Clark, 2000; Lipskey & Gartner, 1994; Slee, 2001a) have agreed to the point that special education has been described not only as a place but as a deficit way of thinking about students with disabilities. This has led to those children's exclusion from everyday life, and a denial of their rights to quality education in their local schools. It can be argued that IE

remains a complex and contradictory concept due to the use of such "competing discourses" to explain and describe it (Kearney, 2011, p.4). Among many, Corbett and Slee (2000) have described the concept as follows:

> Inclusive schooling according to traditional special educational perspectives is seen as a technical problem to be solved through diagnosis and remedial interventions. Typically, this generates policies whereby the expert professions are called in to identify the nature and measure the extent of disability. This is followed by highly bureaucratic ascertainment processes where calculations of resources, human and material, are made to support the locating of the disabled child in the regular school or classroom (Corbett & Slee, 2000, p. 143).

Literature on inclusive education describes exclusion as a process that occurs when students are denied access to participation at school that includes access to teacher time, access to curriculum or resources and so forth (Booth, 1996; Kearney, 2011). Exclusion in education works against inclusive education (Kearney, 2011). Cochran-Smith and Dudley-Marling (2012) have contributed to the discussion on division between 'special education' and 'inclusive education' by highlighting two issues: deficit perspectives and access to general curriculum. They noted that dominant special education discourses focused on deficit thinking that consider identification and remediation of learning deficits as fundamental to special education practices.

In contrast, the social justice perspective of IE rejects this deficit thinking because it pathologises individual students, their language and culture, their families, and communities. Curriculum content and structure of schooling divide these two positions. While special education advocated for greater access to the general education curriculum for those with special needs; social justice advocates have tended to seek

“transformation of the existing curriculum in dramatic and fundamental ways and to challenge the ‘normal’ structure of schooling that have perpetuated the oppression of various social groups, especially those that are historically marginalized” (Cochran-Smith & Dudley-Marling, 2012, p.241).

Inclusive education cannot take place in segregated settings, such as special schools, units and classes, because of their exclusionary nature. According to Slee and Allan (2005) inclusive education has been misunderstood to the extent to which claims are made that inclusive education happens when a special school is relocated onto the grounds of a regular school so that students can share some activities. They point out that some faculties of education in Australian universities have employed special educators to train new teachers to be inclusive. The issue here is that some ‘new concepts of inclusive education’ still maintain the myth that segregated education with specialised training and specialised teachers in special settings, such as special schools, units and classrooms, are needed for some students.

Segregated education has been widely criticised in the research literature because of its exclusionary forms. According to Lipskey and Gartner (1994), IE is neither “dumping” of children in schools without recognising the reality and the legal requirements for each child, nor a new label for “mainstreaming” that assumed the existence of two separate systems (regular and special) where integration was mainly limited to non-academic activities (p.36). They argued that IE entails taking programmes designed to meet the individual needs of each child, and that it does not benefit some students at the expense of others. It is argued that because of the exclusionary nature, all special education related thinking and practice, wherever it

happens, need to be left behind (Slee, 2001a). Thus, IE should be developed in regular schools accessible by all and in ways that address students' diverse needs.

Exclusion as physical presence in the local school. Much of the rhetoric in inclusive education literature suggests that IE can be developed in regular schools and often refers to the placement of students with disabilities in classrooms alongside their peers (Kugelmass, 2004). However, IE does not occur simply because children with disabilities are physically present in their local school (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011;Mclesky & Waldron, 2007). Indeed it is the full participation of a child in every aspect of educational settings (Fisher, 2012; Lalvani, 2013) as opposed to "[C] o-existence without involvement and sharing" (Curcic, 2009, p.532). Some researchers (e.g. Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006b, Kearney 2011; MacArthur, 2009) noted that special education and deficit thinking can be traced in some regular schools where students with diverse needs can face substantial barriers to their learning and participation.

Another common misconception is that inclusive education as a "notion of assimilation" requires the included child to adjust, change or fit within a mainstream setting which is contradictory to the notion of inclusive education (Cologon, 2013, p.13). These misunderstandings can raise further questions among members of the school community regarding whether or not all children have the basic right to be included.

Exclusion as labelling of ideology. Special education was often criticised and challenged for its construction upon a belief system of individual pathology, ideas about what is normal and abnormal, deficit thinking, and the belief that only expert teachers can know about, and meet the needs of students with disabilities. This "medical model" ideology was associated with the phenomenon of exclusion of children with disabilities

(Kearney, 2011, p.7).According to Booth and Ainscow (1998), this ideology led to exclusion and segregation because it presumed that children with disabilities were deficient and thus required 'special and different forms of education'.

Other researchers shared similar viewpoints uttering that: "A great deal of theory and practice which forms of special education tradition is essentially disablist, compounding the patterns of educational and social exclusion we witness in school and communities" (Corbett & Slee, 2000, p.143). Such an approach of labelling arguments about IE is considered unhelpful, because it stops open discussion about the rights of all children regarding their access to quality education that improves their present life in the community as well as prepares them well for an adult life. Such an approach also disrupts the discussions regarding how regular schools can work, progress and change in positive ways to develop all students' learning and participation, which ultimately leads to embracing exclusion (MacArthur, 2009).

However, opposed to such labelling of medical model ideology to IE, a number of researchers in the field suggested practical ways to be engaged with inclusive education. For example, Mogharreban and Burns (2009) argue that "Inclusion is not simply an intellectual ideal; it is a physical and very real experience" (p.407). Booth, Ainscow, and Kingstone (2006) suggest that IE requires an ongoing process of "putting inclusive values into action" (p.4).Cologon (2013) expands this view with a suggestion that engagement with inclusive education as a "practical and everyday process" is essential to translate those values into action (p.21). He argues that IE can be understood as "ongoing critical engagement with flexible and child centred pedagogy that caters for and values diversity, and holds high expectations for all children (p.21).

Definitions and Practice

Ambiguities in conceptualisation of IE create challenges for defining IE as well as for its application (Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A. C., & Spandagou, 2011). Inclusive education scholars agree in point that IE is something that cannot be easily defined (Forlin, Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler & Sharma, 2013; MacArthur, 2009).IE is interpreted and applied in many different ways (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2002; Forlin et al., 2013; Glazzard, 2013).There is little agreement or clarity about definitions of IE, its implications for educational systems, and its practices or success criteria by which it can be judged in the developed countries of the world (Armstrong, A. C., Armstrong, D.,& Spandagou, 2010).Sikes, Lawson and Parker (2007) emphasise that understandings of IE are not "fixed or definite, but rather are 'becoming', developing and changing as they are articulated" (p.367).Consequently, IE is viewed differently by different groups in different contexts (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006a) and there is "no single consensual definition" (Winter& O'Raw, 2010, p.15). In the absence of shared understandings of IE, "the field itself is riddled with uncertainties, disputes and contradictions" (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010, p.402). Glazzard (2013) argues that a "multitude of practices" may arise under the name of IE due such absence of a shared understanding (p.182).

Researchers in the field have provided suggestions to address ambiguities in defining inclusive education. For example, Dyson (1999) states:

> Constructions of inclusion imply different notions, not simply of what schools should look like, but also of what constitutes exclusion, of who are the excluded groups, of the rational for and purposes of inclusion, and, indeed, of what is meant by a 'just society' (p. 49).

Dyson (1999) suggests that ambiguities in the concept of inclusive education might be addressed by discussing different inclusive education and the different discourses from which these were constructed. The different conceptualisations of inclusive education are broadly grouped under two categories: those that are conceptualised based on the primary features, and those that conceptualised inclusive education as the removal of that which excludes and marginalises.

Conceptualisation of inclusive education based on primary characteristics

Inclusive education has been mostly conceptualised based on certain characteristics and features such as accepting all children, age appropriate placement and students being able to attend their local schools (Forlin et al., 2013). Researchers who have focused on the main features are those who have defined and interpreted inclusive education along the *'whole school approach'* (Forlin et al., 2013, p. 6) where all children are educated together (Ainscow, 1999; Mitchell, 1999 & 2005) in the regular school.

To define inclusive practice, researchers and forums have discussed various processes to deal with students' diversity at schools as principles of inclusive education philosophy. A range of definitions of inclusive education and various sources are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Definitions of inclusive education and their various sources

Definitions of IE	**Reference**
Being with one another, how to deal with adversity , how to deal with difference	Forest and Pearpoint, 1992
A set of principles which ensures that the student with a disability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the school community in every respect	Uditsky, 1993
A move towards extending the scope of 'ordinary' schools so they can include a greater diversity of children	Clark et al., 1995
Schools that deliver a curriculum to students through organisational arrangements that are different from those used in schools that exclude some students from their regular classrooms	Ballard, 1995
Schools that are diverse problem-solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students	Rouse and Florian,1996
Full membership of an age-appropriate class in your local school doing the same lessons as the other pupils and it mattering if you are not there. Plus you have friends who spend time with you outside school	Hall, 1996
The process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering its curricula organisation and provision	Sebba, 1996
Schools that are accepting of all children	Thomas, 1997
Ensuring education for all students in mainstream schools is the guiding philosophy of this educational innovation	Florian, 1998
Placement of students with disabilities in the classroom alongside their peers	Kugelmass, 2004
Education provided for children with disabilities in the regular classroom where instructions are provided by the regular teacher	Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2004
Enabling all children to participate and learn within regular schools instead of separate schools for children with different abilities or needs	DCDD, 2006

(Adapted and updated from Florian, 2005, p.31)

The principles of inclusive education philosophy have been pronounced by the Centre for Studies of Inclusive Education as follows:

- All children have the right to learn and play together.
- Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.

- There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for the duration of their schooling. They belong together rather than need to be protected from one another (CSIE, 1996:10 cited in Florian, 1998).

An analysis of common definitions of inclusive education indicate there has been a gradual shift in emphasis from a focus on the child to a focus on schooling practices and the extent to which a child with special educational needs is involved as a full member of the school community, with full access to and participation in all aspects of education (Winter & O'Raw, 2010, p.12). The following examples are illustrative of the changed emphasis. One view of inclusive education presented by the Centre for Studies of Inclusive Education states:

- All children and young people – with and without disabilities or difficulties – learning together in ordinary pre-school provision, schools, colleges and universities with appropriate networks of support. Inclusion means enabling all students to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream settings, whatever their needs. There are many different ways of achieving this and an inclusive timetable might look different for each student.
- Inclusive education better conveys the right to belong to the mainstream and a joint endeavour to end discrimination and to work towards equal opportunities for all (cited in Winter & O'Raw, 2010, pp.12-13).

The British Psychological Society defined inclusive education based on the following concepts:

- rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason, whether it be ability, gender, language, care status, family income, disability, sexuality, colour, religion or ethnic origin;
- maximising the participation of all learners in the community schools of their choice;
- making learning more meaningful and relevant for all, particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary pressure; and
- rethinking and restructuring policies, curricula, culture and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs (cited in Winter & O'Raw, 2010, p.12)

According to Frankel, Gold and Ajodhia-Andrews (2010), inclusive education values the "active participation of every child as a full member of his or her family, community and society" (p.3). Similarly, Cologon (2013) has defined IE as every child's right to be a valued member of society, and to be provided with equal opportunity for their active participation and their contribution to every area of learning. It involves recognition of impairment as one of the many forms of diversity, and viewing and welcoming diversity as "a resource rather than a problem". It requires creating a condition where "all children can be valued and experience a sense of belonging and where all children are encouraged to reach their full potential in all areas of development" (Cologon, 2013,p.20). This view of inclusive education is reflected in the words of Sapon-Shevin (2003):

> [I]nclusion is not about disability, nor is it only about schools. Inclusion is about social justice. What kind of world do we want to create and how should we

educate children for that world? What kinds of skills and commitments do people need to thrive in a diverse society? (p. 26).

Further, some have attempted to define inclusive education in terms of social justice and human rights. For example, Mitchell's (2005) view on inclusive education includes:

- entitlement to full membership in regular, age-appropriate classes in their neighbourhood schools; and
- access to appropriate aids and support services, individualised programmes, with appropriately differentiated curriculum and assessment practices(p.4).

While Mitchell's (2005) elements of inclusive education can be applied exclusively to schools and schooling, his view reflected a wider view of inclusive education based on social justice philosophy.

Some scholars in this field have viewed inclusive education as a process that ensures access and full participation of all learners, and overcomes the history of exclusion by identifying and eradicating obstacles to learning and addressing exclusionary pressures (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Recognising the importance of such views, Acedo, Ferrer and Pamies (2009) have suggested that the differences in conceptualising inclusive education point to the need to adopt a process-focused approach and to get a better understanding of the barriers that impede inclusive education at the individual level. Skidmore (2004) describes inclusive education as a process whereby the teaching practices and curriculum activities are geared towards building the capacity to accept all learners into regular school contexts. More recently,

Ainscow (2005) briefly notes that inclusive education is a broader term, covering several main features. According to Ainscow (2005), inclusive education is:

- a process;
- concerned with the identification and removal of barriers;
- about the presence, participation and achievement of all students; and
- intent on groups of learners who may be 'at risk' of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement(p.15).

Ainscow's (2005) set of inclusive education key features is based on celebrating the diversity, complexity and acceptance of heterogeneous students, not only within school but also within society. His set of key features in inclusive education suggests the "dynamic and evolving nature of inclusive educational practices". Such an approach reframes inclusive education as "an issue of school reform and school improvement rather than a process of fitting children into existing structure" (Winter & O'Raw, 2010, p.13).A similar reference to the process can be found in the following description of inclusive education:

> …a process involving changes in the way schools are organised, in the curriculum and in teaching strategies, to accommodate the range of needs and abilities among pupils. Through this process, the school build its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces the need to exclude pupils (Sebba & Sachdev, 1997, p.2).

International documentation such as guidelines for inclusion (UNESCO, 2005) defined inclusive education as a process that involves "a range of changes and modification in content, approaches, structures and strategies" (p.15).

Ainscow and Miles (2008) add to the field, arguing that progress related to inclusive education demands greater clarity about what becoming more inclusive involves. They have defined inclusive education as a "*principled approach to education*" that involves:

- increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the curricula, cultures and communities of local school;
- the process of restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality; and
- ensuring presence, participation and achievement of all students vulnerable to exclusionary pressures, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as "having special educational needs" (Ainscow & Miles, 2008, p.20).

Booth, Ainscow and Kingston (2006) have highlighted another feature of IE stating that it entails an ongoing process of "putting inclusive values into action" (p.4). Similarly, IE is defined as an ethical and "political position" that challenges the view that attaches ascending and descending values to various people(Slee, 2011, p.14).According to Slee (2011) IE involves not just changing our schools, but also changing our roles as teachers and leaders. He states that: "…inclusive education invites us to think about the nature of the world we live in, a world that we prefer, and our role in shaping both of those worlds" (Slee, 2011, p.14).

Based on a variety of sources located within this main features category, Loreman (2009) has provided a synthesis of the key features of inclusive education. These features are:

- All children attend their neighbourhood school.
- Schools and districts have a ‘zero-rejection’ policy when it comes to registering and teaching children in their region. All children are welcomed and valued.
- All children learn in regular, heterogeneous classrooms with same-age peers.
- All children follow substantively similar programs of study, with curriculum that can be adapted and modified, if needed. Modes of instruction are varied and responsive to the needs of all.
- All children contribute to regular school and classroom learning activities and events.
- All children are supported to make friends and to be socially successful with their peers.
- Adequate resources and staff training are provided within the school and district to support inclusion (Loreman, 2009, p. 43).

Literature on inclusive education cautioned that defining inclusive education by what it is, however, is problematic as such definitions may be impacted by swings in educational practices, context, culture and circumstance (Forlin et al.,2013).

Conceptualising inclusive education as the removal of that which excludes and marginalises

Inclusive education, according to traditional special education perspectives, is seen as concerned with education of children with disabilities only. However, scholars in the field such as Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006a) suggest that such a way of thinking about inclusive education is not helpful, because it limits those who need attention. Moreover, ideas of inclusive education would make no sense if only one group of students were attended to. Therefore, inclusive education must attend to any

barriers to participation of students, and as a matter of social justice must challenge barriers to participation experienced by any child in any school.

Recently many researchers have emphasised the idea of removing barriers to participation in education as their key conceptual framework for inclusive education (Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick, & West, 2013; Graham & Slee, 2008; Mittler, 2012). For example, Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick, & West (2013) and Mittler (2012) have conceptualised the task of inclusive education as being that which identifies and removes barriers to participation in education. Forlin and associates (2013) quoted other researchers (such as Slee, 2011; Graham & Slee, 2008) who have suggested that "the special school-regular school dichotomy is not any longer a useful way of structuring education"(p. 8) and the barriers that exist either in special school or in the regular school sector need to be removed so as to produce what is not like any of the two. It seems that they suggest the "irregular school" which is neither a special school nor a regular school (Slee, 2011; Forlin et al., 2013). Arguing that "the irregular school" is neither a special nor a regular school, Slee (2011) views it to be one that has been re-envisioned and restored with a view to eliminating barriers to inclusive education in a precautionary way. He notes that "Reforming education is a manifold and complex task that reaches into the deep structures of education and schooling to produce different policies, practices and cultures"(Slee, 2011, p.164). Researchers tend to have reached agreement on one point: the idea of inclusive education is about developing a system committed to the 'uniqueness of students' (Forlin et al., 2013, p.9).

Extensive research investigating implementation of inclusive education in countries around the world identified a number of barriers. For example, in Zimbabwe, there was a lack of resources, training among teachers, commitment by policy makers,

specific legislation and negative attitudes toward people experiencing disability(Chireshe, 2013; Musengi, Mudyahoto & Chireshe, 2010;Mushoriwa, 2002).In Malawi, there was a lack of coordination between stakeholders(Griender, 2010). In Australia, it was inadequate funding and behaviour problems with children (Graham & Spandagou, 2011). In Guyana, there were negative attitudes toward those with special needs plus an absence of change agents to support, lead and advocate for inclusive education (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel,2010). In Thailand, there was a negative cultural attitude of blame towards people with disability, existing policies and centralised management, and limited funding (Klibthong, 2013; Vorapanya & Dunlop, 2012,) including the assumption that special education teachers are responsible for teaching children with disabilities, lack of training, unpreparedness of teachers in terms of special education skill and knowledge in teaching children with disabilities and insufficient support from principals(Sukbunpant, Arthur-Kelly, & Dempsey, 2012). In South Africa, there was reluctance and lack of preparedness of players at different levels, non-functioning or unavailability of support structure, inappropriate training, lack of individualised attention to and neglect of learners who experience barriers to learning (Geldenhuys &Wevers, 2013). In Greece, the centralised system was found as barrier to IE that created “serious limitations” to teachers’ thinking (Strogilos, 2011, p.15). In Serbia, there were inadequate professional development programmes for teachers, low peer status of children with disabilities in regular classrooms, and lack of resources (Rajovic & Jovanovic, 2013). In Ethiopa, there was a negative attitude by teachers towards inclusive education (Beyene & Tizazu, 2010). In Singapore, there were person-related hindrances, structural obstacles, gaps in programme delivery, and limited specialised training and resources (Yeo, Neihart, Tang, Chong, & Huan, 2011). In Botswana, there was inadequate training in special education, lack of resources and a high teacher-student ratio (Mukhopadhyay,Nenty & Abosi, 2012). And in Bangladesh,

there was a negative attitude, inaccessible school environment, and lack of accommodation (Mallick & Sheesh, 2013), authority, students' lack of acceptance, non-supportive views of parents and community, teacher resistance, limited professional development, and limited resources and physical environments (Mullick et al., 2012a). There were also large class sizes, high workloads, inflexible curriculum policy of primary education and inadequate experiential learning facilities for teacher education programmes (Malak,2013), challenges in preparing pre-service teachers for inclusive education (Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012), and lack of government initiatives to recruit teachers with special needs training (Hoque, Zohora, Islam, & Al-Ghefeili, 2013).

In addition, some international organisations reported on barriers to inclusive education from their experiences of inclusive education programmes and initiatives undertaken in different countries. For example, according to a Sight Savers International report, several factors that contribute to exclusion include: lack of proper understanding of inclusive education, societal attitudes, poverty, insufficient government leadership, a lack of and/or poor quality human and material resources, fragmented approaches, weak role models, and inadequate confidence building programmes for children with disabilities(Sight Savers International, n.d.). Another report (Handicap International, 2012) identified some barriers grouped into three categories: a) negative attitude in the community and lack of knowledge, b) quality inclusive primary education not accessible to children with disabilities due to inadequate teaching, monitoring and support and an inaccessible education environment, and c) lack of national and local inclusive education policies.

Again, many research studies and international reports suggested strategies and initiatives for removing barriers to inclusive education. For example, Sukbunpant, Arthur-Kelly, & Dempsey (2012) recommended some strategies for the Thai context which include: inclusive education policy and inclusive education support need to span

the wider education system to address younger children; teacher preparation programmes need to provide adequate special needs training; a public education programme to assist the Thai community to reconcile traditional Buddhist beliefs into beliefs that are innate in including children with disabilities in regular classes; some traditional views of Thai teachers regarding the parent's role with a child with disabilities need to be challenged; and commitment and proactive leadership by the principal.

Rajovic and Jovanovic (2013) reported Serbian teachers' recommendations to include: organisation and constant realisation of development programmes on inclusive education about the needs of particular schools; continuous cooperation with all relevant individuals and institutions (e.g. health care, social welfare); change in organisational context of teaching(e.g. flexible curriculum, time dynamics); and additional support for children and teachers such as psychologists, speech therapists, physicians, psychotherapists and so on.

Another research study reporting on inclusive education in Guyana (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010) suggested that prevalent sociocultural attitudes toward children with special needs require transformation to see them as active and contributing members of their schools and communities; regardless of the abilities of the children, all children must be viewed as having equal access to all aspects of society including educational aspects. The researchers of the study concluded that transformation among social beliefs and attitudes will in turn support transformation of the educational system including policy development, accessibility and allocation of funds, securing of inclusive education advocates, ensuring adequate special needs teacher training,

provision of adequate special needs teacher training, increasing inclusive education philosophies and shared commitments throughout schools.

Kim (2014) emphasised teacher education in facilitating teachers' greater awareness and knowledge of individuals with disabilities and the varied types of disabilities to bring about positive attitudes for both teacher and students, considered key in advancing the state of inclusive education in South Korea. The researcher reported that the South Korean educators and administrators had developed and revised their special education policies to guarantee the rights of children with special needs to learning within an inclusive education framework. He added that due to culturally immersed belief in Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, the South Korean society hugely values familial ties, traits that extend naturally and informally to safeguard its vulnerable members. The researcher concluded that the success of inclusive education in South Korea was mainly influenced by social, cultural, economic and political factors.

The most prevalent features of the identified barriers to inclusive education and strategies regarding removal of such barriers are those that define IE based on disability issues. It appears that in attempting to implement inclusive education most countries have approached IE through a disability lens. A review of inclusive education literature cited Finley Snyder (1999), who observed the "inclusive education movement has primarily been a special education movement" (Forlin et al., 2013, p.9) arguing that initial thinking based on special education may be the impetus for thinking that inclusive education is merely about children with disability. It is not unlikely then that as a consequence of a disability based educational approach, the whole parallel system of "special" education has been advanced simply because diversity could not be accommodated within the regular system (Ebersold, 2011).

Many scholars critiqued a disability based approach in implementing inclusive education. For example, according to Ebersold (2011), a diagnostic based educational approach associates disabilities with individuals' inabilities and relates school difficulties to the inabilities of individuals. He added that such approaches fail to present diversity as a core issue of the education system, and consequently access to education becomes dependent on the individuals' ability to adapt to the system as well as cope with prevailing norms.

Further critiquing disability approach to inclusive education, Forlin and colleagues (2013) argued that if inclusive education is viewed as a disability issue instead of a "whole-of-school" issue, "inclusive education becomes a code for special education and as such can work against inclusive practice, with certain groups of children becoming pathologised in the eyes of educators"(p.9). Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006b) questioned

> "…the usefulness of an approach to inclusive education that, in attempting to increase the participation of students, focuses on the 'disabled' or 'special needs' part of them and ignores all the other ways in which participation for any student may be impeded or enhanced"(pp.15-16).

While questioning such an approach, Ainscow and colleagues (2006b) emphasised ways to ensure participation of all students in the regular education system that indicates their advocacy for broader understanding of inclusive education. Other scholars (Forlin et al., 2013) emphasised the need for an expanded view of inclusive education as a human rights issue.

The key features of inclusive education discussed earlier suggest that it should not be viewed solely as students with a disability (Forlin et al., 2013), but rather it is about the right of all students to education. According to Ebersold (2011), implementing the right to education requires a focus on individuals' educational needs rather than their inabilities. He states that such an educational approach:

> …considers that all students may have an educational need in their career and may require some support to be successful in school, independently from the existence of impairment. It requires schools to be more receptive to diversity of educational needs and profiles and to commit themselves to become pedagogically, socially and physically accessible (Ebersold, 2011, p.20).

Similarly, other scholars viewed inclusive education as being concerned with diversity in general. For example, for Shaddock, MacDonald, Hook, Giorcelli, & Arthur-Kelly (2009) inclusive education implies that when it becomes an issue for the participation of any student, which may arise from diversity, gender, behaviour, culture, poverty, refugee status or any such reason, the desired approach is not to create special programmes for the newly identified needs for individuals or groups, but instead to expand mainstream thinking, structures, and practices to ensure accommodation of all students. According to Ebersold (2011), "…implementing the right to inclusive education requires policies and strategy for transforming educational systems towards a universalized and holistic approach to quality education for all that accommodates positively the difference of disability"(p.22).

As argued earlier, no single category may adequately conceptualise inclusive education. IE scholars agree that it is neither possible nor desirable to attempt to come

up with a single comprehensive definition, because inclusive education means various things to various groups in varied contexts (D'Alessio, 2011; MacArthur, 2009; Winter & O'Raw, 2010).

However, scholars continue in their attempts to explain inclusive education in broad terms. One commonly shared belief is that IE requires that all students are accepted, and actively and fully take part in school life as valued members of normal classrooms in normal schools (Slee, 2001a), emphasising students' presence, participation, and achievements (Ainscow,2004; Ainscow & Miles, 2009).

Presence. Presence refers to children's place in their neighbourhood regular school and in classrooms with their peers. It is concerned with the place where children are educated, and how punctually and reliably they attend (Ainscow, 2004). By being present in the local community and school, students can develop a sense of belonging in their local community and learn to be a part of that community as well.

Participation. Participation refers to the extent to which students' actually participate and benefit from their association in the life of the school through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. The notion of students' participation can be associated with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989). According to this UN convention, children's participation rights are based on recognition of children as full human beings with rights, dignity and identities that should be respected. It implies that children have the right to be consulted and taken into consideration, to freedom of speech and opinion, to access to information, and to participate in and challenge decisions made on their behalf.

Achievement. Achievement refers to the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not just test or examination results (Ainscow & Miles, 2009). In relation to inclusive education it focuses on achievement for all students which implies that schools are vigilant to the experiences of all their students, and are responsive when inequality of resources or experience becomes an issue of concern (MacArthur, 2009).

Buysse (2011) has added to the discussion as he describes access, participation and support as the defining features of inclusive education. These defining features refer to an expanded conception of IE, which means not only physical presence of the students with special educational needs in mainstream schools, but also their successful access to the mainstream curriculum with necessary support, individualising or differentiating. Access means removing physical or structural barriers, providing a wide range of environments and activities, and making required adaptations to create opportunities for optimal development and learning for every single child (Buysse, 2011). This suggests that schools should provide physical and curricular access for all students so they feel, behave as and can be treated as full members of the school community (Topping, 2012). This was defined by Farrell and Ainscow as the "Presence-Acceptance-Participation-Achievement" cycle (2002, cited in Topping, 2012, p.13).

According to Topping (2012),besides addressing special educational needs IE entails celebrating diversity and supporting the participation and achievement of all students who face any type of learning or behaviour challenge due to cultural heritage, ethnic origin, socio- economic circumstances, sexual performance, linguistic heritage, religion and so on. Support refers to creating an infrastructure of system-level supports to facilitate implementation of quality inclusive education.

Examples include: public policy, ongoing professional development, coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders and resources (Buysse, 2011). Topping (2012) emphasised that IE should occur in and out of school and schools should engage the community and all families as well as all children in the process. He has described the expanded notion of IE at the following four levels:

1) Children with special educational needs in mainstream school.
2) Children with special educational needs have access to mainstream curriculum with social and emotional integration.
3) All children achieving and participating despite challenges stemming from class, poverty, gender, religion, race, cultural and linguistic heritage and so on.
4) All children, parents and the community equally achieving and participating in lifelong learning in various forms in and out of school(Topping,2012, p.13).

Ainscow and associates (2006b) argue that inclusive schooling is one that has not reached a perfect state, but rather is on the move. Inclusive education can be seen as a process of improving schools. This implies that those involved in education need to try to overcome barriers to learning and participation at all levels of the education system – educational policy, school organisation and structure, and teaching ideas and practice. Accordingly, school systems working toward inclusive education are likely to focus on change in order to improve all students' education experiences (Booth, 2002; Education Queensland, 2001).

Change in Education

Implementing inclusive education as government reform policy, necessarily involves change in practices across the whole system and at all levels. How change processes are understood in educational context are discussed in the following section.

Change processes

The volume of educational change literature is immense and the terms ‘educational change’, ‘educational reform’, and ‘school reform’ are interchangeably used. Education reform is generally seen as complex, interactive and systemic. According to Fullan (2003a), educational change is an ongoing and complex process, rather than a discrete event.

Many educational change scholars have offered different models of change as processes identifying different phases that occur during change. These phases indicate a shift in focus, strategies and priorities as well as level of participation and the role of different stakeholders. For example, Everard and Morris (1990) have identified six sequential stages for the management of change processes: diagnosis/ reconnaissance, determining the desirable situation, evaluating the present situation, identifying the gaps between the desired and present situation as well as the target, transition and evaluation.

Morrison (1998) has recognised seven stages of change including: innovation/ awareness, development, diffusion/ dissemination, adaptation/rejection, implementation, institutionalisation and recommendation. Elmore(2003) outlines eight stages which are fairly representative of those identified earlier and include: problem recognition, ‘low-hanging fruit’ stage referring to impact of the immediate positive results from simple low level change, stagnation, external help, barrier resolution, impossible work, transformed organisation and self-management. Carnall (2007) has suggested ‘change equation’ that presents the generation of shared vision, knowledge for strategies of change and a dissatisfaction with the present situation unite to create

commitment and energy for change. His model demonstrates how people experience change and what stages they encounter when challenged with change. Carnall's model consists of five stages: denial, defence, discarding, adaptation, and internalisation.

Fullan (2007) has identified three broad phases in the process of change: initiation, implementation, and institutionalisation. He believes that when these three phases are accomplished, the result is positive and change is effective. Figure 1 presents an overview of Fullan's change process:

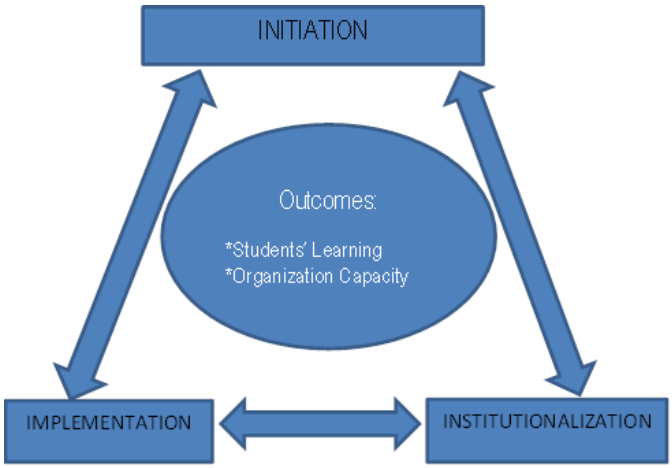

Figure 1: Overview of the change processes (Adapted from Fullan, 2007, p.66)

According to Fullan (2007), each of these stages involves change in belief, structure and practice in varied combinations. The initiation phase is referred to as the preparation and readiness stage. In this stage, change is being considered for adaptation and a decision is made as to whether to adopt or not adopt change. The implementation phase refers to the first few years when change is put into practice. The transition from the initiation to implementation phase necessitates caution so stakeholders involved support the ideas and practices being implemented. The level of change however is dependent on the beliefs, values and expectations held by the participants at different

levels in the system. Institutionalisation is the final phase of the series that refers to whether change is accepted and becomes an integral part of the practice or disappears either by conscious decision or through lack of use.

Institutionalisation is further described as an extension of the implementation phase whereby judgements and decisions for continuation, modification or rejection are usually taken (Fullan, 2007). Effective institutionalisation happens when change becomes an enduring part of the system. Such effective institutionalisation hinges on the effectiveness of initiation and implementation. Institutionalisation is made possible (a) when commitment for the innovation to continue is made at policy level; (b) where efforts are taken by the institution's leaders to maintain to new practices; (c) when the external support is adopted to specific institutional needs; and (d) where a sense of ownership among the users exists (Fullan, 2007).

In general, many issues are associated with change. Fullan(2007) has labelled specific, yet inter-related, issues that contribute to or are related with different phases discussed above which affect each other during the change process. A brief summary of those issues are presented below.

The initiation phase is affected by the existence and quality of innovations, advocacy from central and/ school administrators, access to information, teacher advocacy, community pressure (support, opposition, apathy), external change agents, new policy and funds, and problem solving and bureaucratic orientations. Fullan (2007) has highlighted that the implementation phase is associated with characteristics of change (need, clarity, complexity, and practicality), local roles (school, district, board and community, principal, teacher), and external factors (government and other

agencies). Institutionalisation is affected either by lack of interest or by support from higher authorities including the principals of schools which may influence whether the change i) gets embedded, ii) has skilled and committed administrators and teachers during institutionalisation or continuation, and iii) has established procedures for ongoing maintenance.

Thus, the above discussion clearly indicates that many issues are involved at different stages of the change process which may directly or indirectly influence the effectiveness of the school reform effort. Key issues involved in change processes are discussed under two broad headings: a) elements for effective school change, and b) barriers to school change.

Elements for effective school change

Educational change researchers have suggested various approaches in order to achieve success in school change. These suggestions are conceived as elements for change. Some of the key elements for effective school change include: commitment to change, moral purpose, common understanding of change and systemic reform approach.

Commitment to change

Change in education requires commitment of stakeholders to change. In general, organisational change researchers argued that commitment is one of the most important factors involved in staffs' support for change initiatives (Armenakis, Harris, & Field, 1999; Connor, 1992; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Klein & Sorra, 1996).Commitment to change is described as "the glue that provides the vital bond between people and change goals" (Connor, 1992, p.147).In relation to school change the views of organisational

change researchers imply that commitment is key to engaging members of the school community to provide necessary support for successful school change. This argument is well supported by leading educational change scholars. For example, Hargreaves (2008) maintains that "Commitment to change is required from all stakeholders, from grassroots activists to educators to policy makers" (p.73) for sustainable development in education.

Fullan (2007) emphasises the need to establish conditions for collective focus and commitment where educators feel and act responsibly for the school system. Fullan (2001b) argues that leaders must learn to develop the capacity and commitment within the organisation to solve complex problems. Highlighting the need for commitment in school change, some researchers suggest that a shared vision for change and common understanding of change may facilitate the process of commitment to change (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxen, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Wagner, 2001).

Moral purpose

Moral purpose is one of the most powerful elements within the educational change process (Abrahamson, 2004; Fullan, 2001a; Senge, 2006). Michael Fullan, a leading education reform scholar, discusses that change should be driven by a sense of moral purpose (Fullan, 2001a, 2001b, 2003b, 2005 & 2007). He has noted that " In addition to the direct goal of making a difference in the lives of students, moral purpose plays a large role in transforming and sustaining change"(Fullan,2002a, p.4). Moral purpose is thus defined as follows:

1. A commitment to raising the bar and closing the gap of student achievement.
2. Treating people with respect which is not to say low expectations.

3. An orientation to improving the environment including other schools in the local authority (Fullan, 2005, p.4).

Moral purpose, according to Fullan (2001b), is closely linked to the mission of schools and their value. The need for addressing school change to ensure access and equity is a moral obligation (Fullan, 2003a; Sergiovanni, 1992). Fullan (2001b) argues that the role of schools is to make a positive difference in the lives of their students, and thus change should be motivated by a desire to improve the life chances of all students. In addition, change needs to be driven by desire to create an 'equitable society'. Accordingly, moral purpose is described as "improving society through improving educational systems and thus learning of all citizens" (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005, p.54). Fullan (2001b) defines moral purpose as both the 'ends' and 'means' (p.13). He explains that making a difference in the lives of the students is an important end in education, but the means of achieving this outcome is crucial.

Moral purpose is also described as a "process of engaging educators, community leaders, and society as a whole in the moral purpose of reform" (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005, p.55) and thus, it is considered a key element for successful school change. In educational change, moving people toward greatness requires connecting one's self and others to a mission with a moral purpose, rather than connecting one's self and others to a monetary reward or compliance with an external authority (Fullan, 2001a; Reeves, 2009). One effective strategy for bringing about change is connecting peers to a moral purpose (Fullan, 2008). Engaging teachers and leaders in the change process is significant regarding the notion of moral purpose. Any reform initiative is unlikely to succeed without staff dedication and support. Accordingly, staff commitment to the reform effort is often associated with moral purpose (Fullan, 2001a).

This implies that a lack of moral purpose or the means to pursue it is a barrier to change, while having moral purpose is a catalyst.

Many educational change scholars have highlighted the significance of leadership in the management of change (Bush, 2003; Fullan, 2001b,& 2007; Mulford, 2007; Levin, 2008). Thus moral purpose is considered vital for educational leadership. For example, Fullan (2001b) in his framework has shown moral purpose as one of the core components of leadership. The framework provides guidance to school leaders to define and implement change, focusing on key themes that allow leaders to lead effectively, even under "messy conditions" (Fullan, 2001b, p.x). Fullan's framework is organised into five components: moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. He asserts that "moral purpose is concerned with directions and results; understanding change, building relationships, and knowledge building hono[u]r the complexity and discovery of the journey and coherence making extracts valuable patterns worth retaining"(p.7). When working through change, people need to see how these five components of the framework are part of a larger whole, despite occasional chaos. The framework in Figure 2 demonstrates five components of leadership which are independent, yet mutually reinforce each other to generate commitment that leads to positive change (Fullan, 2001b).

Leading in a culture of change

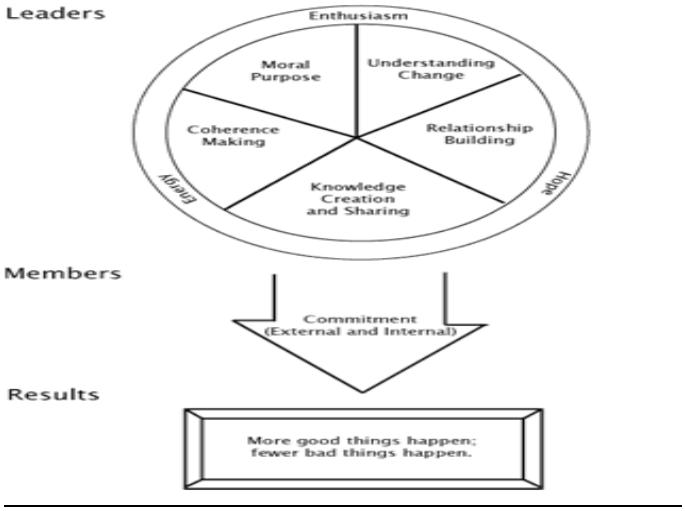

Figure2: Framework for leadership (Adapted from Fullan, M. *Leading in a Culture of Change*, p. 4. © 2001 by John Wiley and Sons, Inc.).

Embedded within the framework, the notion of moral purpose is perceived as inculcating in leaders a sense of making a positive difference in the lives of students, teachers, parents and the wider community (Ramalepe & Msila, 2014). Fullan(2002b) argues that moral purpose largely requires a desire to make a "positive difference in the (social) environment" for system improvement (p.4).According to Fullan (2001b) leaders must have a clear vision to excite and mobilise people to commit; they should pay attention to people, focus on building emotional bonds, build relationships, and they need to deal with those hard core resisters who act without moral purpose; and lastly they need to be involved in hard, labour intensive work such as building relationships, building knowledge and striving for coherence making.

In a culture of change, the focus is on understanding and insight of change, rather than taking steps for taking action (Fullan, 2001b). Fullan (2002a) has highlighted that cultural change leaders exhibit "explicit, deep, and comprehensive moral purpose" (p.17). This suggests that at the heart of successful leadership for

change is a sustaining and strong sense of moral purpose that makes a difference in the lives of staff members and students through meaningful, lifelong learning (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves &Fink, 2006).

Moral purpose has been expressed in many different ways in the literature. For example, Macbeth (2006) and Fullan (2001a) refer simply to 'moral purpose', but Andrews and Lewis (2004) use the label 'shared sense of purpose' and Cuttance (2003) uses the label 'whole school vision and goals'. Moral purpose has been labelled as "broad directional vision" (Fullan, 2009, p.109).Almost all of these different expressions however include the notion that such purpose needs to be shared (Bezzina, 2012). Logically, if a purpose that belongs to the individual rather than the organisation is not shared, it is not likely to impact the overall performance of the organisation. Therefore, a shared moral purpose is essential, described by The National College of School Leadership as "a compelling idea or aspirational purpose, a shared belief[a team] can achieve far more from their end users together than they can alone"(NCSL,2006).

A shared moral purpose is further described as one of the basic needs for bringing about the kind of change and improvement that will deliver desirable student learning in schools (Bezzina, 2007, 2012).This shared moral purpose has been constantly identified as one of the key elements for bringing about school change in the literature (Bezzina, 2007, 2012; MacBeath, 2005).

Common understanding of change

Change is seen as a process that requires understanding and thoughtful strategising (Fullan, 2001a). Organisational theorists (e.g. Ball,1987 and Skrtic,1995) emphasise that considerable change at the organisational level can be made when all

participants are given opportunity, through consultation and discussion, to explore the effects of change at personal, professional and organisational levels(cited in Kinsella &Senor,2008).

Educational change involves two key features: “what changes to implement” and “how to implement them” (Fullan, 2007, p.40). For sustainable school reform, local school development requires a coherent shared pedagogical theory upon which new structures of activity and participation can be founded, and new practice can be formed, sustained and modified (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). This refers to a jointly constructed working “theory of change” (Fullan, 2007) which defines what should change. Another requirement is that teachers, principals, district education officers and central office education officers need to negotiate and construct a shared and meaningful conception of reforms and their pedagogical implications and plan how to apply them appropriately. This refers to Fullan’s “theory of changing”: a shared and informed perception of “how to implement them” (2007, p.40) or how change can be brought about. This implies that building understanding and negotiating meaning across various levels of the system and coordinating efforts are critical for initiating any reform (Pyhältö, Soini, & Pietarinen, 2011). This suggests the importance of a shared approach for change to take place successfully.

While success in leading change is not guaranteed, the likelihood of success for a change initiative will increase with a key understanding of how change works (Reeves, 2009). According to Reeves (2009) change begins by examining the four imperatives of cultural change. The first imperative is to acknowledge what will not change. Reeves believed that values, practices, traditions, and relationships must not be lost in a change initiative. The second imperative is to understand that organisational change begins with

leadership actions. Reeves stated that this is not about simply supplying answers or issuing orders but by changing behaviours, such as how decisions are made, resources are allocated, and which meetings are accepted or cancelled. Understanding the importance of culture and context is the third imperative. Reeves (2009) believed that the same actions could be interpreted differently by different staff, depending on culture and context. The fourth imperative is that "change in the culture requires personal attention and 'scut work' by the leader" (Reeves, 2009, p. 39). The term 'scut work' is explained as the small details a principal must take care to notice and work through in order for a change initiative to be successful.

Fullan (1981, 1982) suggests the significance of taking into account the "meaning" of change through emphasising the following essentials: researching the agenda for implementation of educational change; the sources, assumptions and processes underlying educational innovations; the roles of actors and stakeholders; the dilemmas present in educational change; and the critical need to go deeper and wider to bring significant improvements to teaching and learning within schools. According to Fullan (2007) factors affecting implementation are closely related to change itself, the local setting and to external factors related to the wider context. The first factor to be considered in making effective strategies for implementing reform agenda is a clear understanding of the nature and characteristics of the reform along with its need in relation to implementation. Secondly, change implementation requires consideration of the local setting which includes stakeholders' commitment to change and availability of resources to support change. Finally, change implementation requires consideration of a wider context that refers to the understanding of the role of government involving the "pressure and support" forces (Fullan, 2007, p.100). Therefore, effective improvement strategies for educational reform require a thorough understanding of the process

(Fullan, 2007). Interactive factors for implementation of change are presented in Figure 3.

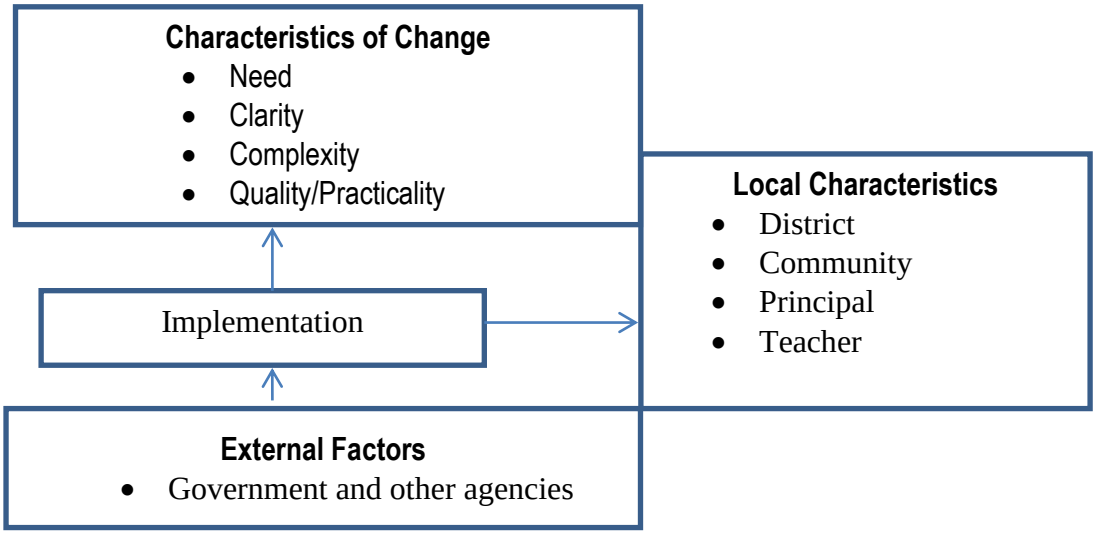

Figure 3: Interactive factors affecting implementation (Adapted from Fullan, 2007, p.87)

Understanding of the goals/ targets for proposed reform and likely changes are critical for those who are directly impacted by the reform, to make sense of any educational reform (Fullan, 2007). Building understanding and negotiating meaning of change among stakeholders is important for a clear understanding of change. This understanding entails a shared meaning about what is going to change, how change will occur, and the required preconditions for change to take place. And this shared interpretation forms the basis for common understanding of the need for and difficulty involved in implementation (Fullan, 2007). Therefore, development of shared meaning regarding change within the schooling system is necessary to foster such change in practice. Shared goals and effort are crucial for effectiveness of schools. Effective leaders encourage teamwork and help other members of the organisation to work together toward common goals.

Systemic reform approach

The systems approach is recognised as an effective strategy for improving change processes and their outcomes in education, considering it is a "process for the application of logical thinking in the solution of problems" (UNESCO,1979). According to UNESCO (1979), the nature of this approach has derived from the term 'system' which is composed of a set of parts united together in an interactive and interdependent manner in order to achieve specific objectives. Accordingly, the systems approach has been defined as a "technique for understanding, predicting, controlling the interaction and interdependence of the major parts of a system in a given situation, to achieve specified objectives" (UNESCO, 1979, p.11). Therefore, it is believed that educationists would address the following issues in adopting a systems approach to education: specify objectives for action; analyse tasks involved in achieving the object; assess the total input and constraints of the system meticulously; identify the key problems; suggest alternative strategies; evaluate and identify the preferred solution in a given context; and modify components and systems operation based on feedback data and continued evaluation (UNESCO,1979).

Many educational change scholars have emphasised a systemic approach in their models of change process and suggested system thinking as crucial for effective change (e.g.Fullan, 2005; Senge, 1990).System thinking is defined as a "discipline for seeing wholes" and "a framework for seeing inter-relationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots" (Senge, 1990, p.68). It permits the interdependent whole to be valued rather than seeing only parts and pieces of how things occur in organisation. As it is the system, it concentrates on the whole organisation (Senge, 1990). School and district together embody a "part–whole" relationship in school reform (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008, p.733). The

problem of focusing on components in isolation is that such an approach disregards the complex, context dependent and interactive nature of school development. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) emphasised the significance of interconnectedness within the system in developing inclusive schools. They argued that the chance of any reform improving student learning is remote unless "district and school leaders agree with its purposes and appreciate what is required to make it work" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p.7).

Thornton, Shepperson, and Canavero(2007) suggested that systems' thinking drives continuous school improvement, stating that "Educators who understand that schools are complex interdependent social systems can move their organizations forward" (p.48). They advocate ongoing program evaluations at a systems level in order to facilitate continual improvement. Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline (2004) recommended that an effective organisation must focus "change from the inside out" and employ a systems approach to improvement (p.1).Organisations are comprised of interdependent components that work together towards pre-set goals driven by policies, strategies, and readjustments (Thornton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007). Thinking about system-wide change demands that organisational components constantly re-evaluate, review and stabilise in the short-term so that the entire system plans strategically to align resources and identify effective functions (Senge, 1990).

Emphasising the importance of a systems based approach to organisational change, Senge (1990) states that "The organisation that will truly excel in the future will be organisations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organisation"(p.4). The learning organisation concept (Senge, 1990, &2006; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2012) comprises

five interacting principles: (a) *Personal mastery* – a process of personal commitment to vision, excellence and life learning; (b)*Mental models* – deeply ingrained assumptions that influence personal and organisational views and behaviours; (c) *Building shared vision* – sharing an image of the future people want to realise together; (d) *Team learning* – the process of learning collectively; and (e) *System thinking* – a conceptual framework that sees all parts are interrelated and affecting each other. According to Senge's learning organisation concept, system thinking fuses the other four disciplines into a coherent body of theory and practice, because it is believed that thinking systemically is a fundamental lever in the "learning and change process"(2006 cited in Lunenburg, 2011, p. 2). It seems from the concept that teachers, heads of schools and educational system leaders should think systemically to recognize the "interdependence and inter-relationships" of their systems and beyond for educational change process to be successful (Tarosa, 2013, p.16).Figure 4 presents Senge's (1990) five disciplines for change.

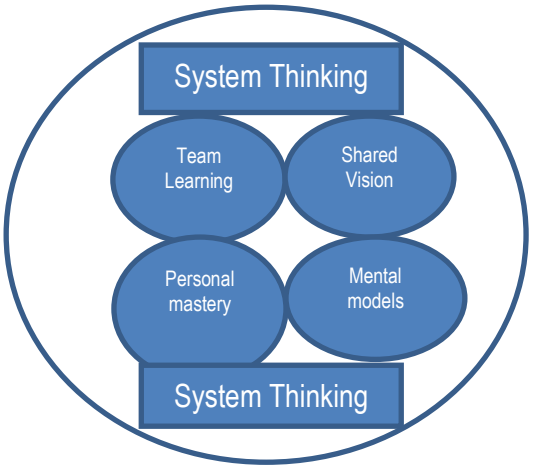

Figure 4: Five disciplines for change (Adapted from Senge, 1990)

Considering the value of focusing on the whole system in school reform, researchers emphasised that creating capacity for education change would necessitate systemic efforts on many fronts concurrently (e.g. Fullan, 2007; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Senge, 1990). Stimulating, coordinating, and sustaining 'coherent' development for schools in a system can be problematic because it involves harmonizing 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' forces (Fullan, 2007, p.211). Thus, success of school reform hinges on dealing with complex units and organisation of multiple elements at the same time. Therefore, to avoid pitfalls and gaps in the implementation of school reform, educational change researchers suggest that initiating complementary horizontal development process between school and educational leaders, and vertical negotiation processes, both from the " bottom–up" and "top-down" between multiple levels of the school system (Pyhältö et al., 2011, p. 52) is essential. These processes contribute to coherence making among multiple levels of the whole school system.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) have introduced a 'fourth way' of effective educational reform based on three interlinked elements of professionalism, public engagement and governmental vision, namely guidance and support. They argue that this reform brings together government policy, public engagement and professional involvement around "an inspiring social and educational vision of prosperity, opportunity, and creativity" (p.71). The fourth way platform is shown in Figure 5.

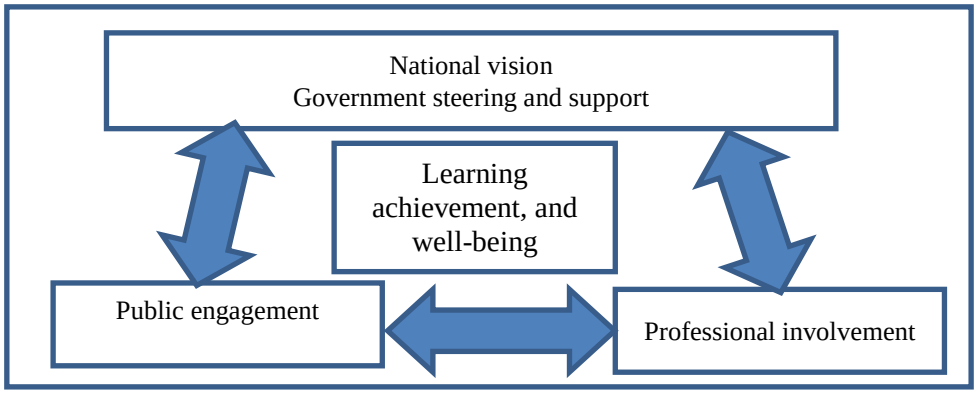

Figure 5: The fourth way platform (Adapted from Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, p.72)

The essence of this idea is that there needs to be significant change for everyone in the system including governments, parents and teachers alike.

Similarly, Fullan (2003b) has provided a **"**Tri-level reform" model that focuses on a systemic approach. In his model, the concepts of tri-level reform have particularly focused on the capacity of systems' various levels to work together to implement the most sustainable and effective reform to improve outcomes for schools as well as for children. Tri-level reform has introduced the idea that there needs to be involvement within and between school/ community levels, the local education authority or district level and national or state policy level for reforms to be successful (Fullan,2003b). The idea advocates that change or reform in education need to take place at a "tri-level". The argument is that "educational transformation will require changes (new capacities) within each of the three levels and across their relationships" (Fullan, 2003b, p.39). Therefore, in tri-level reform all schools must be involved in the change process and the district or local level must work together along with the state to align itself to the reform process. Tri-level reform focuses on total system transformation. This suggests that in order to achieve effective and sustainable reform in schools it is crucial that interconnectedness and interdependence are achieved across school, local education authority or district, and government or central levels.

Like Senge (1990), Fullan (2001a,2003b, 2007) has stressed interconnectedness of different levels of the education system such as school, district and central government in the process of educational change through tri-level reform. Figure 6 presents an overview of tri-level reform.

Figure 6: Tri-level reform (adopted from Fullan, 2005)

Barriers to school change

Over decades, education theorists, researchers and even practitioners are struggling with the question of how to change education to serve the needs of all students. Extensive literature on educational change even identified examples of failure in educational change efforts, and offered suggestions and strategies as to how change can take root and be effectively sustained. In light of the literature, some barriers to school change are discussed in the following section.

A crucial challenge for effective school change is stakeholders' various understandings of the proposed change. Pyhältö and associates (2011) attempted to gain better understanding of the administrators' (principals and chief education officers) perceptions about the implementation of school reform and the means to facilitate development. They found that participants had different ideas, not only on what should

change but also on the object of change. Findings showed there was variation in the means used to promote reform, both within and between principal and education officer groups. Both principals (80%) and education officers (59%) emphasised pedagogical methods in promoting reform. However, education officers gave more emphasis on the technical–financial means to promote change. As a whole, findings from the study indicated that building understanding across levels becomes confused due to different perceptions about the reform. Variation in reform implementation strategies perceived by the respondents multiplies the variety of perceived methods to promote reform (Pyhältö et al., 2011).

Presence of many educational initiatives is a crucial barrier to school change. Fullan (1993) states that "the main problem in public education is not resistance to change but the presence of too many innovations mandated or adopted uncritically and superficially on an ad hoc fragmented basis" (p.23). Reeves (2006) described this presence of many educational innovations as "The Law of Initiative Fatigue", a term originally used in the Harvard Business Review. The Law states, "When resources of time, money, and emotional energy are held constant while the number of old, continuing, and new initiatives rise, organisational implosion is inevitable" (Reeves, 2006, p. 107).

Lack of a holistic approach is considered crucial for any educational reform. Some researchers point out that one of the key reasons for unsuccessful school reforms is that these reforms are likely to focus on parts rather than whole, discounting the way the "whole structure hangs together" (Pyhältö et al., 2011, p. 50). According to Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson and Daly, (2008), school and district together embody a "part-whole" relationship in school change (p.733). The problem of focusing on parts in

isolation is that such an approach disregards the complex, context dependent and interactive nature of school development. Sarason is of the view that partial focus on school development is a key reason for ineffective school change (1991, cited in Pyhältö et al., 2011).This implies that absence of systemic perspective is a barrier to educational reform efforts. For instance, a focus on the wrong variables (ignoring students and teachers) and wrong perspectives (the organisation of schools and teaching practice) along with the absence of a systemic perspective may impede the effective implementation of school change (Hopkins, 2007).

Furthermore, the change process itself is crucial, which can either facilitate or hinder effectiveness of educational change. A number of educational change researchers have identified that most educational reform attempts have failed due to reliance on traditional change theory. For example, Wheatley and Frieze (2007) have described traditional change theory as a top-down approach in which a vision is developed, a strategy is designed, a policy is placed, steps defined and delegated and a timeline of activities and desired outcomes are set. Assessment design and evaluation tools are then created to measure desired outcomes, and the process is carefully managed and controlled to follow that script. The traditional theory assumes large-scale change requires large-scale efforts, carefully managed and controlled through every stage. These authors have shared their experiences regarding one of the most profound changes in recent education history, the "culture of high stakes testing" as a result of "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) (Wheatley & Frieze, 2007, p.35). Acknowledging that NCLB has brought some exceptional change, both in schools and society, these researchers have critiqued the implementation of NCLB as they state that "it has failed in its attempt to create a culture of achievement for all". Wheatley and Frieze (2007) add that what has emerged instead "is a culture of high-stakes testing that actually

subverts achievement and learning" (p.35). A reliance on traditional change theory has been identified as the reason behind this failure. They have argued that real change happens when innovations occur at the local level, such as development of networks between small groups of people with a similar vision and common goal, and these small group efforts synergise and connections are made. Thus a new impetus builds that gradually leads to broader change.

A number of scholars in the field blame top-down processes for the failure of effective educational change. For example, Hargreaves (1997) has considered that "bureaucratic management, burdens of imposed content and assessments, and market orientations that divide schools and teachers from one another" (p.114) are liable for failure of effective educational change. Similar concerns regarding practice have been raised by Levin and Fullan (2008) as they state that "relying on top-down, policy-driven approaches to change" cannot provide real and lasting improvement (p.300).

Harris (2011) has emphasised some features of this top-down reform effort, which she considers is offered "without any attention to building adequate capacity for change or given any thought about the process of implementation" with importing ideas in different contexts, as the main cause of failure of most educational reform efforts worldwide (p.160).Insufficient consultation and discussion, coupled with perceived imposition of change by the authority, may lead to a resistance to change as well as reluctance to embrace new policy by educators, ultimately leading to failure to implement the practices needed to effect change (Kinsella & Senor, 2008).

In addition, failure to implement school change is more often associated with problems such as negative attitudes, lack of good teaching materials, ineffective

professional development and minimum administrative support towards reform efforts. In most cases, change cannot succeed, at least partly because of the assumptions of planners who are unable to solve substantial problems (Fullan, 2007; Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Reynolds, 1989).

The above discussion from the literature on educational change regarding essentials for change and barriers to change has provided a structure for thinking about specific application of inclusive education (IE) reform for this study.

Conceptual Framework for Inclusive Education (IE) Reform

The framework presented in Figure7below has been provided as a way to conceptualise IE reform, drawing on the review of educational change literature. Recognising that commitment is critical, the framework for IE reform is conceptualised focused around commitment to change. Thus the framework is based on three interrelated elements which contribute to establishing commitment across the education system that leads to effective IE reform. These elements are:

- moral purpose;
- common understanding of change agenda; and
- systemic approach.

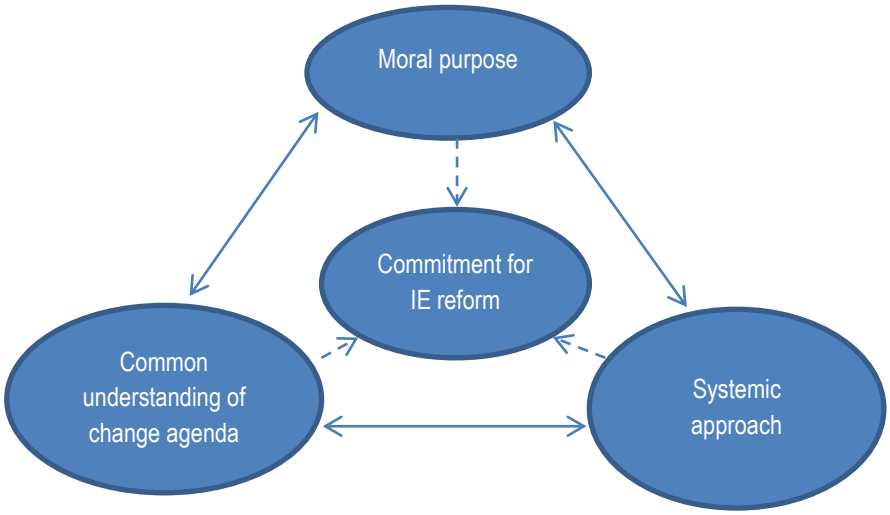

Figure 7: Conceptual framework for IE reform

Moral purpose

In education, moral purpose is seen as having an equitable system where all students learn and are supported to become active as well as positive members of the community (Fullan, 2003a). Moral purpose, with a direct goal of making difference in the lives of students, is a critical motivator for transforming and sustaining school change (Fullan, 2002b).

Moral purpose is the fundamental guiding principal that unites an educational organisation. An effective strategy for bringing about change is connecting peers with a moral purpose (Fullan, 2008). Therefore, the sense of moral purpose denotes a way of engaging educators in the reform process. A compelling and inclusive moral purpose is crucial for inclusive education (IE) reform to be successful because it "steers a system, binds it together, and draws the best people to work together" (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009, p.76).For schools to be inclusive, they must establish IE as an all-embracing moral purpose or goal that permeates everything they do (Macmillan & Edmunds, 2010). In investigating practice of creating inclusive schools, Valeo (2010) found that the need for a moral purpose and a vision of IE was central to practice. Inclusive education researchers emphasised that "central to leadership for inclusion is moral leadership which acknowledges the moral values of social inclusion" (Armstrong, A.C., Armstrong, D. & Spandagou, 2010, p.33).

The concept of moral purpose often parallels espoused "vision" or "goals" in IE reform literature. Thousand and Villa (2005) noted that the vision of inclusive education that needs to be created and communicated include: (1) all children are capable of learning, (2) all children have a right to an education with their peers in their community's schools, and (3) the school system is responsible for attempting to address

the unique needs of all children in the community (p.59). The researchers illustrated building vision as visioning to stress an "action", which referred to the active mental struggle that people undergo when they reconceptualise their beliefs and declare public ownership of a new view in education. According to them visioning "…involves creating and communicating a compelling picture of a desired future state and inducing others to commit to that future". They emphasised that visioning needs to foster widespread understanding and consensus. Otherwise, lack of visioning may result in confusion by some or many in "the school and greater community" (Thousand & Villa, 2005, p.59).

In relation to moral purpose, inclusive education researchers often highlighted the need for "commitment to social justice" and "equity consciousness" issues. For instance, social justice is seen as a commitment that schools as institutions make to provide "access to equal opportunities and outcomes" which support students to achieve "full citizenship and actualisation of their full potential" (Shepherd & Hasazi, 2008, p.476). According to Shepherd and Hasazi (2008), schools committed to social justice "recognize, understand, and promote the cultural contributions of everyone in the community, including those who have been de-valued, marginalized, and under-represented in society" (p.476). Pazey and Cole (2013) assert that schools committed to social justice principles embrace the belief that the practice of including students with disabilities within the school community helps achieve positive outcomes for all students.

According to Morrison (2009), administrators addressing social justice issues in education need to be aware of fundamental inequalities within the education system and should act to challenge various practices that hold these inequalities in place. Theoharis

(2007) defined good leadership as “leadership centered on enacting social justice, and leadership that creates equitable schools” (p.253). In particular, he highlighted social justice leadership for addressing and eliminating marginalisation in schools. Theoharis (2007) considered that social justice leaders are those who centred their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision on issues such as race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other marginalising factors.

Further, proponents of social justice in education emphasised the need for “equity consciousness” of school leaders (Crockett, 2011; Mckenzie, Skrla & Scheurich, 2006). According to Mckenzie and associates (2006) “equity consciousness” happens when school leaders realise that each child can achieve academic success, regardless of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, learning, difference, culture, language, religion, and so forth. They must recognise that traditional school practices have been unsuccessful in producing equitable results and may even maintain inequalities. Moreover, these leaders must accept their responsibility for moving adults in their school community toward a common vision to ensure greater success with students’ achievement (McKenzie et al., 2006). Crockett (2011) calls for actions steered by a fully inclusive philosophy that helps to create provision of an equitable education for all students.

Likewise, Pazey and Cole (2013) have highlighted the need for raising a new “equity consciousness” among school leaders. They argue when students are being excluded, schools appear to be moving further away from any “model of equity” (p.264). In order for a school to be inclusive, the school administrator must maintain a clear vision, fostering among staff the understanding of inclusive education and provide enrichment opportunities for teaching staff to implement inclusive practices (Friend &

Bursuck, 2006). Crockett (2002) identified five responsibilities of supportive inclusive principals: (a) becoming moral leaders by advocating for universal educational access, (b) attending to unique learning needs and student individuality, (c) informed leadership by adhering to public policies that support special education, (d) appropriate supervision and evaluation of inclusive educational programs, and (e) effective communication and negotiation with others to advocate for students with disabilities and their families.

Smith and Leonard (2005) emphasised that principals must be the facilitators of inclusionary practices by establishing "collaborative vision" amongst teachers and staff (p.276). They added that teachers would be empowered to collaborate and make decisions pertinent to the success of inclusive education and thereby inherently support the school's inclusive model. Hu and Roberts (2011) noted that inclusive leadership assists in establishing the "team's vision" by fostering new meaning about diversity and building inclusive schools for diverse learners" (p.553).

Common understanding of reform

Common understanding about inclusive education is crucial for IE reform to take place successfully. Individuals and groups involved in the change process need to negotiate and construct a shared and meaningful conception of the pedagogical implications in order for reform to work (Fullan, 2007). This suggests a shared understanding of what inclusive education means, and how to make it happen is crucial for effective IE reform. In relation to developing inclusive practices in schools, Ainscow and Sandil (2010) argue that a group of stakeholders within a particular context need to look for a common agenda to guide their discussion of practice. At the same time, they need to establish common ways of working through discussion. They emphasise developing a common language with which stakeholders can converse about detailed

aspects of their practice. Similarly, Lindqvist and Nilholm (2011) note that educational leaders need to reflect on how their perception and decisions shape inclusive education practice. Investigating aspects of school life relevant to IE in Sweden, these researchers suggest that educational leaders should engage in discussions and decision making on what IE actually means, and what obstacles and possibilities schools and municipalities can face when dealing with difficulties. In their analysis of conceptual confusion concerning inclusive education, Miles and Singal (2010) suggest that establishing dialogue between policy makers and practitioners can be beneficial to promote inclusive educational practices, because both parties are working toward the common goal of ensuring quality education for all.

Ghesquière, Moors, Maes, & Vandenberghe (2002) investigated the implementation of inclusive education in Flemish primary schools to identify the factors that support or hinder IE process. . The findings of their study indicated that internal and external consultations were positive factors in the implementation process. They argued that a 'culture of consultation' gives a feeling of shared responsibility to those involved. Salisbury (2006) investigated the work of principals engaged in developing inclusive schooling in the USA. The results showed remarkable variations from one school to another in their level of implementation, despite being considered inclusive. Although they shared similar views regarding contextual characteristics and implementation experiences, there were differences in how they viewed and implemented IE .Such difference in views regarding implementation of inclusive education justifies that a shared approach to not only what IE means, but how to implement it is critical in developing inclusive practices.

Pazey and Cole (2013) point out that inclusive school leaders replace authoritative, hierarchical structures with participatory ones plus team-based practices and prompt democratic decision making. These leaders believe in the democratic ideals of sharing power and distribution of responsibility to ensure a common understanding and commitment among all members of their educational community, to serve every student. Further, these inclusive leaders are seen as "change agents" in supporting others to identify the varying abilities of each student and the complexities inherent in understanding the "challenges of individuals with disabilities" (Shepherd & Hasazi, 2008, p.477).

Systemic approach

A systemic approach for change requires engagement in a "process of collaborative problem solving" in order to decide how such change should be managed, implemented and evaluated (Kinsella & Senior, 2008, p.658). For change to be effective, different levels of the education system, such as school, district and central levels, must be interconnected (Fullan, 2007; Senge, 1990). Inclusive education, like any educational reform effort, requires systemic processes for transforming practices of schooling that involve fundamental change in organisational structures and in the roles and responsibilities of key players. A systemic approach to reform refers to exploring and understanding a whole system rather than a system in isolation from the broader context.

In a systemic effort all participants need to collectively explore interdependencies, the nature of connections between parts of the system, external influences, and different roles in the system (Ferrira & Ryan, 2013). Research has highlighted the significance of systemic effort for IE reform to be successful. For

example, a US study sought to examine the change model adopted to move schools towards inclusive practices and to describe the progress of schools towards inclusive practice (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxen, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004). Respondents of the study identified specific factors that influenced changes in service delivery including collaborative activities and shared commitment of administrators and teachers. The findings of the US study suggested that negotiations among teachers, administrators and parents are crucial to move schools towards inclusive practices. Based on these findings, researchers have emphasised the need for shared dialogue to originate from individuals in positions of top-down authority, and those responsible for daily implementation, from the bottom-up (Burstein et al., 2004, p.112).

McLeskey and Waldron (2002) worked with professionals and other stakeholders involved in implementing inclusive education programmes over a 13 year period and identified features regarding 'why' and 'how' some schools changed their practices to become more inclusive than other schools that made little progress. They emphasised that change processes need to be supported by those at the top level of administration as well as by teachers who implement change at the bottom. Similar emphasis on a whole system approach is evident in another more recent study (Causton-Theoharis, Theoharis, Bull, Cosier, & Dempf-Aldrich, 2011) that pointed out that school administrators can set shared planning time for inclusive teams, allowing sufficient input from all members in setting their reform effort up for better success.

A number of research studies on inclusive education reform based on eco-systemic frameworks (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) emphasised systemic influence on the development of schooling practice (Kinsella & Senior, 2008; Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011; Odom& Diamond, 1996; Odom et al., 2004, Schmidt & Venet, 2012;

Singal, 2006). In an eco-systemic framework, an emphasis is placed on aspects of the context that involves systems within the eco-system. The framework explains systemic influence on child development; however, its explanation of development is the basic argument which is vital in relation to school development. The basic concept of the framework is that each individual is significantly affected by interactions among a number of overlapping eco-systems. These nested layers include the microsystem, meso-system, exo-system and macro-system. The eco-systemic framework is considered useful for investigating development of inclusive practices of schooling (Singal, 2006a) and to explore IE reform development as "constructed and constrained" by factors functioning at different levels, and how implementation occurs due to "interactive influence of individuals" and their "social milieu" (Singal, 2006a, p.240).

Many inclusive education researchers have contributed through providing suggestions about what works for effective implementation of IE within a system so that schools can develop inclusive ways of working. For example, Ainscow (2011b) analysed international efforts aimed at finding ways of including all school children. He suggested five propositions to be used to develop more inclusive ways of working that include:

i. inclusive classroom practices involve mobilising available human resources in order to overcome barriers to participation and learning.
ii. engagement with various kinds of evidence can be a powerful driver for encouraging teachers to develop more inclusive practices.
iii. use of additional support for individual students needs to be carefully planned and those involved require appropriate training.

iv. inclusive schools can take many forms but what is common is the existence of an organisational culture that views student diversity positively.

v. leaders have a central role in working with their colleagues to foster an inclusive culture within their schools.

Villa and Thousand (2012) referred to the Working Forum on Inclusive Schools(Council for Exceptional Children 1994) that identified 12 essential characteristics of schools implementing quality inclusive practices. They highlighted that these characteristics can serve as a guide for educators, administrators, community members and social activists involved in advancing quality inclusive schooling facilities, not only for students with learning needs but for all students. These 12 characteristics of inclusive schooling include: a sense of community, visionary leadership, high standards, collaborative partnership, changing roles and responsibilities, array of services, partnership with parents, flexible learning environments, strategies based on research, forms of accountability, access, and continuing professional development (cited in Villa &Thousand, 2012, p.113).

Another list of essentials to facilitate inclusive education is provided by Villa and Thousand (2012). Their list includes: "policies and laws, administrative leadership, collaboration among school personnel, families and students, professional development, a shift away from focusing on the perceived deficits within a child to an examination of complex interaction between the learner and the content, process and product demands of the classroom and the use of research-based, collaborative and differentiated instructional strategies to support learners in mixed-ability classrooms"(Villa & Thousand, 2012, p. 122).However, the researchers cautioned that transformation of practices does not occur at schools through an imposed model developed for a particular

place, but rather it occurs through educators, policy makers and community engaging with each other and sharing their experiences.

Deppeler (2012) highlighted that “collaboration” and “representation” are important factors to understand diversity and to generate innovative solutions to the challenges of inclusive schooling (p.125). She explained that collaboration allows teachers with diverse expertise not only to work together but to share decision making to address the challenges of their schools. With evidence from several studies the researcher showed collaboration as critical for developing practices at school. Representation ensures that all voices within the community be heard and all contributions are equally valued. Deppeler (2012) emphasised that collaborative investigation can positively impact developing practices to address diversity of the learner. She argued that collaboration is dependent on shared leadership and structures that create collective action and that are respectful of diversity.

The development of support networks is cited as a crucial factor in developing inclusive schooling. According to Dukes and Lamar-Dukes (2009), support networks involve coordination of groups and individuals who support each other and inspired by a committed school administration.

Another frequently cited critical factor is the development of an open relationship based on trust between professionals and parents and the local community (Loreman et al., 2010; Rose, 2012). Among others, Rose (2012) emphasised local community engagement as key to creating a favourable environment to develop understanding in developing a more inclusive education system. He pointed out that schools willing to adopt the broader principles of inclusive education should ensure

local community engagement and thus enable children to feel they belong within society as a whole. This implies that schools focused on developing inclusive education require a better interconnection not only within the school but with administration, families and local community.

A shared effort by different teams (e.g.educators, administrators, families, local community) within an organisation seems to be crucial for developing inclusive schools. Such an approach encompasses teachers, educators, administrators and community members' and collaboration through shared leadership, developing support networks and interconnections within school community and "beyond the school gate"(Rose,2012). A sustained system wide development can be ensured by " the systemic creation of a context for developing a shared vision and ownership, the development of processes for shred decision making through consensus, and the use of focused questions to bring in different voices, knowledge, and experience"(Jones, Forlin, & Gillies, 2013, p. 71).

Discussion of moral purpose, common understanding of change agenda and systemic approach demonstrates that all three elements of the IE reform framework lead to enhancing educators' commitment to reform. The implicit idea is that if those three elements are not working together, it would not enhance educators' and administrators' commitment towards progressing IE reform.

Commitment for IE reform

Commitment is essential for any reform effort to be successful. Commitment has been defined as "a force [mindset] that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of change initiative (Herscovitch & Meyer,

2002, p. 475).Commitment is conceived by Mowday, Porter, and Steers as an “attitude that reflects the nature and quality of linkage between an employee and an organisation”(1982, cited in Vakola & Nikollaou, 2005, p. 163). It is argued that commitment is a “state” in which individuals connect with an organisation and its goals, and facilitate them (Vakola & Nikollaou, 2005, p. 163). The views of organisational change researchers suggest that commitment includes individuals’ attitudes toward the change agenda. As attitude has been identified as an important aspect of commitment, in order to understand individual commitment to reform, attitude needs to be measured.

A “strong commitment” to working towards a just society is critical for developing an inclusive education system (UNESCO, 2008b, p.1). More specifically, the success of IE reform is dependent on the attitudes of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the reform agenda (Ngwokabuenui, 2013).One of the main purposes of this study is to understand whether administrators are committed to implementing IE policy in Bangladesh. Therefore, in order to measure administrators’ commitment to IE reform, in this study their attitudes were investigated.

Administrators' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education (IE)

School administrators are key players in IE reform that involves "transforming practices in classrooms, school buildings, and districts across the country" (Brotherson, Sheriff, Milburn, & Schertz, 2001, p.31). They set the tone for inclusive practices in schools by offering "a vision, leadership and administrative authority" (Schmidt & Venet, 2012, p.221). The success of IE is considered to be related to planning and the will of administrators, as well as other factors including their values, beliefs and positive attitudes that contribute to a favourable environment in which all students can be accepted (Collins & White, 2001). Accordingly, inclusive education researchers suggest that school administrators need to be committed to the philosophy of IE and develop attitudes and behaviours that promote inclusion of students experiencing difficulties in learning (Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Praisner, 2003; Sharma & Chow, 2008; Sharma & Desai, 2008). Therefore, their attitudes are crucial to design, and to implement programmes and practices in developing inclusive schools.

Many researchers worldwide investigated administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in order to understand opportunities for and the means to implementing IE reform successfully. Research studies indicate that without positive support from school administrators, such as principals, the likelihood of implementing effective IE programmes are greatly diminished (Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Cox & Washington, 2008; Khochen & Radford, 2012; Livingstone, Reed & Good, 2001; Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Porter, 2004). In contrast, when principals support inclusive education, the possibilities of successful implementation are significantly increased (Sharma & Chow, 2008). This implies that these principals can inspire or inhibit school personnel to accept inclusive education for all students in regular classrooms in their

schools. To be more specific, school level administrators who have a positive opinion about inclusive education can improve teacher, student and parent communication (Sar, Cetinkaya, & Inci, 2013). Among others, Sharma and Chow (2008) share similar views as they note that principals can directly or indirectly affect teachers' commitment to including children with disabilities in their schools.

The literature on inclusive education has identified a strong relationship between principals' attitudes toward inclusive education and its implementation (e.g. Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Praisner, 2003). Researchers in the field indicate that such positive attitudes are accompanied by issues related to implementation of IE. In a number of studies, administrators' positive attitudes toward inclusive education were found to be attached to their acceptance of students with disabilities in inclusive settings (Abernathy, 2012; Choi, 2008; Cox & Washington, 2008; Farris, 2011; Galano, 2012; Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012; Sar et al., 2013; Usman, 2011). For example, a study conducted in New Jersey, USA (Galano, 2012), investigated the attitudes of urban elementary principals toward inclusive education of students with special needs in the general education environment. These findings showed that most principals had positive attitudes toward inclusive education of students with disabilities. However, the presence of students classified as emotionally disturbed or orthopedically impaired was linked to lower attitude scores of principals.

Cypriot head teachers' views on inclusive education were explored by Hadjikakou and Mnasonos (2012). Investigating attitudes of 185 head teachers, the study found that Cypriot head teachers overall had positive attitudes toward inclusion of children with disabilities. However, respondents expressed they were more prepared to include children with specific learning disabilities and felt less prepared to include

children with neurological impairment. Conducting a survey study on 536 South Korean elementary school principals, Choi (2008) reported that principals agreed with important inclusive education concepts and held positive attitudes toward inclusive education. The result of the study revealed that alongside positive attitudes toward IE, special education schools were considered more appropriate educational placements for students with disabilities. Participants reported that students with disabilities were not provided with instruction and curriculum adapted to their educational needs and their schools did not have adequate staff or support for implementing inclusive education.

Research studies again demonstrate that administrators' positive attitudes toward IE are often accompanied by their concerns regarding issues like resources, funding, and policies. For example, Martz (2005) found that perspectives regarding possible time-frames for implementation of IE varied among different groups of participants (i.e. school administrators, teachers and parents of students with or without disabilities) in Russia, though their attitudes toward the idea of IE were overall positive. The participants identified that both lack of necessary conditions in schools and government policies and finances were the greatest barriers to inclusive education. Choi (2008) found that principals' knowledge of legislation, and the extent to which they received in-service training, were strongly related to perceptions, attitudes, and/or school practice.

A number of research studies found that while school principals were supportive of the rights of children, and of the philosophy of including students with or without special needs into regular education, at the same time they had reservations about implementation of inclusive education (Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Brown, 2007; Sharma & Chow, 2008). To be more specific, even when principals held positive attitudes and beliefs about theoretical aspects of IE, such as outcomes or the way in

which they were perceived, their resistance was reflected in identification of barriers about the practical issues of implementing IE in schools, particularly how IE influenced classroom life and actual practices (Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012; Sharma & Chow, 2008). Thus, it is essential to address the barriers to IE along with facilitators for effective implementation.

Barriers to and facilitators of IE

Many research studies, particularly those investigating administrators' views and attitudes toward inclusive education (e.g. Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Glazzard, 2011; Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012; Schoger, 2007), reported on issues that facilitate or inhibit inclusive practices in schools. Some of the key issues are discussed under two broad headings: a) Barriers, and b) Facilitators.

Barriers: One significant barrier to inclusive education is negative perceptions and attitudes toward children with disabilities. Many researchers identified the type and severity of the disability as a crucial issue that inhibited the successful implementation of IE. For example, Khochen and Radford (2012) reported on Labanese administrators' reluctance towards including students with disabilities. The respondents of the study expressed reservations about including all students, particularly those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The findings of the study indicated that administrators' negative attitudes were related to the type and severity of disability.

Ngwokabuenui (2013) found that principals in Cameroon, for example, were more willing to include students with mild disabilities compared to those with severe disabilities in regular classrooms. The respondents perceived that students with mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance, blindness/visual impairment,

deafness/hearing impairment, speech and language impairment, multiple disabilities and autism/pervasive developmental disorder needed to have special education services outside regular school as their most appropriate placement.

In Guyana, Ajodhia-Andrews and Frankel (2010) found that attitudes and perceptions toward those with special needs were the core obstacles inhibiting successful inclusive education. Investigating implementation of IE and the factors that support or hinder the process in Flemish primary schools in Belgium; Ghesquière, Moors, Maes and Vandenberghe (2002) found that participants' consideration of children with special educational needs to be a special (defective) group hindered the development of inclusive education practice. The researcher surmised that educational development cannot be seen in terms of addressing the needs of "defective students" (p.54).

Another crucial barrier impeding the success of IE is lack of resources (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Pather & Nxumalo, 2013). Pather and Nxumalo (2013) identified the lack of human and material resources as key challenges that inhibited inclusive education development in South Africa. Inadequate funding has been identified as another crucial resource issue in relation to implementation of inclusive programmes (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Amadio, 2009; Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Burstein et al., 2004; Graham & Spandagou, 2011; Vorapanya & Dunlop, 2012).School leaders consider funding as an important factor in relation to inclusive education. Vorapanya and Dunlop (2012) revealed Thai school leaders' concerns, stating that the level of government funding for schools was far from being sufficient to address all students' needs. According to school leaders in this study, the shortage of teacher assistants is linked to inadequate funding. Ajodhia-Andrews and Frankel (2010) found lack of adequate resources as a major barrier to inclusive education in Guyana.

Their list of necessary resources included teacher training, human resources /professional support, funding and policies, and equipment and materials.

Schoger (2007) investigated attitudes toward inclusive education of different stakeholders including administrators. The study identified the reasons why principals are not supportive of IE including: a) lack of specially trained staff and or aids available in general education classrooms; b) lack of resources including funding; c) lack of acceptance and understanding of children's needs; d) lack of personnel; e) parents' attitudes; f) lack of time; g) large class sizes; h) general resistance to change by the faculty; and i) lack of practical training. Khochen and Radford (2012) found several resource factors that acted as barriers to inclusive education including a "dearth of finances, human resources, training, educational resources" (p.150).

Lack of knowledge is a crucial barrier to the implementation of IE. In the context of educational change, educators generally believe they must be ready to face the challenges of meeting the needs of all students (Philpot, Furey, & Penney, 2010). Administrators agree with educators that general education teachers lack the necessary instructional skills to work confidently and effectively with children with disabilities in the general education setting (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). Lack of knowledge is often referred to as lack of preparation of personnel, which is seen as a barrier to implementation of inclusive education by school leaders. For example, a study (Vorapanya & Dunlop, 2012) in Thailand, reported that school leaders were concerned that teachers did not have sufficient training and, as a consequence, those teachers faced difficulty in guiding students. The respondents of the study suggested that all teachers need to be prepared for children with special needs in their pre-service training before these teachers are posted to schools. They recommended special education training for

whole of school staff so they would have the know-how to assist and enhance the educational experience of students with disabilities.

Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler, & Guang-Xue (2013) point out that lack of preparedness of teachers is one of the greatest challenges for developing countries in implementing an inclusive approach in school. Therefore, greater emphasis is placed on preparing teachers for such an approach. It is suggested that without a "solid foundation about students' disabilities, education needs, accommodation, and laws" general education teachers cannot provide effective instruction in classrooms (Worrell, 2008, p.45). According to Kilanowski-Press, Foote, and Rinaldo (2010), educators must be provided with a greater awareness of inclusive practices for successful implementation in the classroom. Forlin (2013) suggests that teachers' preparation for inclusive education necessitates making appropriate and effective training available both prior to and during the implementation of IE. Further, specialist training is considered a pre-requisite for educators to take on new roles in implementing IE (Yeo et al., 2011).

Theoharis (2007) added to the list of barriers, reporting that principals faced a number of barriers as they tried to promote social justice in their schools. Some of these barriers included staff members' resistance and desire to maintain the status quo, insufficient leadership training, lack of resources and support from parents, and the bureaucratic system's failure to support equity and social justice.

Facilitators. Research studies identified that some facilitators can ease the way for implementing IE in schools. In other words, they are mainly focused on overcoming key barriers to implementation. For example, investigating school administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in Cyprus, Hadjikakou and Mnasonos (2012)

reported some essentials for facilitating inclusive education which include: a) consultation activities with teachers, specialists and parents; b) pre-service and in-service training of head teachers on inclusive education or special education(i.e. processes and strategies that support inclusive education) for increasing their understanding of inclusive education; c) disability awareness courses for children without disabilities; d) the role of head teachers in eliminating barriers to inclusive education such as teachers' workload and additional responsibilities; and e) recruiting paraprofessionals to aid regular teachers' work needs to be addressed in terms of cooperative learning, co-teaching, offering suggestions about modification and adaptation of curriculum, and providing support with techniques to handle challenging behaviours.

Other key facilitators for effective implementation of inclusive education include: belief in educating all children, availability of support, and adequate infrastructure. For instance, Dover (2005) noted that schools that have administrators who believe and support the implementation of inclusive programmes for students with special needs are predicted to have success with inclusive programming. Therefore, creating an effective inclusive school requires principals who support and develop among all school personnel a firm belief in educating all students in the regular education setting (Ngwokabuenui, 2013).

Praisner (2003) found principals differed in their experiences and perceptions of appropriate placements for students with disabilities depending upon the particular disability. This implies that placement decisions for students with disabilities are made based on the principal's own belief and experience with certain disabilities. As a consequence, students with certain disabilities are not given equal opportunity to be

placed in regular classrooms (Horrocks et al., 2008; Praisner, 2003). For IE reform to be successful, inclusive education should thus be understood in relation to beliefs and values that come with it (Singal, 2006a).

In the context of educational change, practitioners must be provided with continued support and technical assistance for implementing educational innovation (Avramidis et al., 2002). Availability of support is therefore a crucial factor for facilitating inclusive education. Research studies indicate that administrators want to be better supported in terms of funding, staffing and training, even when they hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Khochen & Radford, 2012). Examining primary school principals' preparation to embrace the philosophy of integration in Hong Kong, Sharma and Chow (2008) found that availability of learning support teams or remedial teachers in schools have a positive correlation with administrators' attitudes.Mastropieri and Scruggs (2004) stated that school administration support would impact positively on the attitudes of teachers, students and parents of the school community.

Research studies also emphasised the need to address structural problems in facilitating effective implementation of inclusive education (Mallick & Sheesh, 2013; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012). School environments need to be healthy, safe and most importantly accessible to all learners. It is obvious that if a student with a disability cannot enter a school building or classroom, he/she cannot learn in an inclusive setting (Torreno, 2012). Therefore, school buildings must be mobility friendly for diverse students. Moreover, classrooms must be able to accommodate assistive devices of a student as well as other furniture to meet individual needs. Therefore, adequate infrastructure (e.g. mobility-friendly school infrastructure and classroom support for children with disabilities)is considered to facilitate inclusive education.

Factors influencing attitudes of administrators toward inclusive education

Review of the literature identified some background variables that influence administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. This section discusses the relationship between background variables of administrators and attitudes they hold toward inclusive practice. These background variables are grouped under three categories: demographic variables (age, gender, level of education), work related variables (teaching experience, administrative experience, level of work, work location, support, and government guidelines), and knowledge variables (knowledge regarding legislation relating to inclusive education, special education qualification, and professional development training on IE).

Age

Researchers have investigated the influence of administrators' age on their attitudes toward incision. Sar, Cetinkaya and Inci's study (2013) examined school administrators' opinions toward inclusive education in Turkey. The study found that the age of school administrators is a significant factor to influencing school administrators' diverse opinions on inclusive education. The results of the study revealed that younger administrators (aged between 31-40) held significantly higher opinions than those of older administrators (aged 51 and over).

In Cyprus, Hadjikakou and Mnasonos (2012) explored the views of head teachers on inclusive education for the first time and identified the impact of age. It was reported, for example, that younger head teachers had more negative attitudes toward inclusive education. The results identified that the age of head teachers was related to their accommodation beliefs. Further, a significant correlation among age and inclusive

practices of Israeli elementary school administrators was found in a study conducted by Avissar and associates (2003). The findings revealed that the older the head teachers, the fewer practised full inclusive education, whereas more pull-out programmes were implemented. This suggests that older head teachers held comparatively negative attitudescompared to their younger peers.

Smith (2011) investigated 102 Georgian secondary school principals' perceptions toward inclusive education of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. The findings indicate that the majority held a positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, age did not have any significant effects on their attitudes towardinclusive education. Similarly, Cruzerio and Morgan (2006) did not find any effects of age on principals in managing their programmes for students with special needs in a unified system. Another study (Sharma, 2001) investigating Indian school principals' attitudes toward integration found that age was not statistically significant.

Gender

Much research investigating attitudes toward inclusive education examined the relationship between gender of participants and their respective attitudes (Applegarth, 2004; Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Brown, 2007; Chhabra, Srivastava, R., & Srivastava,I., 2010; Horrocks et al., 2008; Memisevic &Hodzic, 2011; Praisner, 2003; Sharma, 2001; Smith, 2011). In the USA, Brown (2007) found that attitudes of administrators differed based on gender. The findings reveal that female administrators tended to be more positive towards inclusive education of students with disabilities than their male counterparts. The female administrators tended to believe that students with disabilities should be included in regular classrooms and regular teachers are trained adequately to cope with those students. In contrary to the belief of male administrators, female

administrators believe that inclusive education practice should be supported, regardless of whether parents of regular students object to inclusive education. The results revealed that female administrators were more supportive of including students with disabilities in regular classrooms than their male counterparts.

Another study (Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012) investigating attitudes of head teachers in Cypriot primary schools found that female head teachers have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education than their male counterparts. The results of this study indicated that female head teachers felt more prepared to teach children with all types of disabilities than male head teachers. Moreover, female head teachers considered that less classroom modification is required for children with every type of disability than their male counterparts.

In contrast, investigating the perceptions of 460 elementary school principals in the USA, Johnson (2011) found that male elementary principals generally concur with inclusive education practices to a greater degree than their female counterparts. Jordanian teachers' and administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education were examined by Alghazo (2000). The results revealed that male educators were slightly more accepting of including students with disabilities in the regular classroom than their female counterparts.

Again, many studies (Bailey, & du Plessis, 1998; Chhabra et al., 2010; Horrocks, 2008; Memisevic &Hodzic, 2011; Praisner, 2003; Smith, 2011) reported that gender had no influence on the attitudes of participants.

Level of education

Level of education is considered an important factor that can influence the formation of administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. Avissar, Reiter and Leyser (2003), for example, examined Israeli principals' perceptions of inclusive education and their practices regarding IE. The findings revealed that levels of education of respondents are correlated with inclusive education practices. The results indicated that a higher level of education correlates with perceptions of more severe problems. Level of education however was found statistically insignificant in relation to attitudes of school principals in a study conducted by Sharma (2001). Some studies examined educational levels of the participants but the impact status was not reported in the findings (Cruzerio &Morgan, 2006; Livingston, Reed, & Good, 2001).

Work related variables

The effect of administrators' work related variables, including length of teaching/administrative experience, level of work, work location, and availability of resources and support for the inclusive education of students with special needs into the regular school system, is reviewed in the section below.

Length of teaching / administrative experience

Length of teaching/administrative experience has been investigated in a number of studies to determine whether educators' attitudes toward inclusive education were significantly associated with teaching and administrative experience. In general, studies have shown there is a significant negative correlation between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and teaching or administrative experience (Avissar et al., 2003; Sharma, 2001; Sharma & Chow, 2008). For example, Sharma and Chow (2008) examined 130 school principals in Hong Kong in order to determine if their teaching

experience had any significant impact on their attitudes toward integrated education. They found that principals with less teaching experience had a more positive attitude towards integration than those with more teaching experience. The researchers explained that the principals with less teaching experience were recent graduates and their training may have covered different features of educating students with disabilities which impacted on their attitude.

Avissar and associates (2003) studied perceptions relating to inclusive education practices of elementary principals from Israel. They found significant correlation between respondents' perceptions and experience. They found that respondents with more experience were less supportive of inclusive education. Investigating administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education, Brown (2007) found that attitudes differed based on both teaching and administrative experience. The findings revealed that administrators with fewer years' administrative experience tended to agree more with inclusive education of students with disabilities.

On the other hand, investigating principals' attitudes toward the inclusive education of students with disabilities in California, Shomar (2012) found that principals' experience had a positive correlation with their attitudes. However, some studies examining the relationship between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their teaching and administrative experience found no significant relationship (Cruzerio & Morgan,2006; Mthethwa, 2008; Ngwokabuenui,2013; Smith, 2011).

Work level

Research studies investigating school administrators' views and attitudes toward inclusive education examined the relationship between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and level of work. Researchers in particular focused on different schooling levels such as elementary (Bell, 2014; Galano, 2012; Harris, 2009; Horrocks et al.,2008; Praisner,2003; Ramirez, 2006; Shomar, 2012; Weller, 2012); primary (Hadjikakou & Mnasonos,2012); middle(Cox & Washington, 2008); and high (Farris, 2011; Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Smith, 2011) to determine the level specific impact on attitudes toward inclusive education.

Some research studies examined attitudes of district level administrators, central level administrators, and policy makers toward inclusive education (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2002; Cruzerio & Morgan, 2006; Deng & Guo, 2007; Kinsella & Senior, 2008; Schoger, 2007; Singal, 2006a; Stainback, G.H., Stainback, W. C., & Stainback, S. B., 1988). Investigating the attitudes of administrators toward inclusive education of students with disabilities in regular education as well as factors influencing their attitudes in Rankin County School District, USA, Brown (2007) found there was a difference in administrators' attitudes based on different school levels such as elementary, middle and high schools. The results of the study indicated that more administrators from middle schools agreed than from elementary and high schools to include students with disabilities. The results show that administrators of middle schools tended to agree that students with special needs belong in special schools where their needs are met; however, they can benefit academically when included in regular classrooms.

Horrocks and colleagues (2008) examined principals' (elementary, middle and high schools) attitude regarding inclusive education of children with autism in Pennsylvania public schools. They found a correlation between school level and principals' placement score. The results indicated that elementary principals had the most positive placement recommendation.

Location

Some research studies examined the relationship between principals' attitudes and their school location such as rural (Livingstone et al., 2001) and urban (Galano, 2012).In order to explore Indian educators' attitudes and concerns regarding integrated education, Sharma (2001) surveyed 310 primary school principals and 484 teachers in Delhi. He found that principals' attitudes were significantly associated with school location. The principals from urban schools were significantly more positive in including students who required specialist help than principals from rural schools. A study conducted in the USA (Galano, 2012) reported similar findings where 96% of the sample of urban principals held positive attitudes toward the inclusive education of students with special needs in general education settings. Deng and Guo(2007) examined principals' and district managers' understanding of IE in China and they found rural administrators relate their positive attitudes with traditional virtues, moreover, these rural administrators were concerned with "negative social ideology and atmosphere"(p.701).

Contrary to the studies discussed above, a study (Desai, 1995) examining 353 elementary school principals' attitudes in Victoria, Australia, found no significant differences between the attitudes of urban and rural principals toward integration of students with disabilities in their schools.

Knowledge variables

Research findings suggest that successful inclusive education depends on developing and sustaining positive attitudes towardinclusive education, increasing educators' knowledge regarding IE through professional development and offering clear expectations of IE for educators (Kuyini & Desai, 2007). A considerable amount of research studies have been undertaken to determine whether significant relationship exist between educators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their knowledge variables such as (a) knowledge of inclusive education and related laws,(b) special education qualification and (c) professional development training. A review of these studies is presented below.

Knowledge of inclusive education and related law

Knowledge of inclusive education is vital for educators and administrators who implement IE, and their lack of knowledge in implementing IE causes negative attitudes (Sar et al., 2013). Sahbaz and Kilic (2011) reported that due to a lack of adequate knowledge and experience about students with disabilities, educators and administrators were hesitant in offering their opinions on the integration of disabled students in Turkey. They surmised that "if branch teachers have adequate knowledge and experience about students with disabilities and the integration practices, their opinions on the integration of disabled students will change positively" (Sahbaz & Kilic, 2011,p.173). Examining attitudes of primary school administrators, in the same context, Sar, Cetinkaya and Inci (2013) found that administrators' in-service training on special education had a positive effect on their attitudes toward inclusive education.

Mthethwa (2008) examined principals' knowledge of and attitudes toward inclusive education in South Africa. The findings revealed difference in the extent to

which the participating principals knew about inclusive education and a child with special education needs and more than 60% had a positive attitude towards inclusive education. Again, a vast majority (65%) reported a high level of knowledge of inclusive education as well as children with special needs. The findings indicated that teaching experience helped to increase principals' knowledge and a positive relationship was revealed between principals' knowledge of and attitudes toward inclusive education.

Knowledge of special education law has been found significantly influencing on attitudes toward inclusive education in the study conducted by Ngwokabuenui (2013) in Cameroon. The results indicated that knowledge of special education law has a significant effect on the attitudes of participating principals toward inclusive education. A study (Shomar, 2012) investigating elementary school principals' attitudes toward inclusive education of students with disabilities in California found a positive correlation between principals' knowledge in special education law and their positive attitudes toward inclusive education.

Other studies conducted in USA (Harris, 2009; Ramirez, 2006) found that knowledge of special education has a significant effect on the attitudes of administrators toward inclusive education. For example, examining attitudes of 76 assistant principals of elementary school in North Central Texas, Harris (2009) found a correlation between the respondents' level of knowledge of special education law and their attitudes toward inclusive education. Earlier another doctoral study (Ramirez, 2006) reported that administrators' knowledge of special education law had an effect on the attitudes of their attitudes toward inclusive education.

A study(Schoger, 2007) investigating parents', teachers', principals', and central administrators' perceptions regarding inclusive education and attitudinal barriers to IE of children with moderate and severe disabilities, found lack of comment from participating groups relating to adherence to the laws that administer inclusive education.

Special education qualification

The impact of special education qualifications on the formation of educators' attitudes toward inclusive education has been examined in many research studies. In the USA, Galano (2012) examined the relationship between principals' attitudes, and professional training and education. He found that school principals with little or no training in special education were likely to have negative to low positive attitudes toward inclusive education of students with disabilities. The results indicated that special education/ specialised training in behaviour management for students with special needs is a significant factor associated with positive attitudes of principals. In contrast, lack of specialised training was found to be a potential barrier to inclusive initiatives in Singapore (Yeo et al., 2011).

Many studies identified a positive relationship between special education qualifications and attitudes toward inclusive education. For example, Subban and Sharma (2006) found that educators' undertaking training in special education had more positive attitudes as well as lower levels of concern regarding implementation of inclusive education. Praisner (2003) found that principals' exposure to special education concepts correlated with their more positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Erhard and Umanksy (2005) examined Israeli school counsellors' involvement in the process of inclusive education measured by aspects of IE such as allocation of time,

collaboration with partners, and involvement in substantive areas of inclusive education. He found that special education training was influential for counsellors' involvement in aspects of inclusive education. Abernathy (2012) found that administrators who received more credit hours in special education during college preparation exhibited more positive attitudes toward inclusive education.

In the USA, Bell (2014) examined the relationship between special education training of elementary school principals and special education administrators and their attitudes toward integration of students with disabilities into regular education classrooms, measured by a) special education credits taken in formal training programmes, b) number of in-service hours in inclusive practices and c) type of specific topics included in preparation programmes. The results revealed that the number of in-service hours was significantly associated with attitudes toward inclusive education, but the number of special education credits taken in formal training programmes and the type of specific topics included in preparation programmes were not related to attitudes toward inclusive education.

Professional development training

The influence of professional development training on administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education of students with disabilities has been investigated in a considerable number of research studies. Sar, Cetinkaya and Inci (2013), for example, examined the opinions that Tarkish primary school administrators hold towards inclusive education, and found that in-service training received by school administrators had a positive effect on their attitudes toward inclusive education. Based on their findings, the researchers suggested that school administrators who received in-service training believe that inclusive education is effective, both with normal progression and

disabled students. Principals' personal experiences, professional training and formal training were analysed in a study conducted by Farris (2011) that investigated Texas high school principals' attitudes toward the inclusive education of students with disabilities in the general education setting. The findings revealed positive correlation between principals' special education training experience and in-service training experience. The results indicated that respondents' positive perceptions of inclusive education were based on training hours in inclusive practices.

Abernathy (2012) conducted a study that investigated South eastern region school administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in the United States. He found that administrators who receive inclusive training demonstrate a more positive attitude. A similar finding was earlier reported by Smith (2011) who investigated the attitudes of secondary school principals toward the inclusive education of students with disabilities in general education classes. The results from his study(Smith, 2011) indicated that principals who had at least some training in teaching students with disabilities held positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Investigating 408 primary school principals' attitudes toward the inclusive education of students with disabilities in Pennsylvania, USA, Praisner (2003) found that principals who had more hours of training demonstrated a more positive attitudes toward inclusive education of students with disabilities than those with less hours of training.

Other studies had similar results regarding the positive impact of the training variable on attitudes toward inclusive education (Choi, 2008; Horrocks et al., 2008; Cox & Washington, 2008).From their investigation of principals' attitudes regarding inclusive education of children with autism in Pennsylvania, Horrocks and his colleagues (2008) found that principals with formal training recommended higher levels

of placement for students with social detachment. The results indicated that training on deficit in social development and effective methods of handling children demonstrating such characteristics might increase principals' willingness to support higher levels of inclusive education for these children. The attitudes of middle school principals in South Carolina were examined by Cox and Washington (2008) who found respondents generally had a positive attitude towards inclusive education. The findings indicated that principals with more formal training held significantly more positive attitudes relating to inclusive education of students with special needs into the regular classroom.

Similarly, Shomar (2012) found that elementary school principals in California hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education. The findings indicated that training had a positive correlation with school administrators' attitudes. Based on these findings, the study emphasised the importance of principals' training in special education and inclusive education. Similar recommendations came from Avramidis and colleagues (2002) who investigated inclusive education in one LEA in England and found a positive attitude on the part of teaching staff regarding inclusive education. The findings indicated a perceived need for ongoing professional development. The respondents reported a requirement for more knowledge relating to specific disabilities and for training to better implement inclusive programmes.

In contrast, studies undertaken by some investigators (e.g. Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Smith, 2011) revealed no significant relationship between administrators' professional development training and their attitudes toward inclusive education.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study. The chapter has been arranged in two sections. The first section provides an explanation of research design and the rationale for using mixed-methods design as a research method for this study. The second section describes two phases of the study including methods employed in each phase.

Research Design

A mixed method approach was employed in this study involving a sequential research design, in which both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis processes were undertaken. This research study was conducted in two phases. In Phase 1, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth understanding of administrators' attitudes regarding inclusive education. In Phase 2, a survey was conducted using a newly developed scale to measure administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in relation to their background features. The connection between qualitative and quantitative phases was primarily established during the intermediate stage of the research process when the survey instrument was developed. The findings from both phases were integrated during the interpretation of outcomes of the whole research study, when mixing took place at data analysis stage. This design provided a breadth of perspectives on "social phenomena" being studied (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p.115).

In this research, a mixed-methods approach was used for three reasons. Firstly, the purpose of a mixed-method approach was to develop a context specific scale for attitudes toward inclusive education. This study began in Phase 1 with a qualitative exploratory study to explore understanding and meaning making of inclusive education by administrators in Bangladesh. The findings of the qualitative study served as a guide to develop the "*Administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education questionnaire*", then used in Phase2 of the study.

Secondly, a mixed-methods approach was employed in order to expand the scope of the study. Through a qualitative approach, this study primarily aimed to inquire about administrators' current understandings regarding inclusive education. However, it was hoped that the scope of the study could be expanded by employing a quantitative study through exploring whether there was any significant relationship between background variables of administrators and their attitudes or perceptions regarding inclusive education.

Finally, mixed methods is complementary. As inclusive education is a complex concept, the findings of either a quantitative or qualitative study may not capture the comprehensiveness of administrators' understanding and meaning making of the concept. Therefore, conducting a mixed-method study presented a comprehensive understanding of administrators' perceptions and attitudes regarding inclusive education by elaborating the findings of the qualitative study with those of the quantitative study or vice versa (Doyle, Brady, & Byrne, 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The overall design of the study (visual model) is illustrated in Figure 8.

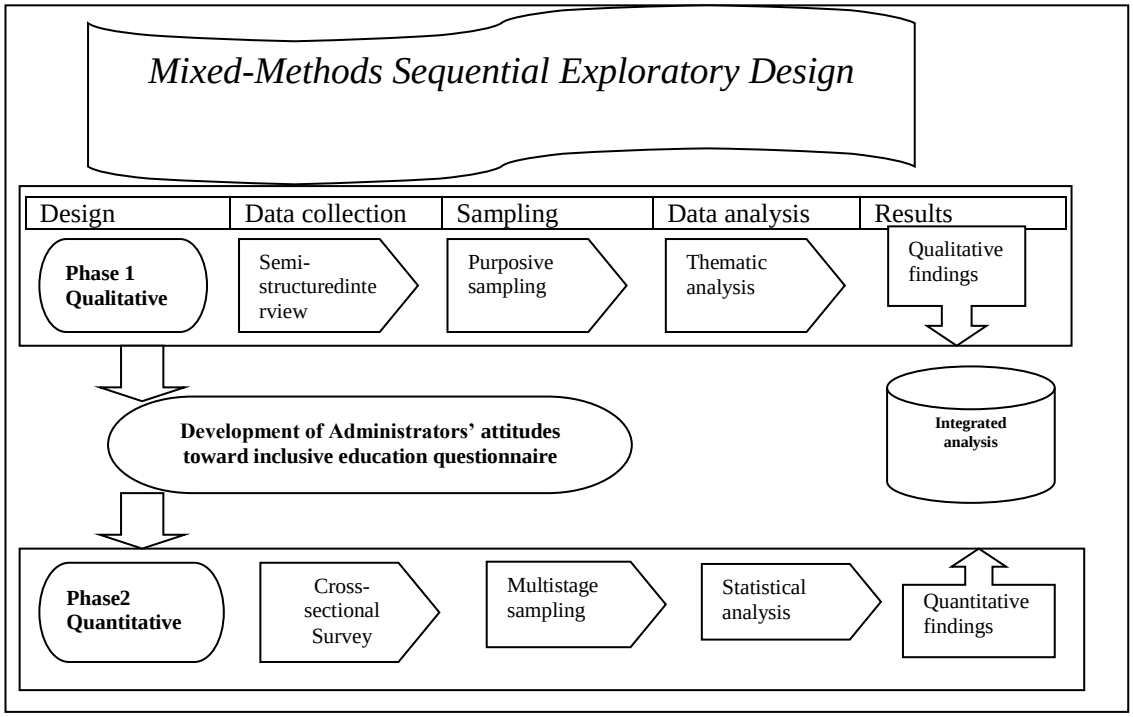

Figure 8: Phases of the research design

Phase1(Qualitative)

This phase of the research study employed a qualitative approach aimed at exploring administrators' understanding of inclusive education including what they identify as facilitators and barriers to its implementation in the Bangladeshi context. The specific research questions this phase attempted to answer were:

1. How do primary education administrators at various levels understand inclusive education?
2. What do administrators at different levels identify as barriers to inclusive education?
3. What do administrators at different levels identify as facilitators for inclusive education?

Participants

Participants were selected from the administration of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) in Bangladesh. The DPE is the central authority with overall responsibility for primary education management and administration in Bangladesh. The DPE manages the primary education in Bangladesh through its field offices, such as Division, District and Upazilla (sub-district) and schools. Three groups of administrators were selected according to their position in administration, considering that administrators working in different positions within the administration might have different working experiences in relation to implementation of educational intervention. It was likely that administrators from different levels might have different perspectives; and these diverse perspectives could produce rich data to map an overall understanding of inclusive education in Bangladesh. The three groups of administrators are illustrated in Figure 9**.**

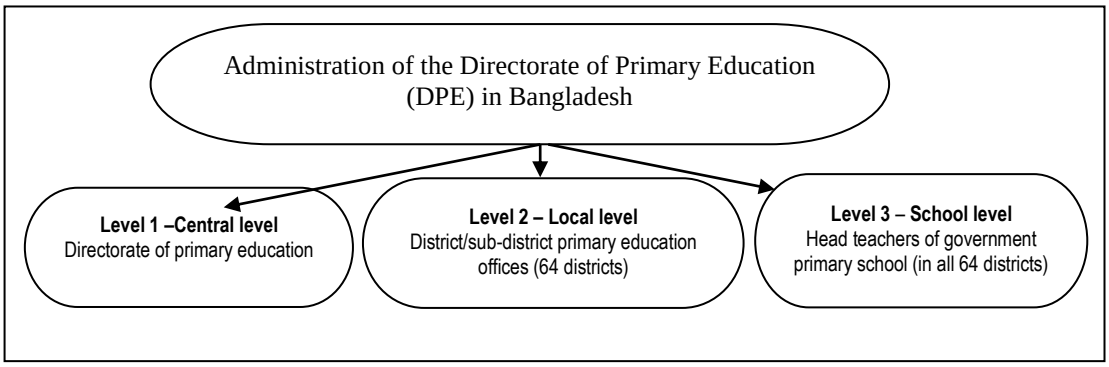

Figure 9: Three levels of administrators as participants

Level 1: The administrators working centrally in the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) are responsible for overall management and implementation of programmes and policies relating to the quality improvement of primary education, co-ordination among central and field offices, training needs assessment and management

of training for teachers and officials, the recruitment of teachers for the government primary schools, and management and allocation of funding for schools.

Level 2: The administrators located in the District /sub-district primary education offices in 64 districts across the country belonging to level 2 are responsible for supervision and support roles in implementing programmes at school level. In addition, their responsibilities include teacher management, skill development of teachers, and inspection of schools and distribution of text books. This level plays a bridging role between level 1(central) and level 3(school).

Level 3: Head teachers of schools are school level administrators who belong to level 3. These administrators are responsible for day-to-day administration of the school and for routine school data reporting.

The total number of administrators at level 1 is 65, between 2800 to 3000 at level 2, and between 36,000 to 37,000 at level 3. In order to identify a small and manageable sample size of administrators, the Director General (DG) of DPE was consulted to recruit participants for phase 1. He was asked to nominate 15 administrators from each of the three levels of administration who have experience of implementing inclusive education. A total of 45 administrators were nominated by the DG of DPE and all were invited by the researcher to participate in the research. An invitation package containing an explanatory statement and consent form was posted to each of them for their consideration. Only those who agreed to be interviewed were the participants for the Phase 1 study. The final sample consisted of 18 administrators. The participating administrators were aged between 33 and 56 with a mean age of about 44. They represented both urban and rural areas. A majority of administrators were male

and most had completed some training on IE. (A profile consisting of information about Phase 1 participants' age, gender, highest academic degree, location of work and training on IE is presented in Appendix G.)

Interviews

Phase 1 of the study comprised interviews with 18 administrators to explore their perspectives about inclusive education. Interviews were used as instruments with a consideration that it would provide the researcher with easy access to "another person's perspective" (Patton, 2002, p.341). Interviews in this study were semi-structured in nature. Semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity "for the unexpected insight to be collected and for the interviewer to seek clarification, invite expansion or explore a response further" (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010, p. 132). The flexibility of the semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to respond to individual questions and provided focused direction.

An interview protocol was developed to ensure focused direction for interviews. Interview questions in the protocol focused on participants' understanding, attitudes and concerns regarding IE in Bangladesh. The protocol was reviewed by experts (Academics of the Faculty of Education at Monash University) in the field who were asked to determine whether (or not) the time allocated for the interview was feasible, and whether the interview questions were appropriate and effective in exploring participants' views regarding inclusive education in Bangladesh. The interview protocol questions were revised based on suggestions and comments from the experts. The researcher then administered the interview protocol to a pilot respondent (a Bangladeshi doctoral student working in a similar field) to determine ease of use of the draft interview protocol. The feedback from the pilot respondent resulted in minor

wording changes in format and presentation of the protocol. The interview protocol was subsequently shared with a group of academics in a workshop at Monash University with no further refinements made. Some of the sample questions were:

- What is your understanding of inclusive education?
- How might inclusive education be achieved?
- What are challenges in achieving inclusive education?
- How will you/we know that inclusive education goals have been achieved/ or progress has been made?

The final version of the interview protocol containing 11 questions is attached in Appendix H.

Interviews were conducted with participants between July and September 2012. Semi-structured interview demands skill and experience from the interviewer to use prompts and other techniques to guide respondents to keep them talking (Newell & Burnard, 2011). All the interviews were conducted by the researcher who had participated in training in interviewing from his supervisor and training conducted by the Faculty of Education at Monash University to further develop his skills for semi-structured interviewing. Each interview session was approximately 45 minutes to one hour in duration. Before each interview started, participants were informed about the study, such as the aims of the study and the rights of the participants, as noted in the explanatory statement for participation (Appendix E). In addition, permission was sought from each participant to have the interview audio recorded. It was noted that if a situation arose in the place of interview and if the interviewee needed to address the matter, we would simply pause the interview and then resume. The background information (age, gender, position level, educational qualification, professional development training and experience of inclusive education) of participants was

gathered at the start of each interview. It provided a portrayal of respondents' life situation and allowed the framing of interview questions in a relevant manner. While conducting the interviews, the interview protocol and different prompts and reflections were used to encourage the interviewee to say more and to expand on the issue. However, while using prompts or reflection during the interview, the researcher was careful not to offer his own views, but encouraged the respondent to answer the original question in more detail. In interviews, the questions were not asked following the order in the interview protocol, but changes in order were made according to the interviewees' responses. However, the reason for using such guided protocol was to cover 'similar territory' in each interview (Newell & Burnard, 2011).

Transcription and translation

Transcription and translation were used as processes for data preparation in phase 1 of the study. Commenting on data analysis, Creswell (2007) suggested that qualitative data analysis should begin with preparing and organising the data for analysis, followed by a reduction in data through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and representation of data in the form of figures, tables or discussion (Creswell, 2007). As the interviews for this study were conducted in Bangla and the findings were presented in English, a careful process of data preparation involving transcription and translation was required to ensure credibility of research findings. Just after interviews, the recorded interview data (spoken version) were transcribed into textual data. Considering the advantage of transcription as 'the first stage for analysis', the researcher himself transcribed all the recorded interviews. Transcribing his own data, the researcher enabled himself to maintain a link between the raw data and the transcript (Langdridge, 2004, p.263). Member checking was done during the process of transcription whereby the respondents were invited to review transcripts and to make

amendments, additions or withdrawals. Textual data from the interviews were then prepared to be analysed in the source language. Following the process of transcription, the textual data from the interviews were analysed in the source language and translation and back-translation were carried out on the analysed data to prepare the data for presentation in English language.

Collecting data in one language and presenting the findings in another demand translation related decisions from the researchers that have a direct impact on the trustworthiness of the research and reporting (Birbili, 2000). Accordingly, a range of issues were considered to ensure the quality of the translation process in this study. Translation has been defined as a process where "the meaning and expression in one language (source) is tuned with the meaning of another (target) whether the medium is spoken, written or signed" (Crystal, 1991 cited in Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, 2010). In line with many researchers, Regmi, Naidoo and Pilkington (2010) expressed the view that translation is primarily a conversional process of transforming field text into research text through making decisions at different stages for achieving equivalence in meanings and interpretations (Brislin, 1970; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Birbili (2000) has pointed out that one of the major challenges of this translation process is "gaining conceptual equivalence or comparability of meaning" (p.2). From the above discussion, it is understood that translation is a complex process involving testing of cultural equivalence and congruent value, and the careful use of colloquialisms (Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, 2010). The researcher was well aware that the process of achieving comparability of meaning in translation would be largely facilitated by researchers' and/or translators' proficient understanding of language and intimate knowledge of culture (Birbili, 2000; Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, 2010). Importantly, the persons involved in the translation process must be fluent in both the

source language and target language, and must hold knowledge of both cultures. The translators require knowledge of subject-specific terminology, awareness of style and grammar, nuances and idiomatic expressions. Thus, the transformation process of one language into another involves translators performing a multifaceted activity of information processing (Chen & Boore, 2009).

Although importance of translation in qualitative research is well recognised, very few studies describe explicitly the systematic process and strategy involved in translation. However, the literature provides some direction regarding processes of and approaches to translation (Brislin, 1970; Chen & Boore, 2009; Halai, 2007; Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, 2010). In the light of directions provided in the literature about the processes and approaches for translation, two key strategies were identified and scrutinised in order to select the appropriate translation procedure for Phase 1 data. These two strategies are illustrated in Table2.

Table 2

Two strategies of translation procedure

Strategy	**Process**	**Comments**
1. Translating the transcripts into target language (English) and back-translate those to the source language. Checking the transcripts against translated interpretation during analysis and synthesis (Brislin, 1970; Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, 2010)	• Transcribing recorded interview data in source language word for word(verbatim) • Translating interview transcripts from source language (non-English) to the target language (English) by two bilingual persons • Back-translate the documents from the target language to their source language by another bilingual person • Comparing both versions for accuracy and equivalence check • Discrepancies that have occurred during the process need to be negotiated and resolved between two bilingual translators (Brislin,1970)	Translation of all transcripts twice and back translation of all data is a daunting process. It would be time consuming and also expensive
2. Analysis of data in the source language and translation and back-	• Transcribing recorded interview data in source language word for word(verbatim)	This strategy involves only translation and back-translation of the concepts

Strategy	Process	Comments
translation only carried out on the analysed data (Chen & Boore,2009)	• Analysis of the source language textual content for concepts and categories • When concept and categories emerge, two bilingual translators will translate those into English and the final English version is reached by agreement between two translators • Another bilingual translator takes the English version and back-translates the concepts and categories from English to source language • To obtain conceptual equivalence and to ensure the use of most appropriate words that most native speaker would understand, an expert panel committee is involved in reaching final agreement on the translation (Chen & Boore,2009)	and categories of the analysed data. Therefore, this process would entail less time and money.

Chen and Boore (2009) argued there was no necessity to translate all interview transcripts into English; rather the concepts and categories that would emerge from the data analysis from original version could be translated to report the findings. The argument in favour of translating only the concepts and categories of analysed data was viewed appropriate for the current study, considering the time and expense involved in translation of all data (Regmi, Naidoo & Pilkington, 2010). The translation procedure employed in Phase 1 was developed following the strategy 2 in Table2 where "data were analysed in the source language and translation and back-translation only carried out on the analysed data" (Chen & Boore, 2009, p.237). Figure 10 shows the detailed translation procedures followed in the study.

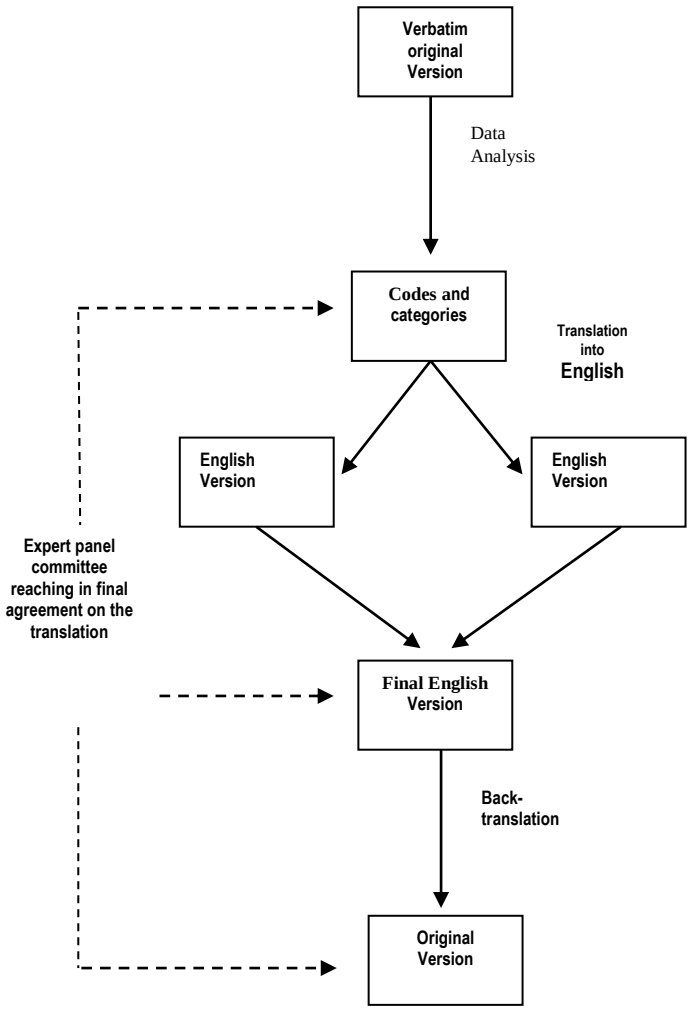

Figure 10: Visual model of translation and back-translation procedure followed for Phase 1 (adapted from Chen & Boore, 2009, p.237).

As depicted in Figure 10, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim in Bengali and the data were analysed in source language. After the codes and themes emerged, these were translated into English by the researcher (who is bilingual). Then a bilingual colleague (who is fluent in both Bengali and English, and a doctoral student in a similar field) was employed to translate the codes and themes identified from the data in the source language. The final English version was reached by agreement between translators. In the next step, another bilingual colleague (who is fluent in both Bengali and English, and a doctoral student in a similar field) took the final English version and back-translated the codes and themes from English to Bengali. These initial two steps

were repeated as required to negotiate any differences between the original version and the back-translation. To obtain the conceptual equivalence and to ensure the use of words that most native speakers would understand, an expert panel was involved. The expert panel included the researcher (bilingual), two colleagues of the researcher (bilingual, with Bengali as first language and with experience in qualitative research), a lecturer at Monash University (bilingual, with Bengali as first language and with experience in qualitative research) and an Associate Professor from the Education Faculty at Monash University (English monolingual). The expert panel reviewed and discussed discrepancies between the source language (Bengali) and target language (English) until agreement on equivalence of meaning was reached. A sample of data from each level was transcribed and translated using the identified procedures to establish validity and reliability. Having established reliability and validity, it was deemed appropriate that these steps could be used for the remainder of the data.

Data analysis

The process of data analysis drew on more than 100 hours of transcribed textual interview data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was considered a useful process for this study, in organising and structuring the data accumulated from interviews (Newell& Burnard, 2011) and in describing the data set in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis technique was used because it was considered more flexible than other types of qualitative analytical methods, in capturing important themes and addressing the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process followed in phase 1 of the study drawing and particularly upon the guidelines offered by Braun and Clarke (2006), though guidelines from other sources (Newell& Burnard, 2011; Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Langdridge,2004) were also taken into consideration. This analytical technique involved analysing

transcripts, identifying and gradually categorising a pattern of themes within and across the interview transcripts and collating the data extracts that represent those themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Burnard et al., 2008). Inductive thematic analysis was employed to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes generated from the interview data. Accordingly, the method of analysis followed in this study involved coding of the data without applying a predetermined coding framework. The data analysis process followed six steps of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The steps of thematic analysis involved in Phase 1 study are shown in Figure 11 followed by explanations for each step.

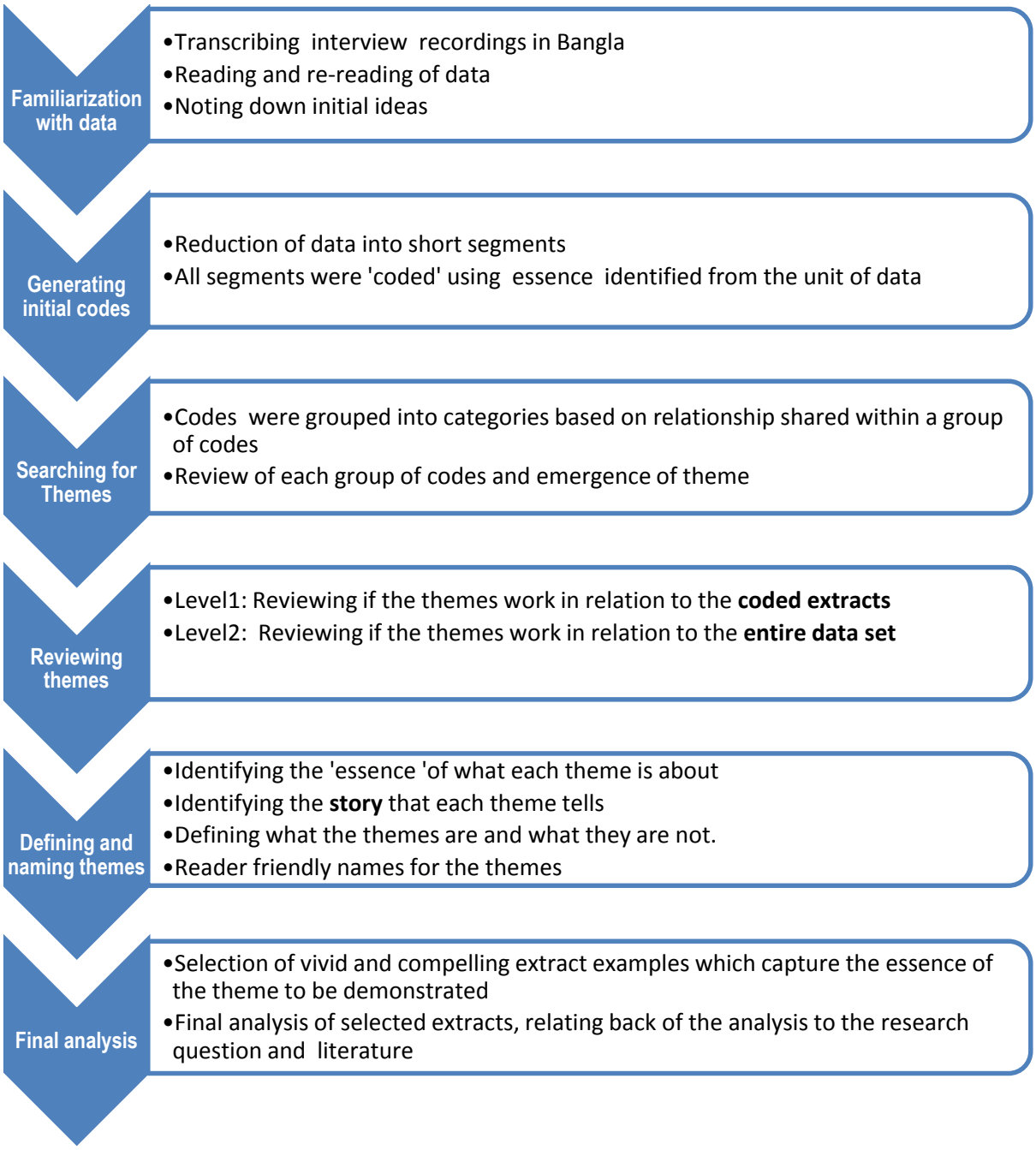

Figure 11: Phases undertaken for thematic analysis (Modified from Braun&Clarke,2006)

Step 1: Familiarisation with the data

The data analysis process began as the recorded data were transcribed and transcripts were checked against the tapes for accuracy. The formal activity for this phase involved reading and re-reading interview transcripts until an overall understanding of the data was obtained. During this initial reading of transcripts, no

attempt was made to code them. However, some early, general notes were made to become engaged in the data (Newell & Burnard, 2011). As a result an initial list of ideas was generated, informing what was of interest in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 2: Generating initial codes

This phase of initial code generation was divided into two steps. First, after transcripts had been read carefully, the most interesting words or phrases of each individual transcript were highlighted. Through this process textual data were segmented into small units. These units were groups of words, sentences or paragraphs containing particular aspects in relation to the purposes of the study. This process helped to reduce the data into short segments known as "data condensation" (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p.106).

Second, each data unit was read carefully and labels were applied to the short segment of data according to the essence identified from the data unit. These labels or 'codes' allowed data to be thought of in new and different ways (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) and referred to "the most basic segment, or element of the raw data or information that could be assessed regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis,1998,p. 63). Each data unit was given equal attention and all meaningful data extracts were coded and then collated together within each code. All data were initially coded and collated resulting in a long list of different codes identified across the data set. During these processes of data reduction and coding the whole context of the study was taken into consideration. A representative example of data reduction and coding is shown in Table 3.

Table3

An example of reducing and coding data

Textual data	**Data reduction**	**Code**
Q: What is your understanding of inclusive education? A: What I normally understand[about inclusive education] is that our father of nation, the then President, *nationalized the education system to ensure the right to education for all children in Bangladesh* in 1973. Following this sequence in 1974 there was an enactment of law which was passed in the parliament. From that time or date a consciousness existed/ exists that is to *bring all the children under education* so that *no one is deprived of an enlightened life.*	Law ensuring the right to education for all children National policy for bringing all children under education No children can be deprived by law	Equal rights to education Access for all policy No deprivation law

Step 3: Searching for themes

There were two steps within the process of searching for themes: 1) categorising codes, and 2) generating potential thematic categories or themes. The first step involved grouping codes into categories based on commonality or relationships shared within a group of codes (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Interview questions and the meaning expressed within the data unit helped determine commonality within the codes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). As can be seen from the example presented in Table 3, the code for 'equal rights', 'access for all ' and 'no deprivation ' were grouped together because all these codes originated from data segments that expressed the principle of democratic

participation , and addressed the research question about understanding inclusive education.

The second step was generating potential themes. Each group of codes was reviewed in order to identify a structural meaning that connected an expression of codes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). This reviewing process resulted in the emergence of a thematic category or theme. Themes emerged in two levels: themes and sub-themes. Sub-themes were associated with categories of codes that emerged from textual data whereas themes were associated with the structural meaning that was made to address research questions, such as understanding inclusive education policy, barriers to inclusive education and facilitators to inclusive education. An example of codes, themes and sub-themes from the analysis phase is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

An example of codes, theme and sub-themes

Code(n)	Theme	Sub-themes
Equal access(5) Right to education(2) No obstacle for access and participation(1) Equal opportunity(1) No discrimination(2) No exclusion(2)	The concept of Inclusive Education – "Ekibhuto Shikhkha	Principles of IE
Recent policy direction(3) Government willingness(1) Nationalisation to ensure education for all (1) Government target of 100% enrolment (1) Commitment to international policy EFA (4)		Policy influence for IE
Policy development for IE (1) Policy framework to address IE(2) Addressed through PEDP(2) Addressing four areas (2)		Local approach towards IE

Code(n)	Theme	Sub-themes
Development of manual, screening tool and action plan (1)		
Creation of provision for access (1) Achieving EFA goals (1) Bring all children to school (3) Overcoming challenges for coming to school (2) Addressing problems of children with difficulties and creating opportunities to grow with other children (1)		IE goals and target
IE is a specialised topic (1) Include children who are lagging behind (1) Requires special system (1) Separate care (1)		Disability focused IE
Lack of specification in IE policy (1) Limited knowledge of IE (1)		Limitation of knowledge of IE

Step 4: Reviewing themes

This phase of analysis involved reviewing and refining identified themes and refinement of themes. This task was undertaken at two levels. At level 1, the coded data extracts were reviewed for each theme, while at level 2, validity of individual themes was done in relation to the entire data set . Themes were cross checked and then back to the original data set to ensure their internal coherence, consistencies and distinctiveness. Themes, sub-themes and data set codes were then presented together in a table and these were reviewed and discussed several times by the researcher and his supervisor to minimise research bias. At the end of this phase a hierarchical category of themes, sub-themes and codes was identified, called ‘a thematic map’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.89).

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

The fifth phase of analysis involved defining and refining themes generated for each concept that emerged from data segments under each theme. A review was then completed to establish the essence of each theme and aspects each theme captured. It was essential at this stage to ensure codes and sub-themes under each theme were captured by the respective theme's definition (Braun & Clarke, 2006).The outcome of this phase was that each theme was given an appropriate name that reflected the overall concept.

Step 6: Final analysis

The final phase of the process of analysis involved grouping key issues in different ways and identifying similarities and differences between them. In this final step, emerging central phenomena were identified and interconnections between several themes, causal conditions, specific strategies, contexts and intervening conditions were explored. A story line was identified with vivid examples or extracts that captured the essence of the point to be demonstrated in the write-up of data findings.

In order to assess trustworthiness of the data analysis, "checks of interrater reliability" were conducted (Thomas, 2006, p.243). The student researcher carried out the analysis and developed a set of categories that constituted preliminary findings. The evaluation objectives and interview text were given to a second coder (bilingual, with Bengali as first language and with experience in qualitative research) creating a second set of categories from the interview text. To ensure the reliability of inter-coding the categories from two independent coders were compared. The overlapping categories in two sets were accepted in the final set of categories. A few modifications were made for some categories based on discussion and agreement between the two coders. Detailed

findings of qualitative data analysis are presented in the next chapter. Only key themes that emerged from initial analysis in Phase 1 data are described here, which guided the development of the survey in Phase 2. The five preliminary themes identified from Phase 1 data were: understanding of inclusive education, facilitators of inclusive education, barriers to inclusive education, exclusion, and reform processes for inclusive education.

Phase 2 (Quantitative)

Initial analysis of data was undertaken from Phase 1 to identify key themes. The preliminary themes that emerged informed items to be included in the survey questionnaire for Phase 2.

Twelve research question (RQ) s answered from this Phase 2 were:

RQ 4: What attitudes do administrators hold towards inclusive education?

RQ 5: What attitudes do administrators at different levels hold towards inclusive education?

RQ6: Are there any significant differences in attitudes toward inclusive education among administrators working at different levels of administration in Bangladesh?

RQ 7: Is there any significant difference between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their work setting/location (rural-urban)?

RQ8: Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on gender?

RQ 9: Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on their special education qualification?

RQ 10: Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on their knowledge of IE related policy?

RQ 11: Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on their professional development (PD) training?

RQ 12: Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on the following demographic characteristics?

a) Years of administrative experience
b) Years of teaching experience
c) Age.

RQ 13: Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and the following knowledge variables:

a) Highest level of education

b) Knowledge of IE priority

c) Knowledge of resources for IE

d) Duration of PD training

e) Effectiveness of the training for implementing IE.

RQ 14: Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and the following support variables:

a. Level of support received

b. Level of support provided.

RQ15: Is there a significant relationship between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their opinions about inclusive education policy?

Participants

Participants were also selected from all three levels of primary education administration for Phase 2.

Selection of level 1 administrators: Level 1administrators working at the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). There were 65 level 1 administrators and they were all invited to participate in the survey. Thus 65 administrators comprised the sample (n=65). The sampling procedure for level 1 administrators is shown in Figure12.

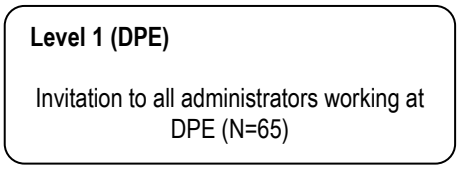

Figure12: Selection of level 1 administrators for Phase 2

Selection of level 2and level 3 administrators: Administrators working at level 2 and level 3 are high in number and located in 64 districts across the country. The number of administrators at level 2 range between 2800 and 3000 and at level 3range between36,000 and 37,672. A two-stage cluster sampling technique was used to select administrators from level 2and level 3. The steps involved in the sampling technique for selection of administrators at both levels were:

- **First stage:** Two districts were purposively selected out of 64 districts representing urban and rural areas respectively (Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh for urban and Gazipur for rural areas).
- **Second stage:** All administrators at level 2 and level 3 were invited to participate. At level 2, there were 111 administrators and at level 3 there were 1299administrators respectively. The stepwise sampling procedure for level 2and level 3 administrators is shown in Figure13.

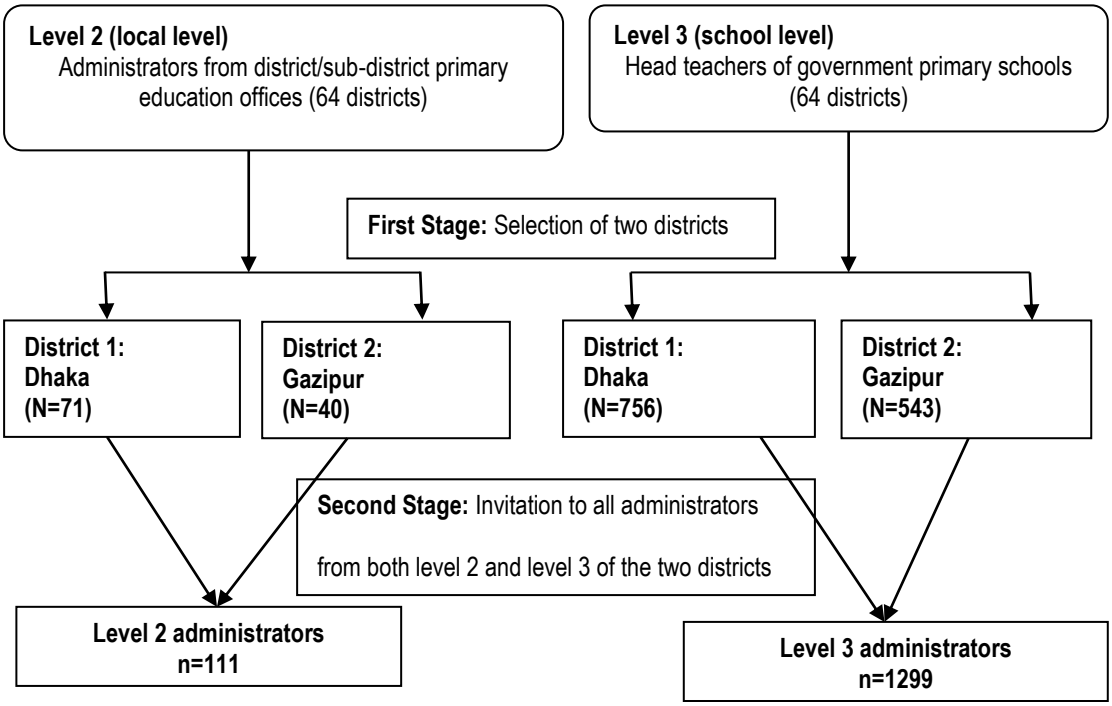

Figure13: Selection of level 2and level 3administrators for Phase 2

The final sample of administrators included administrators from each of the 3 levels of administration of DPE. Hence, the sample of administrators selected for Phase 2 was (65+111+1299) = 1475. The numeric picture of the Phase 2 sample administrators is presented in Table 5.

Table5

Total sample of administrators for Phase 2

Administrative levels	**Total number of administrative clusters**	**Number of administrative clusters identified for the survey study**	**Total number of administrators in the selected clusters**	**Number of administrators invited for the survey study**
Level 1	1	1	65	65
Level 2	64	2	111	111
Level 3	64	2	1299	1299
				Total: 1475

Survey method

A cross-sectional survey method was used to collect data in Phase 2 study of this research. This method of data collection was chosen, as it is widely used to subjectively measure social phenomena and investigate peoples' beliefs, concerns, attitudes, interests, practices and behavioural response trends to specific issues under inquiry, with a view to generalise the findings for the entire population(Creswell, 2008; de Vaus,2002). Moreover, this method was considered useful as potential participants of this study were large in number and scattered in different geographical places (Cohen, Manion, &Morrison, 2011; de Vaus, 2002). This research aimed at investigating the interpretation of inclusive education by the administrators in Bangladesh. For

understanding the interpretations of the administrators' opinions, impact of variables on their beliefs and attitudes toward inclusive education were also investigated. Considering the nature of the subject of the study, it was believed that a survey could be most useful for revealing the current status of target variables within this particular group through interpreting the numerical descriptions (Thomas, 2003). Data collected from each respondent in a survey was also considered useful for exploration of relationships among variables measured (e.g. attitudes related to levels of working set-up or knowledge of inclusive education) (Kidder, 1981). It was expected that survey design would provide general and specific quantitative descriptions of attitudes or opinions of the studied population (Creswell, 2009; Wiersma, 1991).

Instrument for the survey

A review of literature was undertaken in order to identify an instrument befitting the Bangladeshi context that could be used to measure administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. The review indicated that the majority of studies focusing on administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education were conducted to explore attitudes of school level administrators (Brown, 2007; Horrocks et al., 2008; Kuyini & Desai, 2007, Praisner, 2003). Moreover, most of these instruments were designed in developed countries. However, a few modified versions were used in developing countries. For example, Sharma and Chow (2008) explored Hong Kong primary school principals' attitudes toward integrated education using a modified version of the School Principals' Attitudes Toward Inclusion (SPATI) scale. The SPATI was originally developed in Australia in 1998(Bailey & du Plessis, 1998). It was therefore decided that there was a need as mentioned above for a standard, validated scale appropriate for measuring administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in the Bangladeshi context.

Development of the questionnaire

The literature on questionnaire design provided information about various ways of structuring the questionnaire to best capture information that would answer the research questions. Accordingly, a systematic approach was followed to develop the questionnaire. Eight steps were involved in producing the final questionnaire as presented in Figure14.

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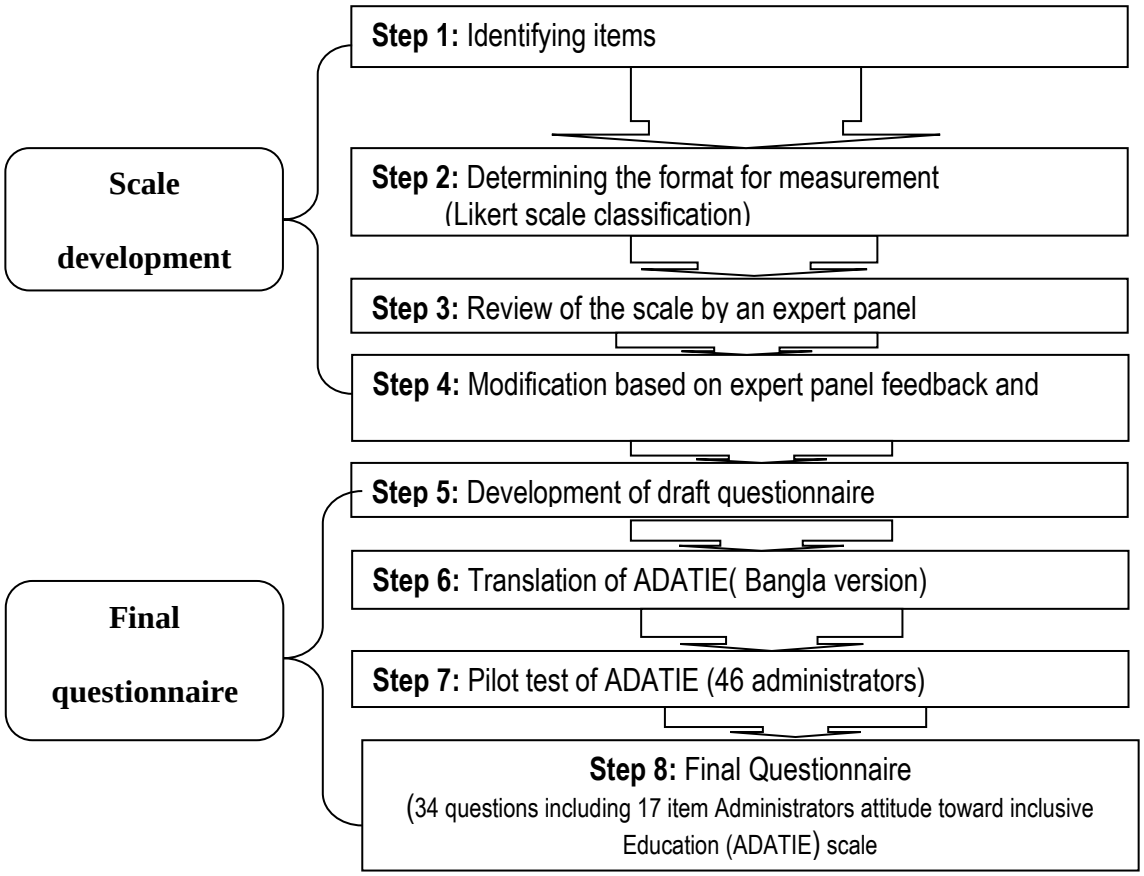

Figure 14: Development of questionnaire for Administrators' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education (ADATIE)

Step 1: Identifying items

The initial step involved identifying items in order to develop the scale. The identification of items for the scale relied on two primary sources: the literature review and findings from Phase 1 of the study. A review of literature was undertaken focusing primarily on studies dealing with perceptions/ attitudes/ facilitators/ barriers and other

related issues in relation to the implementation of inclusive education(Avissar et al., 2003; Bailey, 2004; Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Cruzeiro & Morgan,2006; Deng & Guo, 2007; Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Graham & Spandagou, 2011; Horrocks et al., 2008; Praisner, 2003; Schoger, 2007; Sharma & Chow, 2008; Stainback et al., 1988). A number of themes (e.g. teachers' preparation, schools' readiness, parents' acceptance, children's learning challenges and benefits of inclusive education) derived from the literature review formed the foundation for the questionnaire. Phase 1of this study identified a number of preliminary themes (e.g. understanding of inclusive education, facilitators of inclusive education, barriers to inclusive education, exclusion, and reform processes for inclusive education) that provided important conceptual clarification and essential information about the various constructs to be incorporated in the development of questions and items in the questionnaire. It was thought that developing items with contributions from the interview data would reduce the risk of "researcher imposed constructs" by drawing on valuable insights offered by participants (Punch, 1998, p.262). Finally, combining the themes identified from the two primary sources a pool of 17 items was constructed.

These items were written up as a declarative statements to capture administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education.

Step 2: Determining the format for measurement

A decision was taken to use a six point Likert classification for 17 items of attitudes toward the inclusive education scale with responses raging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Somewhat Agree (4), Agree (5), Strongly Agree (6) to measure the level of administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. The Likert scale was chosen considering its extensive use for measuring opinions, beliefs and attitudes (DeVellis, 2012). It was decided to use a six-point Likert scale format seemingly on the basis that this was a form used in other studies in the

related area (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle, 2009; Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma, 2014). There are legitimate reasons why the idea of a forced choice scale where respondents are not able to indicate a neutral approach to an item may be desirable in research of the kind reported here almost demands that respondents make an either for or against response. The participants are administrators with responsibilities to implement government policy and therefore it was important that administrators make a choice in favour of or against the idea expressed in the item.

Step 3: Review of the scale by an expert panel

Content validity of the survey instrument was considered important, as it referred to the degree to which the instrument actually measures the concept it is supposed to measure (Slavin, 1992). Commenting on validity issues of the survey, Light, Singer, and Willett (1990) stated that the way to measure face validity is "by having experts examine the measure and agree that it does assess what it is supposed to assess"(pp.151-152). Considering the importance of content validity of the survey, and to ensure the relevance of the scale in the Bangladeshi context, content validation was carried out by sending the newly developed scale to a panel of experts with a request to review and to provide comments/ suggestions for improvement. (A copy of the letter directed to the expert panel is attached in Appendix I).Four Bangladeshi doctoral researchers (with expertise in the area of inclusive education) and a lecturer at Monash University were approached to review the English version of the scale to check content, design, clarity and suitability for the target population(Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The panel was asked to review the scale based on the following criteria:

1. Are the item descriptors clear and free from ambiguity?
2. Are the words easily understandable to a person with no or limited knowledge in inclusive education?
3. Could each item be interpreted differently than intended?
4. Are there any biases in any aspect of the questionnaire?

Step 4: Modification of the draft scale based on expert panel feedback

Upon receipt of comments and suggestions from the panel, various changes were made to different sections of the initially developed scale. The panel suggested that the term “regular school” be rephrased as “regular classroom” to prevent any confusion for participants. In addition, the panel felt that it was important to include a clear definition of the term “inclusive education” in the introduction to improve understanding for participants. The draft scale was revised incorporating all recommendations made by the expert panel. The outcome of the process produced the final draft version in English.

Step 5: Development of draft questionnaire

The process then involved development of the draft questionnaire. An initial draft of two-part questionnaire entitled “Administrators Attitudes toward Inclusive Education” (ADATIE) was constructed in English. The draft questionnaire included the newly developed attitude scale in part 1 and background information items in part 2. The initial draft of the questionnaire consisted of 34 questions with a mix of closed, open-ended and demographic questions as structured below.

Part 1: Attitudes toward inclusive education scale (17 questions preceded by an introduction and instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. All were Likert scale questions).

Part 2: Background information (17 questions of which 6 were Likert scale questions including one generic question and 3 were open-ended questions.)

Step 6: Translation of the ADATIE (Bangla version)

Having produced the final draft version (in English) of the questionnaire, the next step was to translate into Bangla, anticipating that participants would feel comfortable both in understanding the questions and in providing written responses in their own language. A back- translation technique was used to arrive at a Bangla version of all measures in the questionnaire. The back-translation technique involved engaging two bilingual experts in the field of inclusive education, and the process itself involved three steps. First, the questionnaire was translated into Bangla by the researcher who is bilingual. The questionnaire was given to a bilingual colleague of the researcher (who is fluent in both Bengali and English, and a doctoral student in a similar field) for translation from English to Bangla. An initial draft of the Bangla version of the questionnaire was derived with agreement between two translators. In the next step, another bilingual colleague (who is also fluent in both Bangla and English, and a doctoral student in a similar field) took the initial draft Bangla version of the questionnaire and back-translated from English to Bangla. To obtain conceptual equivalence and to ensure the use of words in the questionnaire that most native speakers would understand, an expert panel was involved. The panel included the researcher (bilingual), two colleagues of the researcher (bilingual, with Bengali as first language and with experience in qualitative research), a lecturer at Monash University (bilingual, with Bengali as first language and with experience in quantitative research) and two supervisors of the researcher from the Education Faculty at Monash University (bilingual and English monolingual respectively). The expert panel reviewed and discussed the discrepancies between source language (Bangla) and target language (English) until agreement on equivalence of meaning was reached. As a consequence, a Bangla draft version of the ADATIE was produced.

Step 7: Pilot study of the ADATIE

A pilot study was conducted not only to determine the reliability of the Bangla version of ADATIE but to determine the efficiency of the data collection method. The Bangla version was piloted with a convenience sample of level 2 and level 3 administrators from the Manikgonj District in Bangladesh. These administrators were not the target for the main survey, as that comprised administrators from two selected districts (Dhaka and Gazipur) in Bangladesh. With prior permission, the student researcher joined the regular monthly meeting of administrators with the District Primary Education officer (DPEO) of Manikgonj at his office. The student researcher distributed a survey package to 100 administrators who attended the meeting. The package contained a covering letter, a self-addressed reply paid envelope and a copy of the questionnaire. The covering letter explained the purpose of the study, emphasised the confidentiality of responses and provided information regarding the need for their support in completing the questionnaire. The letter included a request from the researcher to return completed surveys via the reply paid envelope. Forty seven completed surveys were returned. The reliability of ADATIE was determined by computing Cronbach's alpha. The pilot study data analysis indicated that Cronbach's alpha value (reliability coefficient) for the scale was 0.71. Based on suggestion from scholars in the field Cronbach's alpha value of 0.71 can be considered as acceptable (De Vellis, 2012).

Analysis of the data revealed that the corrected item-total correlation for 12 of 17 itemson the attitude scale was very good. There were 5 items with low item-total correlations(less than 0.3). According to Pallant (2011), when the total correlations for some items are low, those items need to be considered for removal from the scale. It was decided however to retain those items because research indicates that the attitude

addressed in those items (regarding classroom modification, school building modification, including severe disability, lack of resources, and provision of special schooling) are the most frequently cited issues expressed by educators in relation to implementation of IE.

The pilot study indicated that the data collection process of distributing the survey packages at the regular monthly meeting of administrators at the local level was appropriate. The result of the pilot study further indicated that the instrument was applicable in measuring the constructs of administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education.

Step 8: Final questionnaire

Finally, a decision was taken to use the pilot tested Bangla version of ADATIE for final data collection in Phase 2 of this study. An individual's attitude score on ADATIE may range from 17 to 102. The score for an individual is calculated by adding responses oneach item. A high score on ADATIE indicates the respondent has a more positive attitude for implementing IE compared to the respondent who obtains a low score.

Administrators' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education (ADATIE):

The ADATIE is described in detail in the following section and a copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix- J.

Part 1: ADATIE scale

This part of the questionnaire sought information regarding administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. A brief introduction was provided at the beginning clarifying inclusive education relative to the study context. The introduction also

included instruction for participants on how to complete the scale, rating their degree of agreement or disagreement with each item.

Part 2: Background information

This part of the questionnaire was designed in order to access the characteristics of respondents and to secure background information relating to administrators. This part comprised 17 questions grouped into different types. Therefore, instructions were provided throughout in order to ensure respondents could easily navigate their way through the questions under varying types.

The first eight were demographic questions designed to collect the following demographic information: age, gender, years of teaching experience, years of experience as an administrator, levels of work setting (e.g. school, district, DPA), work setting classification (e.g. rural, urban), highest academic degree and special education qualification.

Following the demographic questions, there were five closed questions relating to background information, seeking participants to rate their levels of knowledge of inclusive education policy, support received, support provided, effectiveness of training, and effectiveness of government guidelines to understand and implement inclusive education. These questions were followed by a generic question to measure respondents' opinion on inclusive education policy (Do you Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, Agree or Strongly Agree). The concluding three questions in part 2 were open-ended followed by spaces to be answered with three priorities relative to each question (e.g. three priorities of the Directorate of Primary Education regarding inclusive education, three things that

support the implementation of inclusive education and three things that act as barriers to inclusive education).

Reliability

The data from 735 respondents of Phase 2 in this study were subjected to analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21. Reliability of the new 17 item attitude scale was computed using Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency. It was revealed that Cronbach's alpha value (reliability coefficients) for the scale was 0.793. The item-total correlation for item 9 was 0.26, for item 12 itwas 0.126, for item 14 itwas 0.109 and for item 15 itwas 0.055. Item 14 was reverse coded as it appeared to be negatively worded (*Lack of resources is a good reason for excluding children with disabilities in regular classrooms*). When conducted reliability analysis after re-coding, the reliability of the scale went further down and negative correlation was found for this item along with the rest of the items of the scale. A decision was therefore made not to reverse code this item as it seemed that participants' views of requiring resources for inclusive education was perceived to be a reflection of positive attitudes.

DeVellis (2012) recommends that items with low item-total correlations should be dropped from the scale. However, a decision was made to delete two (item 12 on modification to building and item 15 on special schools) out of four items, having significantly lower item-total correlations and to retain two other items (item 9 on classroom modification and item 14 on resources) as the most frequently cited issues in research related to IE implementation. Consequently, two items with significantly low item-total correlations were deleted, resulting in a 15 item scale. Cronbach's alpha for this scale (items 12 and 15 deleted) was 0.817. It is important to note that the dropping

of two items with lower item-total correlations did not guarantee much increase of the alpha value. Moreover, commenting on the reliability coefficient, DeVellis(2012) suggested that a scale with Cronbach's alpha value ranging from 0.80 to 0.90 can be considered as a "very good" reliable scale.

Factor analysis of the issues relating to the ADATIE scale:

Factor analysis was considered a part of scale development process, as DeVellis (2012) recommended that defining the character of latent variables underpinning the item set of a measure is crucial. Given the factor structure of the 15-item scale was unknown, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to determine the latent factor structure of the ADATIE scale developed for this study. By employing Barlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Oalkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Pallant, 2011), the factorability of the data was computed before factor analysis. It was revealed through scrutiny of the correlation matrix that the value for many coefficients was more than 0.30 suggesting the suitability of data. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy index was found to be 0.84, well above the recommended value of 0.6(Pallant, 2011). Barlett's test of sphericity produced a very significant result ($p<.05$) indicating factorability of the correlation matrix (Pallant, 2011).

Principal component analysis exposed the manifestation of four components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, suggesting 29.99%, 11.06%, 7.80% and 6.88% of the variance respectively. Scrutiny of the screeplot revealed a clear break after the second component. Using Catell's scree test, a decision was taken to retain two components for further investigation (1966, cited in Pallant, 2011). The results of parallel analysis further supported the decision to retain two components, showing their eigenvalues

exceeded the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (15variables×735 respondents).

The two-component solution described a total of 41.06% of the variance that included 29.99% contribution from component 1 and 11.06% contribution from component 2. Oblimin rotation was executed to support the interpretation of these components. The oblimin rotation method yielded two tables of loading, with information about factor loading of each of the variables in the Pattern Matrix, and information about correlation between variables and factors in the Structure Matrix. The rotated solution revealed that both components had a number of high loadings (above 0.4) with the majority of variables loading substantially on only one component. However, in order to decide which component was relevant for the variables loading on two components, the highest loading for respective variables was used (Field, 2009). These values are presented with communalities (information about how much of variance in each item is explained) in Table 6.

Table 6

Pattern and Structure Matrix for principal component analysis (PCA) with Oblimin Rotation of two factor solution of ADATIE

Item	**Pattern coefficients**		**Structure coefficients**		**Communalities**
	Com1	Com2	Com1	Com2	
Att6 Inclusion beneficial for teacher	.852	-.131	.823	.055	.705
Att5 Inclusion beneficial to school	.828	-.131	.799	.050	.670
Att7 Inclusion beneficial to students	.775	-.o16	.771	.154	.594
Att3 Parents are supportive	.658	-.296	.593	-.152	.429
Att1 Teacher's Willingness	.560	.095	.585	.256	.344
Att4 Parents of children without disabilities supportive	.556	.134	.580	.218	.364
Att2 Teacher receive support	.453	.269	.522	.430	.331
Att10 Children requiring extra resources should be included	.450	.332	.512	.368	.390

Item	Pattern coefficients		Structure coefficients		Communalities
	Com1	Com2	Com1	Com2	
Att13Teacher include all children irrespective of severity of disability	.439	.216	.486	.312	.280
Att11 Children with challenging behaviour should be taught	.408	.260	.465	.349	.288
Att9Teaching require substantive modification	.343	-.049	.332	.026	.123
Att16 Teachers are skilled	.082	.737	.243	.755	.536
Att8 Schools are resourced	.282	.646	.424	.708	.558
Att17 Schools are well supported	.041	.635	.180	.644	.436
Att14 Lack of resources for excluding children	-.151	.406	-.063	.372	.111

The reason for rotating the factors was to achieve a simpler data structure by spreading the variance more equally across identified factors on the attitude scale. Use of the oblimin rotation method ensured that identified factors were as uniquely different from each other as possible. It was revealed from the component correlation matrix that there was a weak correlation between the two factors(r =.21).

The first factor included variables relating to acceptance of children with disabilities. The main loadings for this factor were variables 1, 2, 3, 4,5,6,7, 9, 10 and 13. These 10 variables represented teachers' willingness, teacher receives support, parents' support, parents' support of children without disabilities, inclusive education benefit for school, inclusive education benefit for teacher, inclusive education benefit for student, teacher requires classroom modification, teaching of children with challenging behaviour and inclusion of children with severe disabilities respectively. This factor was named "Acceptance of children with disabilities". The second factor included five variables and these were variables 8, 11, 14, 16 and 17. These variables

under the second factor were about school resources, children requiring extra resources, lack of resources, teachers' skill and school support. As all the variables placed under the second factor were related to resources, the second factor was named "Resources for IE". The Cronbach's alpha for factor 1(Acceptance of children with disabilities) was 0.80 and for factor 2 (Resources for IE) the Cronbach's alpha was 0.61.

Data collection procedure

The student researcher attended monthly coordination meetings at the Directorate of Primary Education and primary education offices for the two selected districts. With prior permission from the respective authorities, a short presentation about the research study was given for attending administrators at each meeting. A package of survey materials was distributed to every administrator present at those meetings. The package consisted of a survey questionnaire, an explanatory statement and a self-addressed reply paid envelope. Those who voluntarily wished to participate could put the completed questionnaire in the drop box provided at the meeting room, or could post it to the student researcher at a later time. It was explained to administrators that participation in the study was voluntary. Thus they did not need to complete the questionnaire, if they were not willing to participate. A total of 1475 survey questionnaires were distributed, of which 769 were returned. Due to a large amount of missing data, a total of 34 returned questionnaires were discarded. As a consequence, the final number of participants in Phase 2 of this study was 735.

Data analysis

The questionnaire data were analysed with the help of SPSS at a descriptive level, including frequencies, percentage of item responses, mean and standard deviation. Factor analysis was used in the process. Analysis was undertaken to determine the

magnitude of relationships of demographic variables with participants' attitude scores by using a stepwise multiple regression procedure. Table 7 demonstrates the summary version of the data analysis procedure for phase 2 of the study.

Table7

Data analysis procedure for Phase 2(Research question-wise)

Research questions	**Data preparation**	**Analysis**
4. What attitudes do administrators hold towards inclusive education? *5. What attitudes do administrators at different levels hold towards inclusive education*	SPSS	Descriptive statistics (Frequency, mean, SD) and ANOVA
6. Are there any significant differences in attitudes toward inclusive education among administrators working at different levels of administration in Bangladesh?	SPSS	ANOVA
7. Is there any significant difference between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their work setting/location (rural/urban)?	SPSS	*t*-tests
8. Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on gender? *9. Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on their special education qualification?* *10. Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on their knowledge of IE related policy?* *11. Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on their professional development (PD) training?*	SPSS	*t*-tests

Research questions	**Data preparation**	**Analysis**
12. Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on the following demographic characteristics? a)Years of administrative experience b)Years of teaching experience c)Age *13. Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and the following knowledge variables:* *a) Highest level of education* *b) Knowledge of IE priority* *c) Knowledge of resources for IE* *d) Duration of PD training* *e) Effectiveness of training for implementing IE* *14. Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and the following support variables:* *a) Level of support received* *b) Level of support provided*	SPSS	A series of one-way ANOVA
15. Is there a significant relationship between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their opinions about inclusive education policy?	SPSS	Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients

CHAPTER FOUR

PHASE 1 RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of interviews conducted to obtain an in-depth understanding of administrators' perspectives regarding inclusive education (IE) in Bangladesh. The results reported in this chapter are based on the data gathered from 18 administrators working at three different levels of primary education administration. Interviews provided data which was analysed using thematic analysis process. Each of the themes that emerged from the data analysis is presented along with illustrative quotes from administrators' interviews. The results of Phase 1 of the study are organised into the following three sections:

1. Conceptions of "Ekibhuto Shikhkha"(IE).
2. Challenges to IE reform.
3. IE reform: Moving Forward.

This chapter concludes with a summary of results from Phase 1.

Conceptions of 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' (IE)

There was considerable variation amongst administrators' understandings of (IE) in Bangladesh. Administrators at various levels expressed their common understanding about access and success in schooling along with exclusion in their attempts to understand the government's goal for IE reform. Administrators conceptualised IE in ways that were consistent with this goal of bringing all children to school to achieve 100% enrolment, enabling targeted children in four areas (gender, special needs, tribal and vulnerable children) to attend school, and removing barriers to access and success for targeted groups of children. However, the majority of

administrators voiced a lack of acceptance for children with disabilities in attending school, consistent with 'deficit' beliefs and exclusionary views about disability and special needs.

"We call it 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' in Bangla and 'Inclusive Education' in English"(S5):

The key theme that emerged from the data analysis was administrators' conceptions of 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha'. This is the Bangla term used in Inclusive Education (IE) reform documents and the commonly used expression by members of the general community for IE in Bangladesh. The literal meaning of the term is including all types of education, which refers to the 'all' in education for all and emphasises creating equal opportunities for educating 'all' children (MOPME, 2011). Administrators interviewed in the study expressed a variety of conceptions regarding 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' presented under three broad themes: government reform priority, deficit views and exclusionary views. Figure: 15 illustrates these themes.

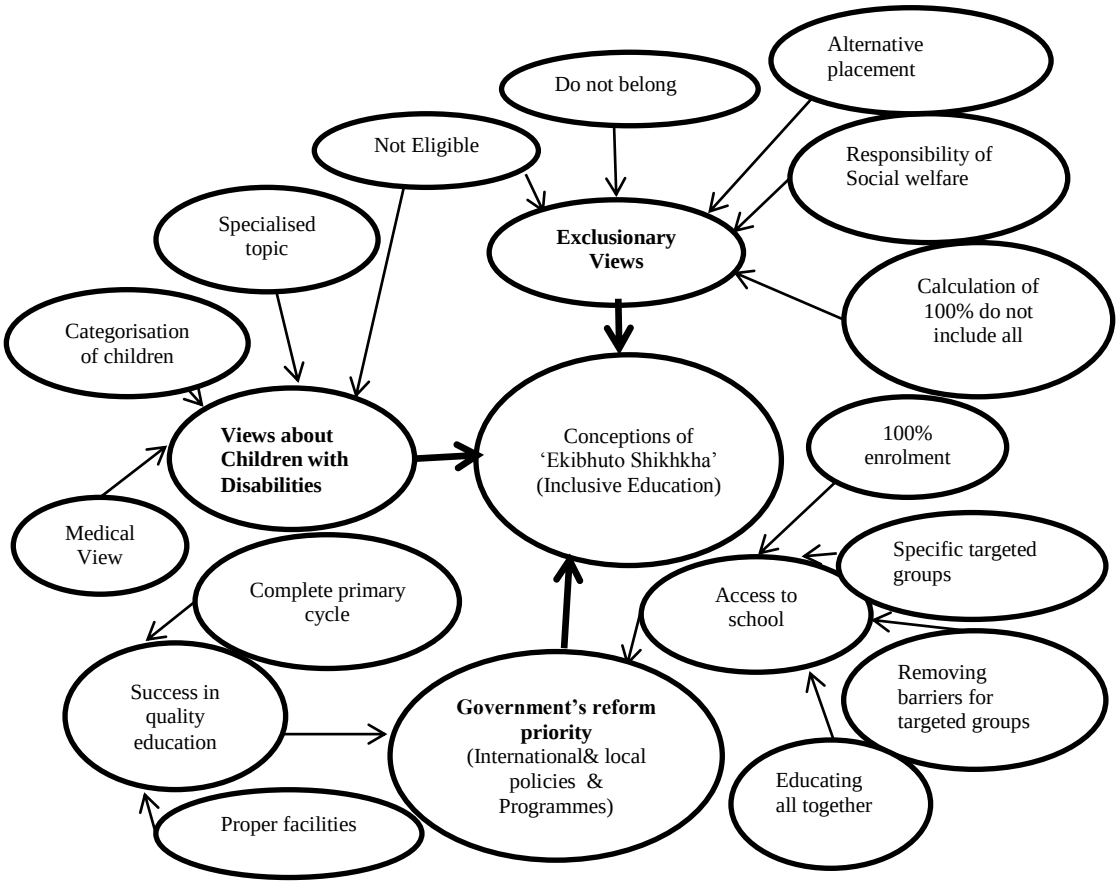

Figure 15: Themes for conceptions of Inclusive Education

'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' as government reform priority

Many views expressed by administrators regarding 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' reflected reform priorities of government in their conceptualisation. The government of Bangladesh is committed to providing education for all children. In order to fulfil the commitment various initiatives were undertaken based on government reform priorities. As outlined in the government policy document (MOE, 2010) two broad government reform priorities are: 1) access to schooling, and 2) success in quality education.

Access to schooling

In relation to the government's first IE reform priority regarding access to schooling, many administrators across three levels understood 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' primarily as 100% enrolment. The following quotes are illustrative:

> *We are ensuring 100% enrolment through that Ekibhuto Shikhkha. Our government demands 100% enrolment. And through that we are making our inclusive education fruitful. All the children are coming under the coverage of school (S1).*
>
> *The government has set a goal of achieving 100% enrolment. But if we fail to bring all the children to school, then we will not be able to achieve the goal. So, we have to bring all of them to school (S5).*
>
> *We will ensure 100% enrolment. In that case, it has become an obligation for us to provide support for bringing all children from mycatchment area into school (S3).*

Administrators at each level emphasised bringing 'all' children into school as a priority following the government reform target of 100% enrolment.

You have already heard that the government has a target to bring 100% children… Now the government has been working to achieve the target to bring all the children to school by 2014 (C6).

But the most important thing is that we have to bring all the children…how we shall manage that without giving importance to Ekibhuto Shikhkha? Our target is to bring all children (M4).

Several comments from administrators showed that IE was perceived not only as bringing 'all' children into school but also educating them together in the primary schools. For example, administrators stated:

Inclusive education is a system to bring all the children under [the] same environment and to teach them together (S3).

What I mean by inclusive education is, to me, it is that all children will come to school (and)will get education in the same school(C1).

Inclusive education is basically to bring them under the same curriculum of primary education and to bring them under [the gamut of] one primary education (M2).

In describing their understanding of 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha, some administrators at central level discussed IE in relation to the impact of national initiatives for ensuring children's rights to education. They referred to a law that was enacted in 1974 to ensure the right of education for all children in Bangladesh, reflected in recent reform policy and emphasis on bringing all children into school. The following quotes from central level are illustrative.

What I normally understand is that our father of nation, the then President, nationalised the education system to ensure the right of education for all children

in Bangladesh in 1973. Following this sequence in 1974 there was an enactment of law which was passed in the parliament. From that time or date a consciousness existed/ exists that is to bring all the children under education so that no one is deprived of an enlightened life (C2).

In the Education Policy 2010 things are stated in the same way that we have to bring all the children under education. So no children are left here (C2).

Another administrator from school level referred to a 'compulsory' mandate to give primary education to all children.

In 1990 (when) Primary Education was declared compulsory. Since then it is said that 'Primary education is compulsory for each child.' We are obliged to provide primary education for all the children (S5).

Several administrators from central level viewed IE as the government's target in fulfilling its international commitments such as 'Child Rights' and 'Education for All' (EFA) and 'constitutional commitment' to ensure education of each child in the country (C2, C5, and C6).This view is explicitly illustrated in the following words of administrator C6:

We are following the call for ensuring education for all children under EFA in the Dakar Conference 2000 and this is considered as policy. Alongside, government has taken step to implement our constitutional commitment to ensure education for every child. In addition, government is promise bound to implement the issue regarding child right in CRC. With due respect to international and constitutional commitment, our government is implementing inclusive education (C6).

Administrators, mainly from the central level, referred to different national and international policies while discussing IE. On the other hand, the majority of local and school level administrators did not refer to national or international policy. Instead they referred to government reform (i.e. 'target' or 'goal' of bringing all children into school for IE reform). For instance, one mid-level administrator stated:

Well, I do not know much about the policy. As far as I know, government has a target that we shall bring all children into school by 2015(M3).

Many administrators across three levels emphasised that IE was about rights and equal access to education for all children, for example, equal 'access'(C1,S4) 'participation' in schooling(M6) and 'no exclusion' from schooling(S4) ideas, consistent with the basic tenants of international inclusive education policy(UNESCO,2009). Several responses from administrators across these levels indicated that ensuring access to schooling for all children was the responsibility of the government based on their 'basic right' to education and the 'no exclusion' policy for IE.

In this age of globalisation, the inspiration prevailing everywhere is to ensure the right of education for every child and for that governments around the world will take necessary measures. The government of Bangladesh has also taken this into consideration with due importance (C2).

This is they call inclusive. Nobody will be excluded from their mainstreaming education (C1).

…. when a child takes birth in society, it becomes the responsibility of the government to ensure all the basic rights to the child like food, clothing and education. We need to ensure no child is deprived of entering into school (M3).

As far as I know, inclusive education is to bring all the children into school. …No child will be deprived of the right of education. Every child will enjoy the right that s/he has to get access in education. In that case every child has to be brought into school. That means bringing them to school is inclusive education (S4).

In describing the ideal situation for IE, one central level administrator emphasised 'all', 'no disparity' and 'no discrimination' for full access to schooling of children. Indeed, full access to schooling for all children was perceived as the ideal of IE.

But it would be the ideal situation when, all children from the whole country will study together, when there will be no disparity among them, no child will feel discrimination regardless of the family s/he belongs to or the problem s/he has. The total environment will be such that there is no discrimination. No child will be neglected due to low family background or disability. To be brief, when, we will be able to mainstream all children and when there will be inclusiveness. I do not want them to address any child differently. The way I address a normal child, when I will be able to address all the children of my country then I would say that IE has been achieved (C5).

While administrators emphasised access to schooling on the basis of the 'right' of all children to education, none of the administrators discussed or noted social justice principles that underpin IE policy in the international context.

Specific groups of children targeted for IE reform

As an impact of government policy reform initiatives, many expressed that views of administrators on IE reform reflected particular attention given to addressing

specific targeted groups of children in four areas (gender, special needs, tribal and vulnerable). The following examples are illustrative.

This inclusive education group includes special need children, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable children. We have also included gender education into it (C6).

As far as I understand, inclusive education means to bring children with special needs, tribal children and children from underprivileged families into the school alongside the general children. We call this inclusive education (M3).

Some administrators across the levels focused on specific groups of children who may not attend school that were targeted by MOPME in their reform.

I understand that inclusive means addressing the students those who are out of the education system. That may be of many different categories: It can be indigenous people, can be some floating [transient] children, and even can be from hilly area or others, even disabled and other children from different categories who are out of the primary education (M2).

My understanding about inclusive education is to bring all children from different castes, different communities, different physical conditions, different mental conditions, and different intellectual conditions to schools (S6).

Our goal is that all children of the country will come to school. This is our main target. Whatever may be the type of the child, it may be children with special needs, may be children from underprivileged families or may be learner/children from vulnerable areas. Our main target is to bring all of them to the school and to integrate all these children into the mainstream (M3).

It was indicated that government initiative was taken to address IE issues through development of four policies to address specific targeted groups of children. For instance, administrator C1 stated:

> *But in 2004 when second Primary Education Development Program was introduced in Bangladesh, some steps were taken at the policy level on these issues. Among them, four policies were developed in Bangladesh which were for addressing gender, vulnerable groups or the underprivileged cluster, tribal groups and then for addressing special needs groups (C1).*

Administrators reported that removing barriers to access in schooling for those four targeted groups was their strategy in order to include those children in the primary schools. This is illustrated in the following comments:

> *We want that the children in four areas…gender aspect, vulnerable aspect, ethnic minorities and the special needs children…In the light of considering difficulties of the children in four issues under education system we want to implement the inclusive education by bringing/including them (C3).*
>
> *For me, inclusive education is to ensure100% enrolment by removing the barriers for the children with poverty, physical disability, tribal background or various socioeconomic conditions to come to primary school. We identify inclusive education as to bring all these students having these criteria into primary school (M1).*

<u>Success in quality education</u>

Western notions of IE include both 'access' and 'success' as equally important components (e.g. Ainscow, Dyson & Karr, 2006; Field et al., 2007; Opertti et al., 2009;

Slee,2008). According to interview data, IE was understood not only as access to school, but also as success in quality education which was another reform priority of the government's policy. In the pool of 18 administrators only five (one administrator from central level, two administrators from mid-level and two from school level) noted the notion of 'success' and quality of education. Some views from these administrators highlighted the need for creating 'proper facilities' and for making a 'framework' to ensure quality education for 'all' children. The following examples are illustrative:

> *…every child will be involved with education. Proper facilities should be provided to him for achieving education (S4).*
>
> *All necessary activities have to be done so that the children can achieve quality education (M4).*
>
> *We need to make a big framework so that we can address all the children. …Now we have to think about IE and quality education. And we have already started thinking on those issues (C5).*

Some other views of administrators reflected their emphasis on guiding children to complete their primary education cycle as well as to become successful in the primary education completion examination. This is illustrated in the following words of respondents:

> *However, when we will see that, all the disable or underprivileged children have come forward and are included into mainstream and completing primary cycle, they will appear in the primary school completion examination and become successful and there will be no drop out case, and they will enrol in high school (M6).*

The activities which we have taken in hand for inclusive education is not an easy and straight path. It involves not only enrolment of the child into school, but also to guide in completing education up to class five (S6).

Conceptions or misconceptions?

While responses from administrators across all levels reflected an understanding of IE, referring to the government's reform agenda and the associated goal of bringing all children into schools, there was contradiction regarding their conceptualisations of IE. Some administrators clearly indicated that equality of IE was interpreted as the same 'curriculum' and the same 'book' for everyone.

My concept about IE is that children from all steps of society are taught at the same time the same subject in the same classroom by the same teacher. This is what I understand by inclusive education (M5).

This is 'Ekibhuto Shikhsha'. All the children of the society will learn together in school in the same environment. ...Environment means [the] same book, curriculum will be the same. On the other hand school environment means what it contains such as: chair, table, bench, etc. (S1).

Another administrator explained that IE involved combining various forms of existing schooling into one. This view of IE cannot be confirmed in any government document.

Inclusive education is a newly combined formation of all kinds of schools including our primary school, registered school, ROSC school for drop-out children and NGO run schools (M6).

Views about children with disabilities

Despite the fact there was an agreed emphasis on bringing 'all' children into school, with a particular priority to address the government's four targeted groups, many administrators across all levels singled out children with disabilities and other 'special' categories of children as a challenge which reflected deficit views in relation to their understanding of IE.

It was evident from the data that several administrators' understandings of IE often drew attention to children with disabilities and special needs. The perception was that IE was about including children with special needs as well as educating those children in the 'mainstream school'.

> *IE is the process to include all types of student in a school. There are students who are handicapped. If we can bring all of them to the mainstream school and give them education that is called inclusive education (M4).*
>
> *Inclusive education means 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha'. Generally the main view of inclusive education is to give education to the children having disability together [with the other children] (S2).*
>
> *The main goal of inclusive education is to bring all types of children into school including disabled, low intellect and high intellect, visual impaired or other types of disabled children (M6).*

IE was viewed as a 'specialised' topic by many administrators and they suggested a special system, a separate school, separate classroom and even separate trained teachers as strategies appropriate for educating children with disabilities:

…inclusive education is a specialised topic. For proper implementation of this specialised topic or to achieve the goals properly, there is a need for a special system or to prepare a special position (C2).

In order to implement (inclusive) education in school, we have to establish a separate boundary and a separate classroom so that we can address them there, and they can look into our school and observe the learning process and games of the normal children…this is my view (S2).

In order to achieve the target of inclusive education, trained teachers for disabled children are required. …The separate teacher being trained will only teach the disabled children in a separate classroom of the school (S2).

Deficit views regarding children with special needs were strongly reflected in administrators' categorisation of children based on their individual difficulties. Some administrators emphasised the need to create 'opportunity' for addressing those children with difficulties along with 'general children'.

…severe disabled are those who are blind, unable to move normally, bedridden, and also ***unable to do normal activities****. These types of children are severely disabled (M4).*

I would say that inclusive education is to address all the problems of the children having difficulties and to mainstream them with the general children. To create an opportunity so that they can grow up with other general children – this is what inclusive education is (C5).

Actually, we all think about children with special needs by inclusive education. Even the general people think that inclusive education is only related to sick children and general children are not included (M3).

One administrator described children with disabilities as ‘uneducable’ and a ‘lump of meat’:

There are many children who are just like ‘lump of meat’ and they cannot move or cannot talk…physically disabled and speech impaired children (M5).

The above comment pathologises children’s differences as deficiencies that prevent any access to schooling. Consistent with this view, two administrators at mid-level stated that IE was only for those children who were ‘eligible’ for school.

Our understanding about [the IE] goal is that we have to bring all children to school, those are eligible for school (M4).
There are some children whom we can consider not eligible for enrolment. In case of special needs, there are some having such a physical condition that it is not possible to bring them to school (M5).

Thus, IE included notions of ‘eligibility’ along with notions of ineligibility or exclusion.

Exclusionary views

Most of the administrators across all levels expressed strong concerns regarding exclusion of children with severe disabilities. The following comments from respondents are illustrative.

In case of special needs, there are some having such a physical condition that it is not possible to bring them to school. …Except these children, all the other children need to be brought to school (M5).

But we have ensured enrolment of all school going children. But I have told before that, it is totally impossible to bring the severe disabled children to the school. So, excluding them, we have brought all children to school. Now all are attending the school(M5).

It is not possible on the part of the government to achieve the target by educating the severely disabled children (S2).

Although the administrators across levels shared views consistent with 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' and with a particular focus on access and equal opportunity for 'all' children's participation in schooling, most of them expressed strong exclusionary views regarding some groups of identified children. For example, a common view regarding the issue of children with disabilities was that children with severe disabilities did 'not belong' in primary education (C5), these children were 'outside' responsibility of primary education management (C3, C4) and these children should be managed by the Ministry of Social Welfare (C1, C3, C5). The following quotes support these views:

For example, autism or if the child is severe disabled, then it does not belong to the responsibility of our primary education. We do not keep that child in our concern (C5).

Only those who are severe [disabled] are outside our management. We have identified them and handed them over to social welfare (C3).

Some administrators initially included students with disabilities and once the department's requirement had been satisfied, they excluded children with disabilities from their area.

We have a strategy that we can never bring them (disabled children) so we are working by excluding them from the target area. Instead, we have to include in the statistics and then those selected from there have to be included in my streamline (C4).

…they are included in our census and they are also in our list. The number of children with a severe disability is very few and only three to four are found every year in one Upazilla…Considering these children as severely disabled, we minus them and then calculate our 100% including the rest (M5).

Majority of the administrators across all levels agreed that children with severe disabilities could not be brought into regular schools and suggested an alternative placement as the appropriate strategy to address those with severe disabilities.

Separate school can be established from central level in every district for the severe disabled children. These schools must be residential so that disabled children can carry on [their] studies by staying there (M4).

But the children whom we call severe and profound level cannot be taught in our primary schools and we have heard that the government of Bangladesh will establish special centres at [the] district level by the Ministry of Social Welfare, and necessary steps will be taken to admit those children and to teach them from these special centres (M1).

I want to give an example: why that child moves with the help of wheelchair. He has to go to another school as we do not have that provision at our school (S1).

Our existing school infrastructure is not suitable to bring those severely disabled children into school and to teach them there. These special needs children can be included in education if special schools can be arranged for them (S3).

These responses reflected administrators understanding that primary schools were not 'suitable' for some children with severe disabilities.

Challenges to Inclusive Education (IE) reform

This chapter addresses the numerous challenges identified by administrators that act as barriers to achieving the goals of Inclusive Education (IE) reform. In describing the challenges to IE reform, administrators were primarily concerned about children with disabilities and those with special needs. These views were in stark contrast to their responses acknowledging that IE was concerned with the education of 'all' children. However, while there were some differences in the views of administrators, there was a high degree of consensus across and within levels. Rarely did an individual administrator voice a unique view. Challenges are discussed in regard to four key themes including: lack of common understanding, deficit views, governance of IE reform and issues on training. Figure 16 illustrates the themes related to challenges for IE.

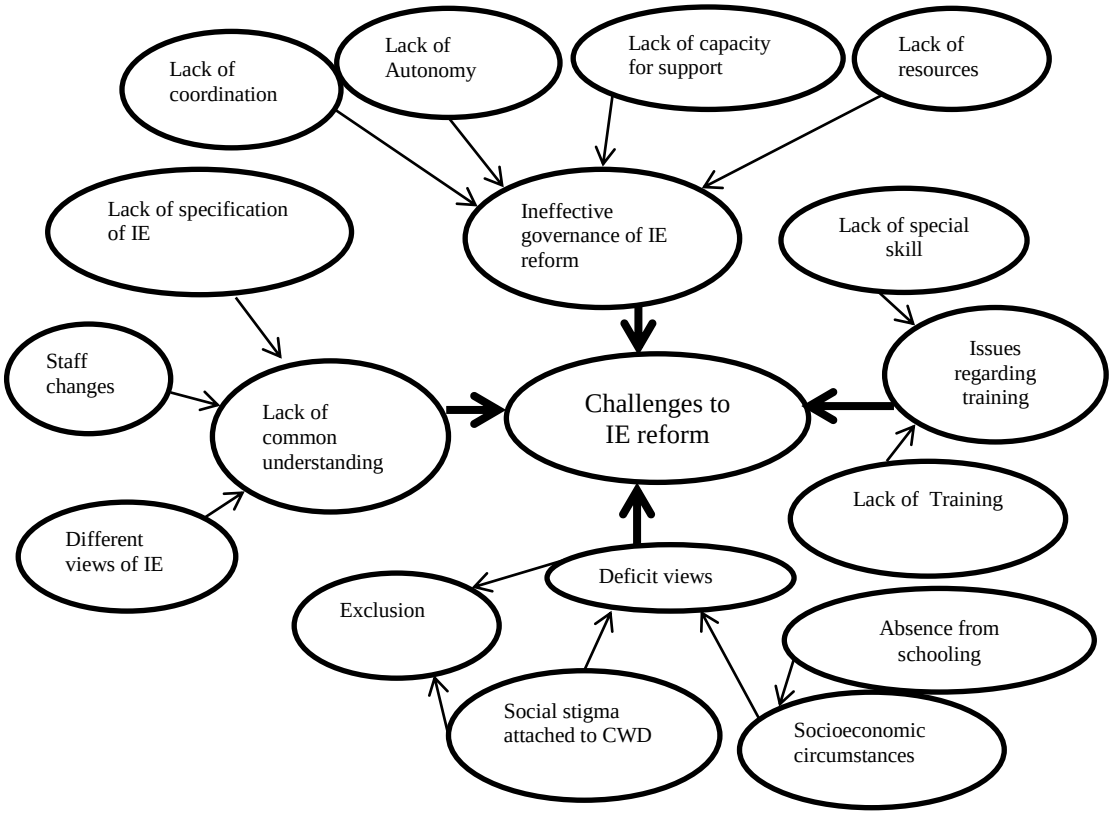

Figure 16: Themes for challenges to IE reform

Lack of common understanding

There are various issues related to a lack of common understanding among members of school communities in relation to IE, identified as a key barrier to the progress of IE reform in Bangladesh. This included understanding of principles and targets that underpin IE along with reform. The principles and goals of IE reform were poorly articulated.Consequently the reform processes were not clearly understood. For example, one central level administrator identified the lack of specification and detail about IE in primary education administration. It was not known what the IE reform targets were and how those targets could be achieved.

> *Basically Inclusive Education in primary education has come to focus in Bangladesh in 2004. Although Inclusive Education is based on the Dakar Declaration or education for all; but the specifications regarding how it will be achieved, how these matters will be addressed and what should be done – all these issues are not specified [in the Dakar declaration] (C1).*

In addition, another administrator from mid-level drew attention to written instructions regarding IE reform that did not provide any 'direction' or guidelines in relation to implementation of reform at school level.

> *In the letter of 2009, it is only said that we have to enrol all children in school but there was no direction on how to bring them or how to retain them in school (M2).*

Other mid-level administrators identified that field level officers and teachers were not fully aware of the strategies that had been developed at central level regarding

IE reform. As a consequence, many did not understand what was expected of them, nor how they should address the IE reform goals.

Our district and sub-district level officers and teachers usually do not know 100% about the issues that the central level of the government is thinking (M4).

…we are not aware about its definite plan, assessment and limitations and what to do and what not to do in the light of our notion (M1).

Similarly, several central level administrators pointed out problems related to the understanding of IE at the top level. Different organisations and administrative levels of the system were reported to have differing views regarding IE.

There are some perception problems at the top level. Different organisations have different perceptions [of IE] and it is again problematic to make all [sic] in agreement (C1).

This problem of differing administrative views of IE was further exacerbated by ongoing changes to staff. This created difficulties for those administrators at central level in attempting to respond to changes in view of IE.

It creates a problem because officers at top level are changed frequently. As a result one may develop a unique idea about inclusive education but cannot establish it as he gets changed and new officer joins. As a result this area faces barrier. So, this perception barrier at the top level is a challenge. It has been seen that the policy has been described differently afterwards. When one decision maker goes off and another comes, the new officers do not consider that in the

same way. I have been experiencing this for the last few years. He then starts a new thing according to his wish (C1).

This in turn created challenges in understanding the government's IE goal and hampered ongoing IE activities at the field level.

So the unique conception, upon which everybody will work, is facing impediment. In addition, it also hampers the ongoing work of the lower level or field level. This is a disturbance. This is a big challenge for inclusive education (C1).

Deficit views

Administrators across all levels focused on the perceptions and attitudes of community regarding children with disabilities and special needs that worked against the inclusion of those children in schools. It was reported that there were some negative perceptions in society regarding children with special needs who were viewed as 'backward' (M1). As a consequence, families were reluctant to enrol these children in schooling.

The special needs children are considered backward in our society and their families mostly agree (M1).

There is a negative perception about special needs children in our society. In most of the cases, we fail to enrol these children due to reluctance from their family (C6).

The influence of deficit views of the general community was strongly believed to influence the attitudes and perceptions of members of the school community. Whether it was parents, teachers or administrators themselves, there were strong negative and deficit views with respect to the inclusion of children with disabilities and

special needs. These views were centred on various issues including ‘shame’ (C3), ‘burden’ (M4) and ‘problem’ (C5).

A prevalent view of administrators at central and mid-levels was that children with disabilities were associated with ‘shame’. They reported that the parents of those children were blamed by members of the general community as responsible for the disabilities of their children. These children were considered as a ‘matter of degradation’ (C3) by their guardians (parents) and were not on show in public. Consequently, these children were not included in the school census activity. The following quotes are illustrative:

> *The guardians do not like to bring their special need child in front [sic]. They do not even disclose that one of their kids has a disability or special need as they consider it a public shame or a matter of degradation in society. As a result, that child cannot be brought under counting [school census] (M3).*
>
> *Guardians will think that it was good as their children were hidden. Now everybody knows about my disabled child. People will not maintain a good relation with the family because of the disabled child. This social situation is a big challenge. It is deadly for us. I am anxious about it (M4).*

Both central and mid-level administrators reported that due to the social stigmas associated with children with disabilities, these children were hidden from the society and school.

> *There are some parents who feel reluctant and shy to say that their children need inclusive education. Sometimes they hide this that they have special need child. They don't want to express. But actually we need to speak out that I have a child*

like that, I need support. The society can help, public can help, school can help in this connection. This ignorance of the parents is also a big challenge. (C4)

They [parents] think that my child is handicapped and what will happen to me? They introduce their other children but not the disabled children. They try to hide their disabled children because they think it is socially embarrassing for them. It is a big challenge (M4).

Another deficit view was that children with disabilities and special needs were considered a 'burden' (C3, M4) to society. These children were considered 'sick' and it was believed that no progress could be made with them. Due to this deficit view, bringing these children with special needs into school was regarded as challenging by administrators.

The attitude that they [children with special needs] are the burden of the society, they are sick and the society will not be able to progress with them. This is their negative attitude and they consider it as their concept that the child has got social stigma due to the fault of the parent. His child has become disabled. This particular concept needs to be changed. We shall not be able to bring that child to school fully if this concept is not changed (C3).

These deficit views regarding children with disabilities were reported by some administrators to be held by teachers, which presented challenges for IE reform.

Another big challenge is that our teachers also consider the disabled child and feeble intellect children as an extra burden. They also think that they are unable

to include them with the mainstream and unable to bring them along. Therefore, they remain indifferent to those children. It is a big challenge (M4).

One administrator from central level reported that top level policy makers held deficit views regarding children with disabilities and inclusion of these children was considered a disturbance for the whole system.

Obviously there is challenge. In my point of view, the top level decision makers are still reluctant. They think they are disturbing the whole system of the school for two or three children [with disabilities](C1).

Deficit views were clearly evident in many of the comments made by administrators who referred to 'special' needs, 'special' care for children with disabilities and considered these children as a 'problem'.

We have problems with children with special needs. We normally do not take them into account (C5).

And again when a disabled child comes with a wheelchair or a child having intellectual disability comes to school the problem becomes even worse. So, special care is needed for them, otherwise they can leave any moment. ...In this case inclusive education becomes a great problem to include all in one school who come from a different class, different professions and from different environments (S6).

Integral to these deficit views some administrators believed 'special' needs created problems such that exclusion was the suggested response. Administrator M3 expressed the following view regarding children with 'extreme special needs':

There are some parents of children with extreme special needs who consider that sending those children to school is of no use. They cannot move or even sit: who will sit with them in the class? (M3).

Although this administrator believes that 'parents' will not see the benefit of schooling, his comment focuses on children's physical deficits and potential exclusion. Another administrator from mid-level voiced that inclusion of children with severe disabilities into school was not at all possible.

Enrolling these types of children into school is TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE. …These types of children are severely disabled (M5).

Indeed, the majority of administrators across all levels reported that children with disabilities and special needs did not belong in school. Several reasons were posited for this. Firstly, it was believed that children with disabilities would not be accepted by their peers, teachers and the parents of other children. A number of administrators at school level reported that children with disabilities would not be accepted by members of the school community. The following examples reflected non-supportive treatment to those children by their peers.

The drawback of inclusive education is that the normal child often mocksthe handicapped children (S2).

Actually at present it is found that although disabled children are admitted…the normal children usually teases them. Even if we are trying to make normal children understand this we are failing. So, by any means, disabled children fall victim to normal children (S2).

Similarly, some local level administrators provided examples that reflected unwillingness to accept the inclusion of children with special needs into school by guardians [parents] and teachers.

Even the guardians raise objections. When normal children are being attacked by disabled [children] then the guardians complain and say 'why do you teach them together?' They also ask for separate sitting arrangements. I think this is a big challenge. But the government asks to teach the disabled children with the normal children. On the other hand the guardians / parents of normal children complain/ raise objections to this (S2).

Our teachers also always complain that if they take long time just for one, how they will manage others (S6).

Separate institutions were suggested by a number of school level administrators as an appropriate education alternative for learners with special needs:

I think…there are some special learners whom we cannot bring under inclusive education. Then at least some model of educational institution should be established so that they get opportunities/facilities to receive education, even after going to a distant place (S3).

Absence from schooling

In addition to children with disabilities and special needs who were kept out of school because of social stigma, administrators identified a number of reasons for which other vulnerable children were absent from school. First and foremost, several administrators across the study levels strongly emphasised socioeconomic

circumstances as a key reason for such absence. It was reported that some children from poor working class families could not attend school as they needed to contribute to their family's income. As a consequence, they reported parents of these children wanted their children to remain employed.

> *Firstly, the children who are engaged in child labour, they do not have economical solvency. As they remain absent from school so they cannot learn properly. They are lagging behind and also losing their interest for school due to not getting education. In other words, they are helping their family financially by being engaged in child labour. So, those guardians are not interested to send their children to school and they are encouraged to engage them to work…get more interest to engage them in works. For these reasons, we are not able to hold them (M4).*

> *Another challenge is that the children engaged in child labour are economically backward and for that reason they do not come to school (M4).*
> *We enrolled all the children, but they are not regular in school. When we go to their houses to inquire about their absence, then we know that they have gone to work with their father or selling fishes. These irregular children are mainly from working class families (S5).*

Many mid- and central level administrators identified that the reason for absence from school was the parents' perceived lack of education benefits. These administrators reported a belief held among the community that schooling of some children from poor families was of no 'benefit' because education would not change their circumstances. Implicit in their statements is that poverty in Bangladesh is a fixed state which is not able to be changed through education. As such, administrators reported that parents of

lower class poor families were not interested in education of their children and consequently children from those families were absent from school.

> *…most of the poor families think what the benefit of going to school is and what the assurances of a job are. …They are totally reluctant about education and do not have any interest at all. As a result, the children from those families also do not come (C1).*
>
> *Those who are not attending actually belong to 'schedule-caste' [lower class] of society. We actually do not think so but it is a prevalent concept that the lower class people like blacksmiths, potters, fisherman, weavers, day labourers and garden labourers are disadvantaged people in society. It is considered that they do not need education (M4).*

Similarly, some central level administrators drew attention to some children from tribal families and some floating (transient) children who miss out on school due to carelessness of their parents.

> *…the people from char (island) areas and haor areas move frequently from one place to another place for settlement. While they are moving from one place to another they hardly know how they can avail the chance of education or don't understand the process. As a consequence, their children also do not come to school or do not get themselves enrolled. These are the special reasons (C1).*
>
> *There are some tribal groups who live in the remote areas and are indifferent to modern or quality lifestyle and culturally they are careless. As a result, they do not even care about what their children would learn. We could not yet take the children of that population to schools (C1).*

Administrators across all levels repeatedly reported that if these children did attend school, they would face a number of challenges and rejection from other students.

> *One thing is that when a boy from a poor family comes to school, she/he faces so many obstructions. He does not have proper dress. He dares not to talk. He fails to mix with other boys. They look down upon them (S6).*
>
> *We are currently enrolling this type of (inclusive education) student in schools under inclusive education programmes. ...In some schools they are doing fine but in some other schools they are neglected by their friends and teachers. There is gap in sincerity and in considering oneness that helps them to play together or mix with each other and learn together (M1).*
>
> *For example, sweepers, they doubt if their children will get the same facilities as the other students do in school. They feel insecure about how their children will be treated (C5).*

Governance of IE reform

Administrators identified various aspects of governance that were ineffective in building capacity to achieve the goals set in the government's IE reform agenda. These aspects included: lack of coordination, lack of capacity and lack of autonomy.

Coordination among personnel and organisational units involved in IE reform efforts was considered a critical aspect for effective management. Lack of coordination was discussed as a barrier to IE reform. Some administrators from central level reported that field set-up, such as district and division levels, was not actively involved in IE reform process in Bangladesh, and there was 'weakness' in the communication links between central and field level 'set-up'(C3).

Actually we have a set-up from district to division level. We need to activate that set-up. One area is the design of that set-up. There is weakness in that area on how this set-up will support the central level. We need to improve that. If we improve the set-up, then our coordination between central and division levels[may be established](C3).

Another example was a lack of coordination in activities by those who were the focal points for IE, who were placed at district and school levels to coordinate IE activities.

Earlier we trained up every ADPO [Assistant District Primary Education Officer] of 64 districts and we made them the focal point of inclusive education. Besides we made one focal point from each GPS. But proper ties were not maintained with them (C4).

Lack of capacity in the management system was discussed by several administrators across all levels in terms of a lack of financial and practical resources along with issues in the distribution of those resources.

To [sic] my opinion, our capacity has not yet developed or we are not yet able to achieve the capacity to ensure real support needed for the Inclusive Education in our education sector (C1).

Lack of resources was identified as a common barrier to IE reform efforts. While discussing the challenges they faced, some administrators at central and mid-level referred to a shortage of financial resources as well as practical resources such as equipment.

We have some shortage of resources, lack of equipment and there are some financial barriers that we mentioned earlier. These are common to us (M1).

There is a limitation of supply of resources against the demands…So reducing the gap between demand and supply of resources is a big challenge (C2).

It was believed that substantive funding was required to ensure appropriate and adequate resources for IE reform. Limitations in funding were seen as a barrier to provision of resources.

Many administrators across all levels described various resource limitations related to school facilities as a barrier to IE reform. It was believed there was not sufficient space in schools to accommodate all children. Limitation with space, accommodation and teachers were considered as barriers to IE implementation.

I think half of the schools do not have sufficient space. In that sense, all our children belong to inclusive education (C4).

We are trying to implement it. However, we have some problems, such as accommodation, teachers, etc. Due to our various lacking [sic], we are not progressing as per government's desire (M6).

Lack of specialised resources and knowledge to support children with disabilities at school was considered essential for IE reform. Some administrators at mid-level and school level focused on the lack of specialised training in 'techniques' for teachers to teach children with disabilities as one reason for not being able to 'progress' with IE. Many administrators voiced that 'special' resources in the form of techniques and materials were needed for 'special' children.

…We have heard that there is a method called brail for the visual impaired. But we do not have it in our school. If the blind children are taught with this method, similarly there has to be something in the system to teach the deaf/ hearing impaired (M1)

Different problems, such as: If there is any blind how he will be taught? We know no techniques regarding this (S6).

Another challenge is lack of seating arrangements and necessary materials in classroom (M6).

Special changes to school infrastructure was identified as a requirement mostly by school level administrators.

Our existing school infrastructure is not suitable to bring those severe disabled children into school and to teach them there (S3).

We could not give him proper toilet facility, moreover, there is not much space in my school ground so that he can move with the wheelchair, and he has to sit all the time in the bench. I feel sad for him, as I am unable to do anything for him. (S5)

Administrators at both mid- and school levels believed that necessary resource 'materials' should be provided from the higher authority in order to develop the capacity to address IE. Administrators at mid-level explained they did not receive any materials from the 'top' and accordingly they could not provide any materials at school level. Therefore, lack of support provision by management was seen as a barrier to IE reform.

We have got training through manual, but now the training is of no use. It is because still we are not provided with the materials from the 'top' that we need for implementation and also to utilise it (training) (M2).

We could not provide other necessary materials to utilise the ramp, likewheelchair and all…We have not yet got that kind of support, advice and help to solve these kinds of problems (M2).

The above quotes reflected that provision had not been created in the management system to provide such facilities. Implicit is the notion that special provision is required for special students rather than better use of existing resources. It was therefore indicated that due to lack of support provision children could not be provided with necessary facilities.

We are still not getting the result of IE. …We still cannot provide our children those facilities as the provision has not been created (S4).

Lack of local level autonomy to make decisions was considered a barrier to IE reform efforts. Some administrators at mid-level indicated that field level administration did not have the authority to make decisions to address local needs, which they believed were essential for success with IE implementation.

So I must have my freedom of work. But here we are asked to do something by making a policy centrally. So we are unable to work independently (M2).

In my 'char' area if I say that I need to construct a school, I do not have the freedom to fulfil the needs I have right now (M2).

Field level administrators were concerned about implementing ‘top-down’ management policy as it involved outsiders and ‘many rules, regulations and complexities’ perceived as barriers to IE.

Even in that local area I am bringing a teacher from outside though I could find the teachers locally. ...If we have to do these things centrally, many rules regulations and complexities arise there. As a result, it becomes difficult to implement the central policy (M2).

…if the responsibility is just imposed from top, then it would not be possible to implement the IE. Before implementation, the challenges should be understood well (S4).

Issues regarding training

Many administrators from each level of administration identified some issues related to preparedness for themselves as well as for teachers in school that posed barriers to the implementation of IE. Their perceived preparedness in relation to implementation of IE was discussed in terms of skill development, training and motivation.

Actually the impediment that I want to mention here already appeared in our discussion earlier…we are not skilled, we are not trained, and we are not so motivated. I want to say that this is the impediment that persists (M1).

This comment by a mid-level administrator reflected a feeling of unpreparedness on the part of administrators to address IE reform goals. Many administrators across all levels strongly believed that teachers were key to the success of IE. Therefore, lack of preparedness for teachers was considered a major barrier to the implementation of IE

reform. Various issues were discussed that referred to teachers' lack of preparedness in relation to implementation of IE at school level.

First and foremost, teachers' knowledge of IE was considered essential for their preparation in implementing IE goals. Whether at the central level or school level, administrators in general reported that most teachers lacked knowledge regarding IE and they did not know how to support children with disabilities. It was often stated that teachers were not prepared to support IE due to their lack of knowledge of students with disabilities.

Most of the teachers in my school do not know about IE (S4).

As a result, though these students are coming, the teachers do not know how these students should be tackled (C1).

Many of the administrators emphasised that teachers needed 'specialised' knowledge and techniques in order to address children with disabilities or special needs in their classroom. They reported that teachers were unwilling in attempting to work with these children because of their lack of capability to do so.

If a child has a low visual problem, he cannot see. And even the teacher also does not know that the child cannot see properly as he does not have idea about that. As a result the child is being deprived day after day or he takes his seat on the back bench. But if it is known by the teacher through examination whether someone is hard of hearing or having low sight vision, then that child's needs can be properly addressed (M4).

I personally think that we (teachers) need some special techniques, especially for the deaf, blind or mentally retarded in order to teach such kind of children (M1).

For example, we have brought the children with handicapping [sic] condition or special need into school. Now we see that in most cases it is not possible for the teacher to handle those enrolled children. They need special knowledge. Due to lack of knowledge, teachers run the class with the normal children without addressing those special needs children (C6).

As a consequence, many administrators across all levels suggested lack of training of teachers was another reason for teachers' lack of preparation to implement IE. These administrators discussed such difficulties due to lack of teacher training. There was concern that children with disabilities could not be addressed or taught in school, as teachers did not have appropriate training.

I do not have trained teachers in each and every school (M1).

A dumb child goes to school. Well, we shall admit him into the school. But I do not have training to teach that boy. So how will I teach him? (S6).

It was further discussed that 'general' and short-term training was not enough for teachers to address children with special needs. 'Extra training' was considered essential for the preparation of teachers.

I do not think that these children will come with the current learning strategy that we provide to our teachers through training. They may need extra training, extra strategy and extra something for them (M1).

We will not be able to address the special needs children by providing such general and short-termtraining to teachers (C1).

The above views reflected administrators' concerns regarding teacher training. Embedded in these views was the assumption that teachers were not prepared to address diverse needs of children in the classroom, which posed barriers to the implementation of IE.

Inclusive Education (IE) Reform: Moving Forward

Administrators interviewed in this study suggested various strategies to meet the identified challenges they faced in implementing the Inclusive education (IE) reform in Bangladesh. These strategies are discussed under following areas: Building common understanding, representation and participation, provision of resources, improving governance of IE reform and professional development. Figure 17 illustrates the strategies to meet the challenges for IE reform.

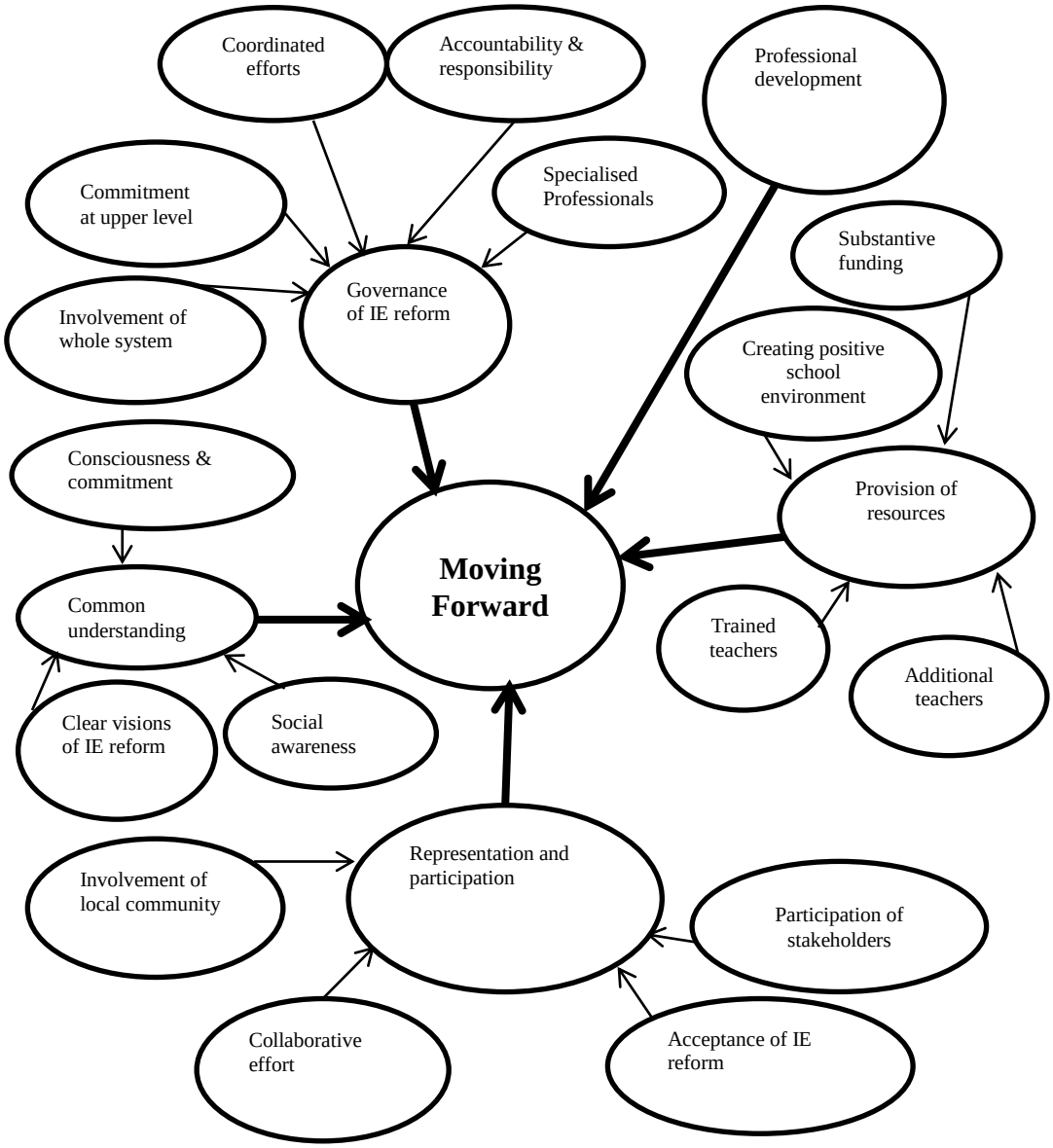

Figure 17: Themes for strategies to move IE reform forward

Building common understanding

Administrators across all levels strongly suggested that there was a need to build common understanding of principles underpinning 'Ekibhuto Shikhkha' and the goals of IE reform among members of the general community. In particular, the vision for IE reform needed to be made clear to all stakeholders including those who were directly or indirectly involved in the implementation process.

> *Actually for implementation of inclusive education we, all from central level up to field level, must know about the existing policy of the government. We have to take steps according to that (M4).*

It was believed that not only administrators but each and every member of the school community should be made aware of the government's IE reform agenda.

> *We need [to] make aware everyone in society about the inclusive education. At first, our teachers must have a clear idea about inclusive education. In addition, all from the catchment area, PTA-parent teacher association and SMC must be made aware of it (S4).*

Raising 'consciousness'(C2P11) and ensuring a 'positive attitude' towards IE reform efforts were considered essential in order to ensure success. The majority of administrators across all levels believed that a social awareness programme would support the general community to understand and commit to the goal of including 'all' children in schools and to provide quality education for all.

> *But in order to achieve this success we need understanding from all related to primary education, from teacher up to Minister level, that there might be*

difficulties but we really want to mainstream them, despite all the barriers, and will include them in the main society and provide them with quality education(C1).

Apart from departmental staff, awareness can be raised through members of school management committees. Awareness can be created among the guardians through meetings of the parents-teachers association at every school, so that they can also provide support for the disadvantaged children who are lagging behind or who have a disability. The parents can also be involved. We can do this through an awareness programme (M1).

Another thing is religion leaders, political leaders, club members and all those representing every sector of the society need to be aware. I think there should be a section on IE in the textbooks, and then the discrimination may decrease (S4).

For its [IE] implementation awareness should be created among the children (M1).

It was suggested by most administrators across all levels that an appropriate social awareness campaign might address a number of barriers to implementing IE such as absenteeism, myths and superstitions regarding vulnerable groups of children. It was believed that an awareness programme would be essential to address negative views and superstitions, and to promote acceptance and social 'responsibility' towards disadvantaged people.

I think local people should be involved and made aware of. If we could raise awareness among all people of every area and if they find out those children who are deprived from education and if they help me, no one will be left out (S4).

You might know that there is a perception in our society or in the Indian subcontinent that those who are untouchable, backward such as children of sweeper class, or those who are very poor and belong to the lower cast are not allowed to come to the schools. We may mitigate these issues by awareness campaigns among the guardians (C1).

(To) implement inclusive education…I think we have to remove the superstitions from our society. I think if we do this, the number of disabled children will reduce in future…We have to realise our responsibility towards the neglected people, underprivileged people and ignored people. Our society will advance as soon as we understand our duty for our society(M6).

Social awareness programmes were variously described by administrators as: 'awareness campaign' for the guardians (M3P7), social mobilisation (M1P9), seminars and workshops (C1P2)for education administrators, 'advertisements, cartoons or drama on TV for mass communication and incorporating a section on IE in the textbook.

I think, raising awareness among the guardians (parents) is very important at the district level. The guardians of the children with special needs must know about the rights of their children as citizens (M3).

The special needs children are considered backward in our society and their family also considers the similar way. The first thing we need to do is that we will take them in front of everybody. We need to arrange social motivation and training for the stakeholders and guardians (parents) so they do not consider these special needs children as backward. Still we have this notion prevailing in our country. We can bring the children in the schools through mobilisation. And

then the teachers will fulfil their requirements and problems according to their needs (M1).

Then the education administrators at sub district, district, even headquarters and ministry levels were 'sensitised' by various campaigning programmes, seminars and workshops (C1).

…We must make it clear through advertisements, Meena cartoons or drama on TV that IE is not for disabled children only, but it is quality education for all children. This is my suggestion and another thing is that more emphasis should be given on communication. Communication, media can play a vital role here (M3).

Social campaigns and training were believed critical to ensure proper conceptualisation and acceptance of IE for those who were engaged in its implementation.

There is a need for a social campaign plus training on inclusive education for my teachers, managers and head teachers (C3).
As it is a reform, so they will have to give training on how to work towards a reform. Orientation, discussion, sharing should be arranged for the stakeholders: district administration, Upozilla administration, government officers who are directly or indirectly connected to education. The IE issue should be made acceptable to them as we need their support. Training, or whatever it is, we need to do those in order to run the activities smoothly, thank you (C5).

Similarly one mid-level administrator emphasised the need for local community programmes to support positive attitudes and acceptance of 'all children' and encourage participation of those who may be excluded from schooling.

If we can make the local people realise the position, then the local people can make the parents aware and advocate that they should not hide their child at home, they should send him to school, help would be given to him like any other children, no one will laugh at him, and no one will deprive him. This belief should be developed and parents should be made aware. If awareness is done they can come to school. Their path to school should be cleared. And for that reason community training is needed (M5).

Representation and participation

Consistent with principles of inclusive education regarding representation and active participation in schooling (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education , 2011; Forlin et al., 2013; Loreman,2007) several administrators agreed on the need for active involvement of stakeholders from 'each and every corner' of the department, as well as from the community to ensure success with IE reform. One central level administrator suggested that IE should be addressed as a 'whole approach' that would ensure participation of all administrative units of primary education administration.

So we have to address this inclusiveness from each and every corner. In this total/ whole approach each section or each division has an important role to play in connection to implementing inclusive education effectively. Reluctance from any division will create big impediments in the implementation of inclusive education (C1).

Many administrators from central and mid-levels emphasised the need to involve all members of the school community, such as teachers, students, guardians, local people, school management committee (SMC) and public representatives, to achieve IE reform goals.

Stakeholders of the schools: teachers, guardians, students, local resource person all of them should be involved, otherwise IE would not be achieved (C5).
In order to minimise these problems and obstacles, the people who are on the school management committee, those who run the school, the elected member and chairman of the area, and those who are at administrative level, from top to bottom, should be involved (M1).

One mid-level administrator drew attention to the importance of involving members of 'local government' in implementing IE:

Involvement is needed. For example, we have Upazilla Porishod. The Chairman of Upazilla Porishod, and Upazilla Nirbahi Officer, and at district level the District Commissioner should come forward regarding this issue. We have seen that when the District Commissioner takes any initiative that really attracts attention in the district. Like that, if Upazilla Nirbahi Officer takes any initiative then it becomes an obligation for all to implement. Therefore, if District Commissioner, DPEO, and at Upazilla level, the Upazilla Nirbahi Officer,Chairman of Upazilla Prishod and local government perform their responsibilities and come forward, then I think this work will be accelerated(M6).

Another central level administrator suggested the involvement of local community as a way of improving IE reform planning.

Involving the local community is the most important thing here. Involving local community, such as if we could involve the tribal groups of Chittagong in different planning process then we would have a better plan and better result (C1).

It was believed by a number of administrators at mid- and central levels that active participation needed to involve collaborative engagement, which would benefit understanding, motivation, development and resource utilisation.

For that, collaborative initiative is essential. Collaborative involvement of guardians, teachers and local elites is necessary. It means, everyone from the society has to come forward equally…The rich people and the influential people can play a vital role to make general people understand and to motivate them. If these two classes of people come forward, I think we can achieve the goal soon (M6).

If we can ensure an integrated approach then it would be more effective. If the government, development partners, GO and NGO all can work altogether to develop a plan of action where it will be mentioned what we will do, how we will do and who will be responsible for what. In that case with our existing resources we can do good work more effectively (C1).

Another administrator at central level confirmed that achieving the goals of IE reform would be difficult for government without a collaborative effort.

And, it is again difficult for the government to implement it alone. NGOS can come forward. So, this is a common effort and everyone should give their effort.

Co-operation with the government, NGOs and mass people is required. Only then, it will be possible to implement IE. Thank you (C5).

Provision of resources

Almost all administrators across all levels suggested a wide range of resources that were required for success in IE reform including: specialised resource persons, school infrastructure, additional teachers, teacher training and special facilities for children with disabilities.

Consistent with administrators' identification of 'special' needs as a problem in the earlier section in this chapter on challenges to IE reform, many of the central level administrators suggested that specialised professionals were needed to help teachers to address children with 'special needs'.

….we need to deploy at least one psychologist in each Upazilla [sub-district] who will try to understand and identify the real problem of them [special needs children] and will guide /give suggestions to the teachers to support them(C1). And in the same way we need a specialised person at central level. Otherwise it will be challenging to translate the policy and to transmit policy to field level (C1).

Similarly, several administrators at field level suggested that various forms of infrastructure would be necessary to address special needs of children with disabilities including additional teachers as well as changes to the physical environment in schools.

I think suitable toilet facilities must be ensured for the students like him who are physically disabled. There should be appropriate seating arrangements for them so that they can sit comfortably and move easily. So, I think infrastructural development is essential for physically handicapped children (S5).

In order to make IE successful, infrastructural development is very much important. The number of teachers should also be increased.…Then I think it is possible to achieve the goals of inclusive education (S5).

Development of infrastructure and training are required. I think these two issues are very important for the implementation of inclusive education and these issues need maximum priority before anything else (M6).

In addition, administrators both at central and mid-levels emphasised on creating a child- friendly environment at school that can address the needs of children with disabilities.

…the children who are coming to school through our activities, they should not be dropped out or face any impediment for coming to school. If there remains any challenge, we shall overcome those and create a child- friendly school. That means the school has to be child friendly. If the school is not suitable for disabled children then it should be developed to make it suitable for them (C6).

The school's environment is needed to make it more attractive for special needs children. Then we will be successful to bring them to school and we can educate them (M4).

Some administrators at field level suggested incentives that described various forms of financial and other material or equipment to support families and their children.

We have to provide them [special need children] some kind of incentives to face the environmental challenges. …Those who need instrument, they can be supported with instruments like crest, wheelchairs, glasses etc. Financial assistance can be given to those who are poor so that they can have economic

solvency. …Moreover, materials which will be needed for the education of these children should be supplied at school level (M1).

At first, we need to identify the special need children. …Then we have to provide support according to their needs, such as some of them may need financial support, someone may need teaching aids like textbooks and teaching-learning materials. The disabled child who needs a wheelchair…If we can give him a wheelchair, or if we can ensure his/ her transport security, then he/ she will be able to come to school (M4).

Necessary equipment should be provided to those who cannot listen or see. The child who is physically disabled cannot use the school stairs, so alternative stairs should be arranged for them. If we can provide such facilities, then it is possible to implement IE (S4).

Further training of teachers was considered essential to address children with disabilities and special needs. One school level administrator emphasised that trained teachers should be in schools in order to achieve success in IE reform.

We need trained teachers for the disabled children to implement inclusive education in each school…Teachers are the best equipment. In order to achieve the target of inclusive education, trained teachers for disabled children are required. There is no trained teacher at our school (S2).

Substantive funding was suggested in order to provide required resources for implementing IE.

In fact, Bangladesh is a developing country. If we want to change the system or in order to implement inclusive education a huge monetary involvement is necessary (C6).

Improving governance of IE reform

Many administrators across all levels drew attention to several areas of governance which they believed could be improved and suggested some changes to progress IE reform. Coordinated efforts of implementation and accountability for such processes were identified by some field level administrators as key to improving the governance of IE reform.

> *But I want to say that all the children should come under education program. I will take care of my school. Local people will carry out their responsibility. Chairman will do the same, members too. Thus if we can discharge our own responsibility and can perform our work according to the criteria, I hope this work will be successful (S6).*
>
> *We have only one policy…to include/involve all the children into primary education. Mainly, it is the government's target. It is also our target or we want it locally too. In our Upazilla (sub-district),those who are working at mid-and field levels should take responsibility. We shall surely play our role but to play our role we need more support. This is what I think…(M6).*

Accountability included the acceptance of responsibilities along the involvement of 'whole chain': One administrator from central level stated:

> *If any officer or unit goes to work on a project and if that is not owned by the upper level, then it is really tough to make it a success. It means the whole chain should own the project. If it is being owned by my cell only and other people just know that the activities are going on,it will not work. The whole chain should be involved (C4).*

While this administrator noted the importance of involving administrators at all levels of the whole chain, he drew attention to the commitment and 'ownership' at the 'upper level' as critical for success in IE reform. Similarly two other administrators suggested that central level administration needed to show that they were making active decisions regarding IE reform and their actions should reflect their decisions. In addition, it was suggested that higher authority should take initiative in establishing communication at the local level.

They (higher authority) have to at first think about how to implement the IE. There should be a policy depending on what the implementation can be carried out. They need to think over the obstacles they may encounter. They need to establish communication with the local level or the school level. They need planning (S4).

So, the decisions relating to inclusive education have to be taken strongly from central level so that there will be no deviation (C4)

On the other hand, some administrators at each level emphasised autonomy and responsibility at the local level, stating that these administrators should be given authority to make decisions and should be empowered to do so. Their comments did not note whether or not local level administrators should take responsibility and be accountable for those decisions.

As a central level administrator I think, field level administrators should be empowered and then it will be possible to implement IE (C5).

If the rules are made a little more flexible and if freedom is given from the 'top' then they will be able to accomplish the task smoothly (M2).

However, there must be some specific policy to do that. I think the things that can be covered from school level should be done at school level. The school level administrators can take help from the higher authority if the problem is really critical and cannot be solved by themselves or through their institution (S2).

In contrast to local decision making, one central level administrator suggested that a way of supporting a more coordinated effort would be to produce an explicit 'instruction manual' on the basis of government policy.

For this, we need of a guide or policy or instruction manual in light of our education policy (C3).

Implicit in his statement is the notion of a one-size-fits-all approach.

Professional development

Professional development (PD) was emphasised by the majority of administrators across all levels as an integral component of IE reform. PD was identified as important for both administrators as well as teachers. Many central level administrators emphasised their belief that PD should include knowledge of the principles of IE as well as knowledge of 'specific' special needs of children and 'specialised teaching' techniques for those children. It was again believed that one-off PD in the form of workshops was not sufficient, but rather training should be of longer duration. It was revealed by one central level administrator that some training had already been conducted as a part of professional development in IE reform effort. While some administrators stated that their training helped to increase awareness of the idea of

IE, it was not considered sufficient to meet the goals of the IE reform agenda. More 'elaborate' and 'higher standard' professional development that included knowledge of IE and teacher training with a focus on real problems and diverse needs of children were suggested to progress IE reform efforts.

> *We are emphasising training more. Knowledge of this issue is important and then the issue of ability or higher ability will arise (C5).*
>
> *I think, training was done for five days or one week. It's very nominal. …We should go for a superior standard training. That means the training programme should be of higher standard (C4).*
>
> *…the training organised for inclusive education was short-term training. Thise was essential for creating awareness. But if we focus on real problems and desires to address individual specific needs then we need to train teachers (C1).*
>
> *...Afive day training programme was conducted. I think that is not sufficient. It should be more elaborate and authentic. In addition, earlier I mentioned about teacher training for implementing those [programmes] (M6).*

PD was believed to be critical for teachers by many administrators across all levels. These administrators believed that teachers' knowledge of IE was essential as they played a key role in IE implementation. A number of administrators both at mid- and school levels believed teachers did not have knowledge of IE. Another prevalent belief was that existing provision of 'compulsory training' for teachers was not enough to address diverse needs of children with special needs. Therefore, these administrators mainly focused on frequent and ongoing training to develop the capability of teachers to address the goals of IE.

Most of the teachers in my school do not know about IE. They need training (S4).

The most important thing is to educate all the teachers about inclusive education. Frequent training is required (S6).

So, all of our teachers, all government teachers need a vast training in order to develop them. We have been given only a compulsory training, which is not sufficient. Sufficient training is needed for all teachers (M5).

Emphasis was again placed on 'special children' and specialised knowledge of teachers to address those children by many administrators across all levels. It was suggested that teachers should be trained up, not only to make them informed about 'special kind of learners', but also to prepare them to be able to teach those learners using special equipment.

…the teacher must be informed which learners will be considered or how they will be treated and what to do with their problem. It is also essential to know about the special kind of equipment which is required for special kinds of learners.

I think, first of all, teacher training is essential and that is for all teachers (S3).

We have to train our teachers properly about how the special need children will be taught, so they can enjoy the lesson (M4).

Another important thing is we will not be able to address special needs children by providing only general and short-term training for teachers (C1).

Overall results from interview data suggest that although the intent for IE reform is to ensure all children's attendance in school to meet the government target of 100% enrolment, the dominant concern for IE reform is about children with disabilities in the Bangladeshi context. Furthermore, findings indicate the pervading influence of deficit

views regarding children with disabilities at all levels of administration, in identifying challenges to IE reform as well as suggesting ways to move forward. However, a major limitation of these findings is that the study exclusively investigated administrators' views in order to understand IE reform in the Bangladeshi context. Thus views of other members of the community were not included. Administrators made several comments on the part of members of the community. Despite their comments on what parents, teachers and other local people would do, these may not necessarily reflect the views of the respective group. Again, it is not clear whether and/or to what extent deficit views regarding children with disabilities are embedded across the administration. However, administrators' emphasis on disability leads the researcher to the second stage of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHASE 2 RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the survey undertaken to investigate attitudes of administrators toward IE reform in the primary education sector in Bangladesh. The results reported in this chapter are based on the data gathered from administrators working at various levels of administration. A two- part questionnaire consisting of background information and Administrators Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education (ADATIE) scale was used to gather data. The statistical analysis of data was undertaken using SPSS software. This results chapter is organised into three main sections:

1. Characteristics of study participants.
2. Attitudes toward inclusive education.
3. Facilitators of and barriers to IE.

Section 1: Characteristics of Study Participants

Three groups of administrators working in different positions within primary education administration in Bangladesh participated in this survey. These groups were: a) central level administrators who work in the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), the central implementing authority for primary education in Bangladesh; b) local level administrators who work at district offices; and c) school level administrators working as principals and commonly known as head teachers in Bangladesh. A total of 1475 survey questionnaires were distributed, of which 769 were returned. Due to the large amount of missing data, a total of 34 questionnaires were discarded. As a consequence, the data for final analysis consisted of responses from a total of 735 administrators.

Table 8 presents specific information relating to the background of administrators who responded to the survey. Some respondents did not answer each item on the questionnaire resulting in missing data in the data set. Taking into consideration the pattern of missing responses which was random, data from all respondents were considered for analysis. The calculation of percentages for sub-categories of variables was done using only the valid responses. Thus, there may be a slight variation in the total for each category (see Table 8).

Table 8

Description of the administrators (N=735)

Characteristics	**Frequency**	**%**
Age		
≤ 30 years	63	9.1
31–40 years	208	29.9
> 40 years	424	61.0
Gender		
Male	336	46.9
Female	380	53.1
Administrative experience		
< 10 years	279	43.9
11–20 years	194	30.6
>20 years	162	25.5
Teaching experience		
< 10 years	212	32.3
11–20 years	170	25.9
>20 years	274	41.9
Level of work		
School	622	88.9

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Local (District/sub-district)	45	6.4
DPE	33	4.7
Work setting		
Rural	433	62.0
Urban	265	38.0
Highest level of education		
Bachelor degree(Graduate)	207	34.9
Masters degree (Postgraduate)	328	55.3
Up to HSC(Higher secondary certificate)	58	9.8
Special education qualification		
Yes	433	63.9
No	245	36.1
Knowledge regarding policy related to IE		
Yes	500	71.2
No	202	28.8
Level of knowledge of IE priority		
None	21	3.5
Very little	125	20.7
Little	269	44.5
Good	181	29.9
Very good	09	1.5
Level of knowledge regarding resources and support for IE		
None	50	8.4
Very little	139	23.4
Little	271	45.6
Good	126	21.2
Very good	08	1.3
Level of support received to implement IE		
None	172	25.5

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Very little	169	25.0
Little	242	35.9
Good	86	12.7
Very good	06	0.9
Level of support provided to implement IE		
None	72	10.8
Very little	144	21.7
Little	249	37.5
Good	185	27.9
Very good	14	2.1
Professional development (PD) training on IE		
Yes	421	61.0
No	269	39.0
Duration of PD training on IE		
One day/half day	102	22.4
Three days	276	60.7
Five days	61	13.4
> Five days	16	3.5
Effectiveness of training in understanding IE goals		
None	17	3.5
Very little	46	9.4
Little	155	31.6
Good	254	51.8
Very good	18	3.7
Effectiveness of training in implementing IE		
None	12	2.5
Very little	74	15.3
Little	192	39.8
Good	176	36.4

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Very good	29	6.0
Received government materials and guidelines related to IE		
Yes	271	39.7
No	412	60.3
Usefulness of these materials and guidelines		
Not at all	17	5.1
Very little	52	15.6
Little	92	27.5
Good	161	48.2
Very good	12	3.6
Usefulness of these materials and guidelines in implementing IE		
Not at all	15	4.4
Very little	66	19.2
Little	104	30.3
Good	143	41.7
Very good	15	4.4

Age

Regarding age of the participants, it was observed that almost two-thirds (424) of total respondents were over 40 years of age (see Table 8). The second highest category included 208 administrators (29.9%) aged between 31 and 40 years. 63(9.1%) administrators were 30 years of age or younger.

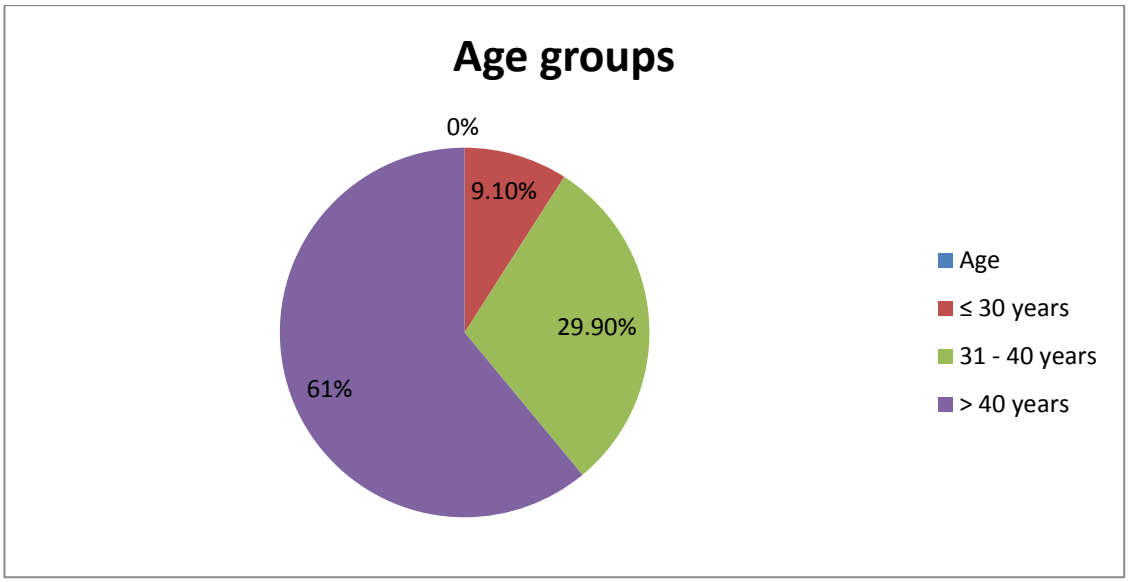

Figure 18: Groups of participants by age

Gender

The ratio of female respondents was found to be higher than their male counterparts. The number of male respondents was 336(46.9%) and the number of female respondents was 380(53.1%). (See Table 8.)

Administrative experience

In relation to participants' administrative experience, it was found that 279(43.9%) respondents had less than 10 years of administrative experience, 194(30.6%) respondents had between 11 years and 20 years of administrative experience and 25.5% respondents(162) had more than 20 years of administrative experience (see Figure 19).

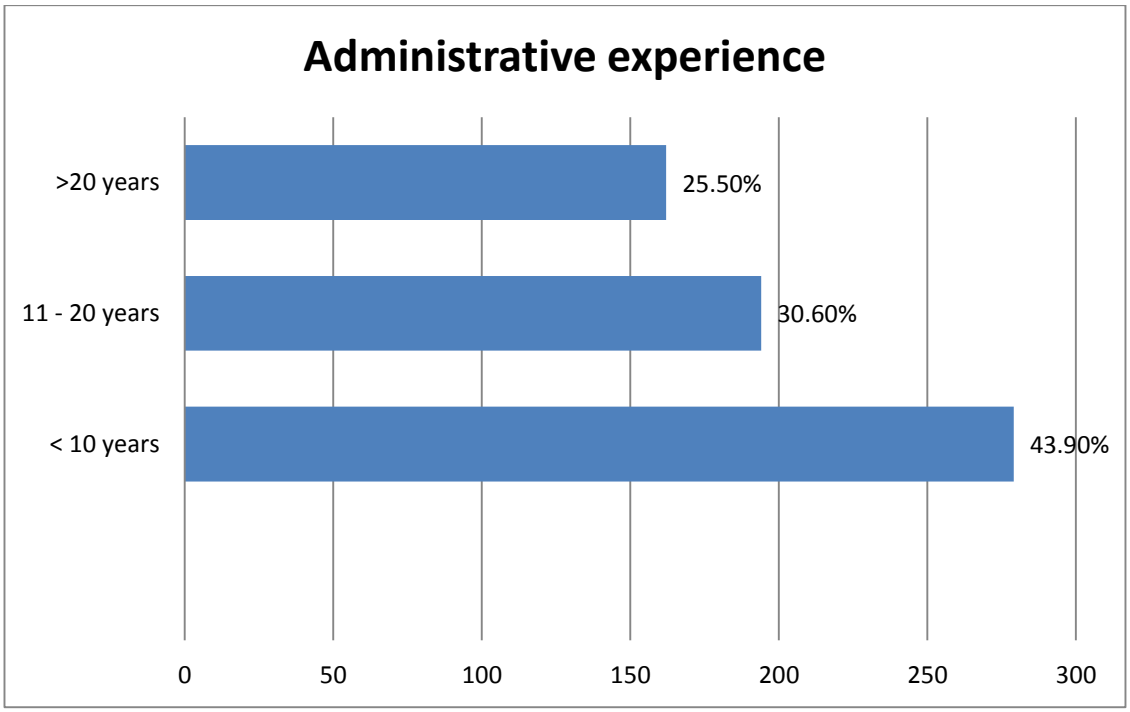

Figure 19: Groups of participants by administrative experience

Teaching experience

In relation to the administrators' teaching experience, it was observed that 212(32.3%) respondents had less than 10 years of teaching experience, 170(25.9%) respondents had between 11 years and 20 years of teaching experience and a large majority of the respondents, 274 (41.9%) had more than 20 years of teaching experience. (See Table 8.)

Figure 20 shows a graphical presentation of the participating administrators based on their teaching experience.

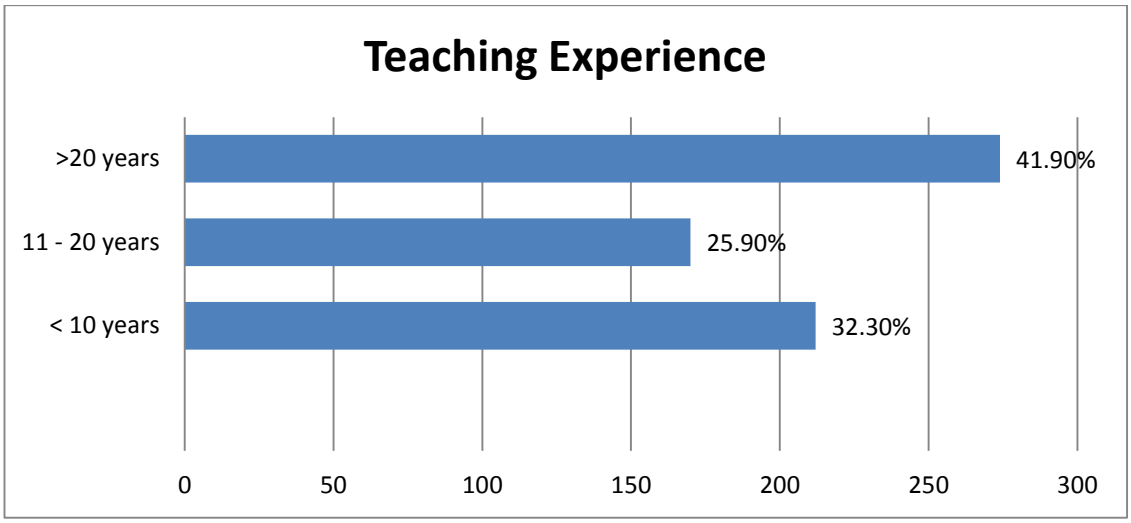

Figure 20: Groups of participants by teaching experience

Level of work

An overwhelmingly majority of respondents 622 (88.9%) were school level administrators or principals (known as head teachers), 45(6.4%) participants were local level administrators (education officers working at district/sub-district offices) and 33(4.7%) respondents were central level administrators working at Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). (see Table 8).

A graphical presentation of the participating administrators from different levels is shown in Figure 21.

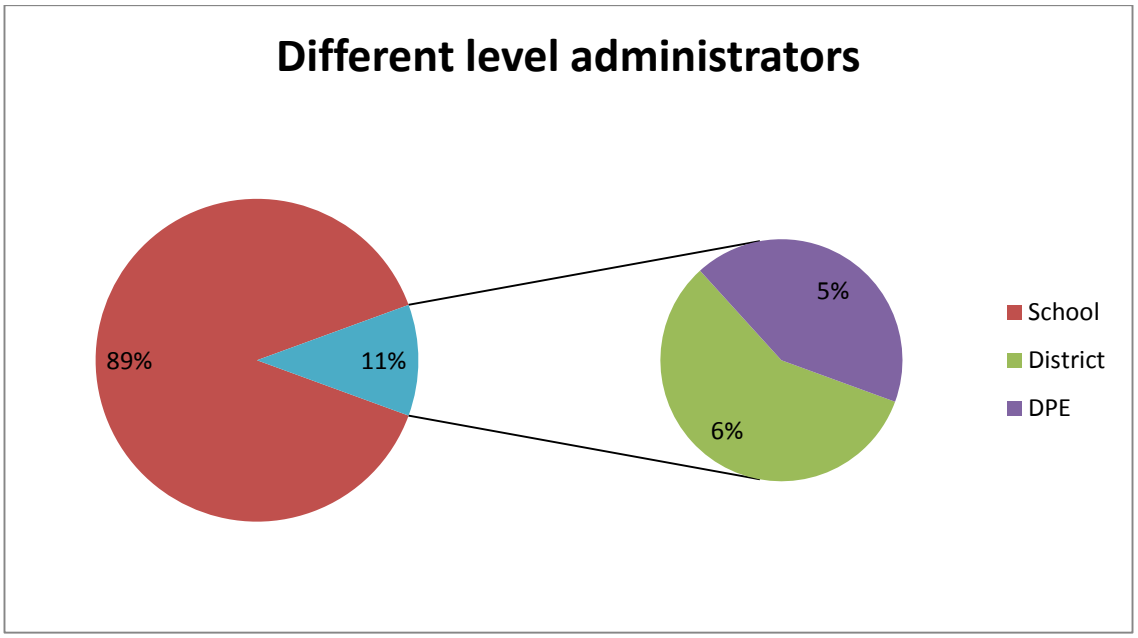

Figure 21: Participants from different levels of administration

Work setting

Administrators were asked to specify the geographical location of their workplace. Four hundred and thirty-three participants (62%) reported that their workplace was located in a rural area while 265(38%) of them reported the location of their workplace was in an urban area.(See Table 8.)

Highest level of education

Regarding highest level of education, it was noticed that more than half of the total respondents (328 or 55.3%) were Masters Degree (Post-graduate) holders. The highest qualification of a small minority (58 or 9.8%) of administrators was HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) or equivalent. Findings showed that 207(34.9%) of the respondents had a Bachelor Degree (Graduate) (see Table 8).

A graphical presentation of the participating administrators' level of education is presented in Figure 22.

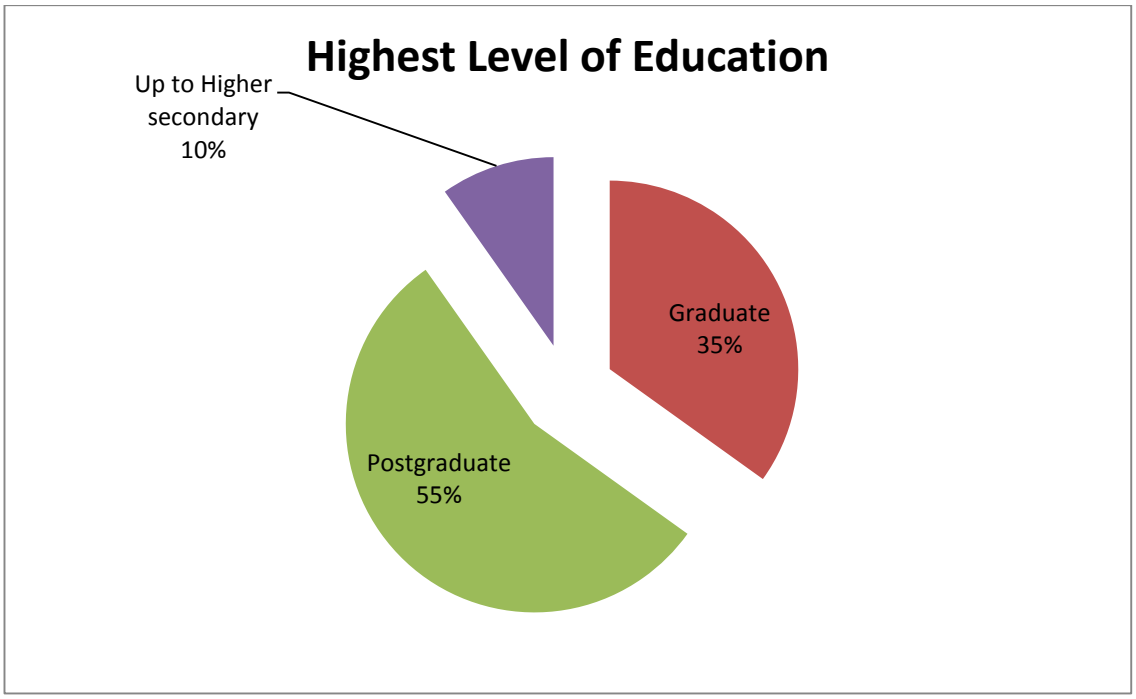

Figure 22: Participants by level of education

Special education qualification

Administrators were asked to report if they had any special education qualification and in the case of positive response to mention the name of the degree. Although a majority of (433 or 63.9%) respondents reported 'yes', none mentioned the name of the special education course or degree. Two hundred and forty-five (36.1%) respondents reported not having any special education qualification. (See Table 8.)

Knowledge of IE related policy

In relation to the question as to whether administrators had knowledge of IE policy, a large majority indicated having such knowledge. Less than one-third (28.8%) indicated they had no knowledge regarding IE policy. Administrators who indicated policy knowledge were asked to report more specific information regarding their knowledge of inclusive education priority. Table 8 shows thatthe majority of participants (44.5%) had 'little' knowledge of IE priority and about a quarter (24.2%)

had either very little or no knowledge of inclusive education priority. On the other hand, 181 participants (or 29.9%) indicated they had ‘good’ knowledge of IE priority. Regarding knowledge of resources and support requirements for implementing IE, less than a quarter indicated having good (21.2%) or very good (1.3%) knowledge of resources and support for IE. The majority reported they had either ‘little’ or ‘very little’ knowledge of resources and support requirement for implementing IE. Of these 271 (45.6%) participants answered ‘little’ and 139 (23.4%) participants indicated their knowledge as ‘very little’. Fifty (8.4%) participants indicated their knowledge of resources and support requirement was ‘none’.

Level of support received to implement IE

Administrators were asked to indicate the level of support they received to implement IE. Only few participants indicated they were well supported. Eighty-six administrators (12.7%) answered ‘good’ and six (0.9%) answered ‘very good’. Many indicated they had received either ‘little’ support (242 or 35.9%) or very little (169 or 25%) support for implementing IE. More than a quarter (172 or 25.5%) answered ‘none’, indicating they did not receive any support to implement IE. (See Table 8.)

Level of support provided to implement IE

In response to the question regarding level of support provided by the administrators for implementing IE, only a few respondents (72 or 10.8%) indicated not providing any support to implement IE. On the other hand, the vast majority indicated they provided support to various degrees. Among those, 144(21.7%) answered ‘very little’, 249(37.5%) answered ‘little’, 185(27.9%) answered ‘good’ while 14(2.1%) answered ‘very good’. (See Table 8.)

Professional development training on IE

Administrators were asked if they had any professional development training on IE. The majority (421 or 61%) indicated they had PD training on IE answering 'yes'. More than one-third (269 or 39%) indicated they had no training on IE. Those respondents who answered 'yes' were asked to report on the duration and effectiveness of their training. Figure 23shows graphically that over half of the respondents (276 or 60.7%) attended three days PD training. One hundred and two (22.4%) respondents attended 'one day/ half- day training, 61(13.4%) respondents attended 'five days' training, and only 16(3.5%) respondents attended training that was more than five days.

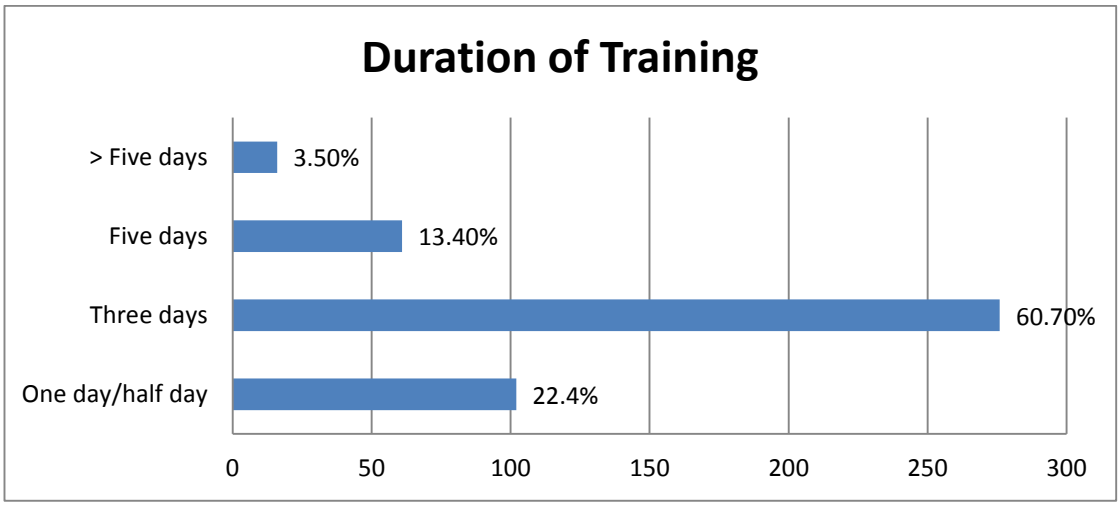

Figure 23: Participants by duration of their received training

Regarding effectiveness of the training in understanding IE, 254(51.8%) respondents answered 'good' and 18(3.7%) answered 'very good'. While 155(31.6%) respondents answered 'little', 46(9.4%) answered 'very little 'and 17(3.5%) answered 'none'. Participants were asked to specify the effectiveness of training in implementing IE. One hundred and seventy-six (36.4%) respondents answered 'good' and only 29(6%) answered 'very good'. While 192(39.8%) respondents answered 'little', 74(15.3%) answered 'very little' and only 12(2.5%) answered 'none' (See Table 8).

Section 2: Attitudes toward Inclusive Education (IE)

This section is presented in three sub-sections:

1. Administrators' attitudes toward IE in Bangladesh.

2. Relationship between administrators' attitudes toward IE and demographic variables of administrators.

3. Relationship between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their opinion about IE policy.

Administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in Bangladesh

RQ 4: *What attitudes do administrators hold toward Inclusive Education?*

In order to answer this research question administrators' responses on the ADATIE scale were examined in three steps. In step one, the mean and standard deviation for item wise responses were computed. The mean and standard deviation for total score of ADATIE and for the two factors of the scale were computed and compared in step two. In step three, the mean and standard deviation for the total score of ADATIE were computed for three groups of administrators.

The result from the first step is presented in Table 9. A closer examination of this table suggests that administrators have a higher attitude mean score for inclusive education of students with disabilities in regular classroom of primary school with substantive modification in teaching (Item 9, Mean=5.01). Item 9 has the smallest spread (SD=1.35) indicating that administrators generally agree on this point. Administrators' mean attitude score was found to be the lowest (Mean=2.64) for Item

17that states “Schools are well supported from administration to include students with disabilities”.

Table 9

Mean and standard deviation of responses to items on the ADATIE scale

Item	**Mean**	**SD**
Teacher's willingness (1)	4.59	1.49
Teacher support(2)	3.30	1.56
Parents are supportive(3)	4.35	1.47
Parents of children without disabilities supportive(4)	3.32	1.55
Inclusion benefits school(5)	4.36	1.53
Inclusion benefits teacher(6)	3.95	1.54
Inclusion benefits other students(7)	3.64	1.63
Schools are resourced(8)	2.84	1.81
Teaching require substantive modification(9)	5.01	1.35
Children requiring extra resources should be included(10)	3.46	1.94
Children with challenging behaviour should be taught(11)	3.48	1.84
Include all children irrespective of severity(13)	3.81	1.86
Lack of resources as a reason for excluding children (14)	4.06	1.84
Teachers are skilled(16)	2.93	1.83
Schools are well supported from administration(17)	2.64	1.74

* Number in parenthesis denotes corresponding item in the scale

Administrators' attitude score for item wise responses on the ADATIE scale is presented in the bar graph in Figure24.

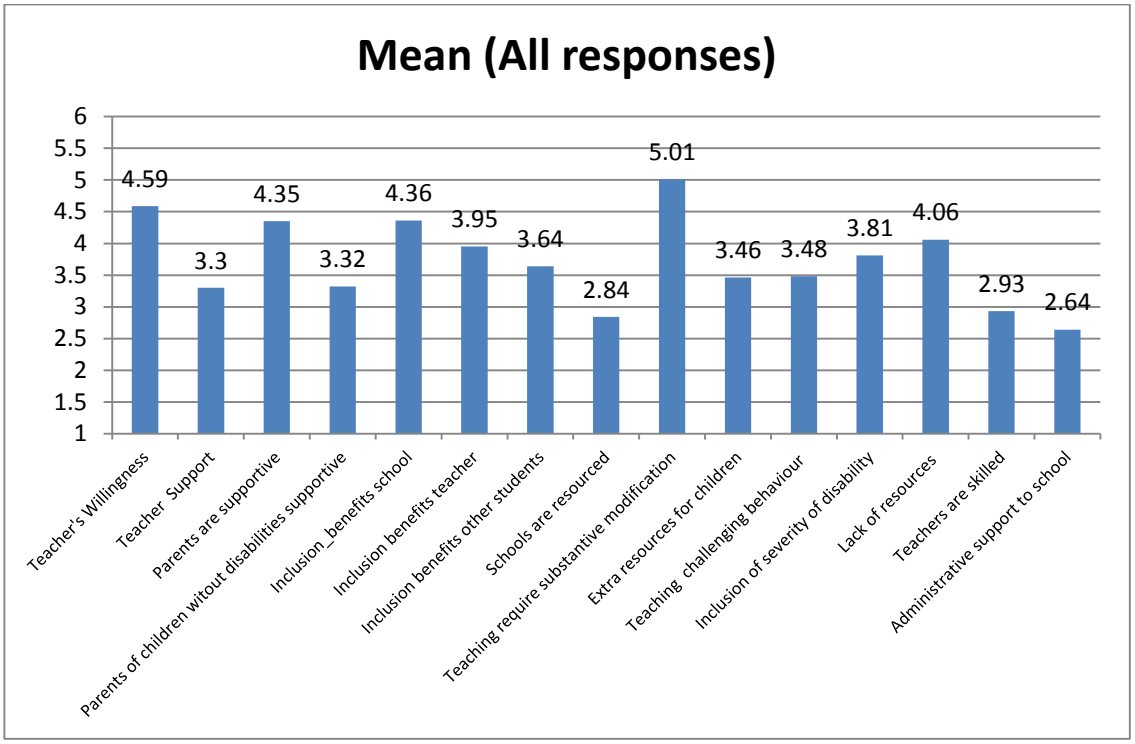

Figure 24: Administrators' mean scores on 15 items of the ADATIE scale

The second step in examining respondents' attitudes revealed that administrators' mean attitude score on the ADATIE scale was 3.72. On this scale, a value of 3(Disagree somewhat) suggests a moderately negative attitude while a value of 4(Agree somewhat) suggests a moderately positive attitude. As a value of 3.5 is in the middle of these two categories, therefore, a mean of 3.72 indicates that the attitude of participating administrators was neither very positive nor very negative about including students with disabilities. The difference between administrators' scores on two factors of the scale was revealed through this step of analysis. Table 10 presents a comparison of administrators' scores on two factors of the scale. It revealed that respondents' mean score on Factor 1 (Acceptance of children with disabilities) was 3.98, much higher than the mean score on Factor 2(Resources for IE), which was M=3.08.

Table10

Comparison of mean scores of administrators' attitudes on two factors of the ADATIE scale

	Factor	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**
Factor 1	Acceptance	3.98	0.919	675
Factor2	Resources	3.08	1.06	665

The finding on factor scores indicates lack of resources as a concern for administrators, influencing their attitudes toward inclusive education.

RQ 5: What attitudes do administrators at different levels hold toward Inclusive Education?

The participants in this study were from three different levels of primary education administration in Bangladesh: school, district and DPE (central). Therefore, in order to answer RQ 5, responses from each individual level were examined, aiming to identify administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education at different levels of administration in Bangladesh. The mean and standard deviation for each item on the ADATIE scale was computed and compared for three groups. The item wise mean scores on ADATIE for three different administrator levels of are presented in Figure 25.

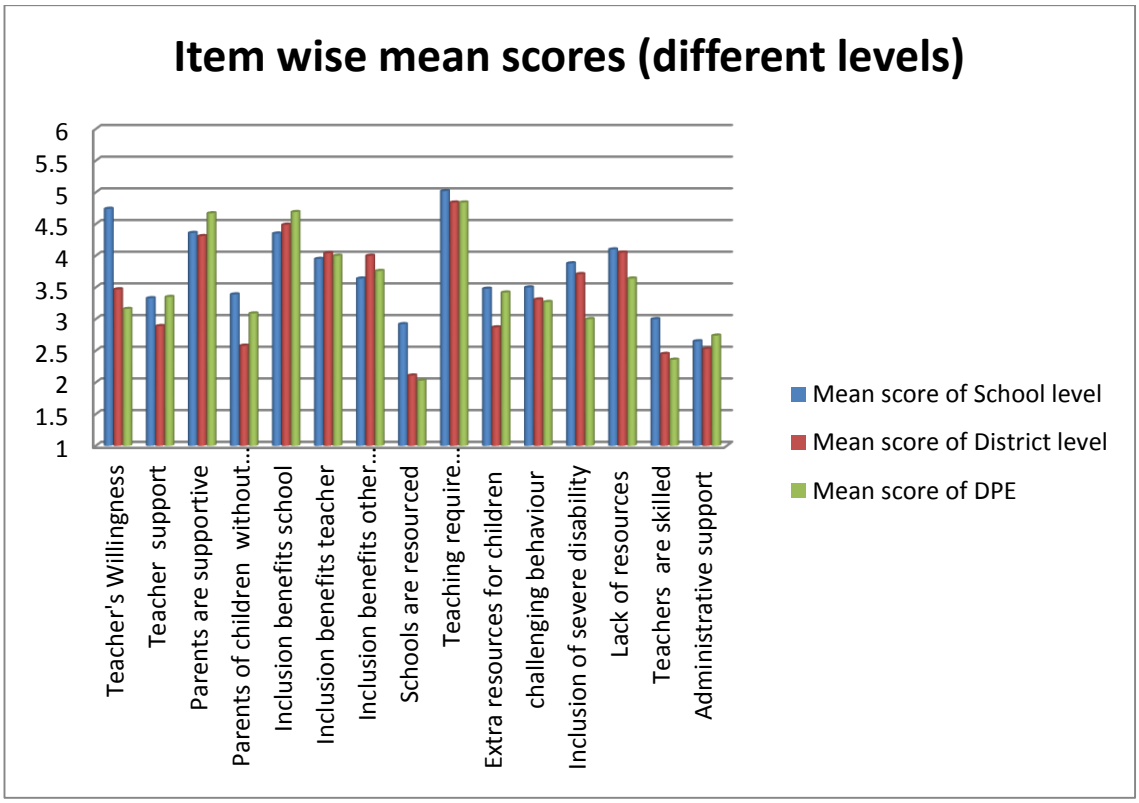

Figure 25: Mean scores on the 15 items for administrators at three levels

A closer examination of Figure 25 would suggest the following:

- Administrators at all three different levels were most positive about inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classroom of primary school with substantive modification in teaching(Item 9, mean score of school level=5.02, mean score of district level=4.84, mean score of DPE=4.48)
- Administrators at all three levels had low mean scores (school level=2.65, district level=2.53, and DPE=2.74) on item 17 that states "Schools are well supported from administration to include students with disabilities". This suggests that administrators were less positive.
- Among the three levels, district level and DPE administrators scored the lowest mean on item 8 that states "Schools are resourced to provide education to the children with disabilities", suggesting that these administrators were less

positive about inclusive education (Mean score at district level=2.11, mean score of DPE=2.03).However, interestingly the school level administrators' mean score (2.92) was comparatively higher than district and DPE level mean scores.

- Administrators at all three levels scored very low on item 16 that states "Teachers are skilled to teach students with disabilities". This suggests that administrators were not positive about inclusive education. The mean scores for school level, district level and DPE administrators were 3.00, 2.45 and 2.36 respectively).

In step three, the mean and standard deviation for the total score on the ADATIE scale were computed for three groups of administrators. The results revealed the school level administrators' mean score was higher (M=3.75,SD=0.86) compared to attitude mean scores of district level administrators(M=3.45, SD=0.72) and DPE administrators (M=3.44,SD=0.46). However, the total attitude scores on the ADATIE scale for all three levels suggested that administrators were neither positive nor negative to include students with disabilities into regular classrooms, irrespective of their level of work. The mean and standard deviation for the two factors of ADATIE (Acceptance of children with disabilities and Resources for IE) were computed and compared on three different levels. The results showed that at all three levels of respondents' mean scores on Factor 1 (Acceptance of children with disabilities) were higher compared to mean scores on Factor 2 (Resources for IE). Figure 26 shows a graphic presentation of differences at all three levels.

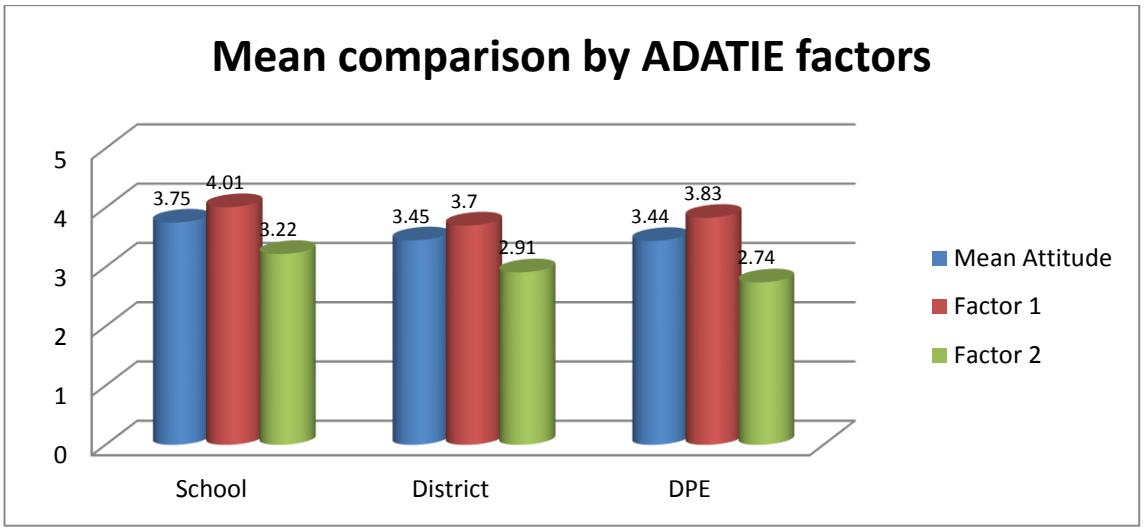

Figure 26: Mean scores for two factors of ADATIE at three levels of administration

A comparison of administrators' attitude scores in relation to the ADATIE scale and its two factors is presented in Table 11. The results showed that school level administrators had higher mean scores on two factors on the ADATIE scale, compared to mean scores of their counterparts at district level and DPE. The school level administrators had the highest mean score (Mean=4.01) for factor 1(Acceptance of children with disabilities) with a very low spread (0.94). DPE administrators had the lowest mean score (Mean=2.74) for factor 2(Resources for IE).

Table 11

Mean and standard deviation of ADATIE (with two factors) for different level administrators

ADATIE scale	**Administrative level**		
	School M(SD)	**District** M(SD)	**DPE** M(SD)
Factor 1: Acceptance of children with disabilities	4.01 (0.94)	3.70 (0.77)	3.83 (0.61)
Factor 2: Resources for IE	3.22 (1.07)	2.91 (0.91)	2.74(0.79)

RQ 6.*Are there any significant differences in attitudes toward Inclusive Education among administrators working at different levels of administration in Bangladesh?*

In order to answer this question a one-way ANOVA test was employed to determine whether significant differences existed among the attitudes of different level administrators working within the primary education administration in Bangladesh. The dependent variables for this statistical investigation were the ADATIE mean attitude score and scores of two factors of ADATIE. Before conducting the parametric test, assumption testing was conducted. There was no violation of assumption to use ANOVA for this analysis. The level of significance was set at 0.017(Bonferroni adjustment) to identify whether there was any difference between the groups (Pallant, 2011). The difference in attitudes toward inclusive education among administrators at three levels is presented in Table 12.

Table12

Differences in administrators' attitude on the ADATIE scale and its two factors

ADATIE scale	***F* value (df)**	***p* value**
Total score	3.968(2,607)	0.019
Factor 1: Acceptance of children with disabilities	2.812(2,648)	0.061
Factor 2: Resources for IE	4.150(2,641)	0.016*

**p* value significant after Bonferroni adjustment <=0.017 level

The ANOVA test result presented in Table 12 showed no significant differences in total (ADATIE) attitude scores and factor 1 scores for three groups of administrators. A statistically significant difference in administrators' attitudes was found in Factor 2 scores: $F(2,641)=4.15$, $p=0.016$. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the three groups was quite small. This was evident in

the small effect size (0.013) obtained using eta squared. Post-hoc comparison using Scheffe's test indicated that school level administrators were more positive towards inclusive education than their counterparts at district and DPE levels. Results of post-hoc comparison analysis are presented in Table 13 below:

Table 13

Post-hoc comparison of three level administrators' attitude scores (ADATIE and its two factors)

Dependent variable	**Between levels of administration**	**Mean difference**	**Std. error**	***p* value**	95% confidence Interval	
					Lower band	Upper band
Total score (ADATIE)	School-District	0.304	0.135	0.080	-0.027	0.636
	School-DPE	0.315	0.174	0.195	-0.112	0.742
	District-DPE	0.010	0.214	0.999	-0.516	0.536
Acceptance of children with disabilities	School-District	0.318	0.145	0.092	-0.039	0.675
	School-DPE	0.185	0.178	0.583	-0.252	0.622
	District-DPE	-0.133	0.223	0.838	-0.682	0.415
Resources for IE	School-District	0.304	0.167	0.195	-0.107	0.716
	School-DPE	0.475	0.203	0.066	-0.023	0.974
	District-DPE	0.171	0.256	0.800	-0.457	0.800

Relationship between administrators' attitudes toward IE and demographic variables of administrators

The relationship between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and demographic variables were examined using both ANOVA and *t*-tests. Research questions 7 to 11 were analysed using *t*-tests, as each question consisted of two categories of responses and participants could respond to each question. The categories were: 'yes' or 'no'; 'male' or 'female'; 'rural' or 'urban' and so on. Research questions 12, 13 and 14 were analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) as these questions encompassed three or more responses to compare differences. These categories included: 'school, district, and DPE'; 'none, very little, little, good, and very good'; '<=10years, 11–20yearsand >20 years' and so on.

RQ 7.*Is there any significant difference between administrators' attitudes toward Inclusive Education (as evidenced by their factor scores) and their work setting/location (Rural-Urban)?*

In order to respond to research question 7, the mean and standard deviation for the total (ADATIE) score and its two factors for two groups (rural and urban) of administrators were calculated. A series of independent *t-tests* were then conducted to determine if differences existed between rural and urban administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. Overall, rural administrators were found to hold significantly more positive attitudes than their urban counterparts regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities. A graphic presentation of the attitude mean score comparison for rural and urban administrators on ADATIE and its two factors are shown in Figure 27.

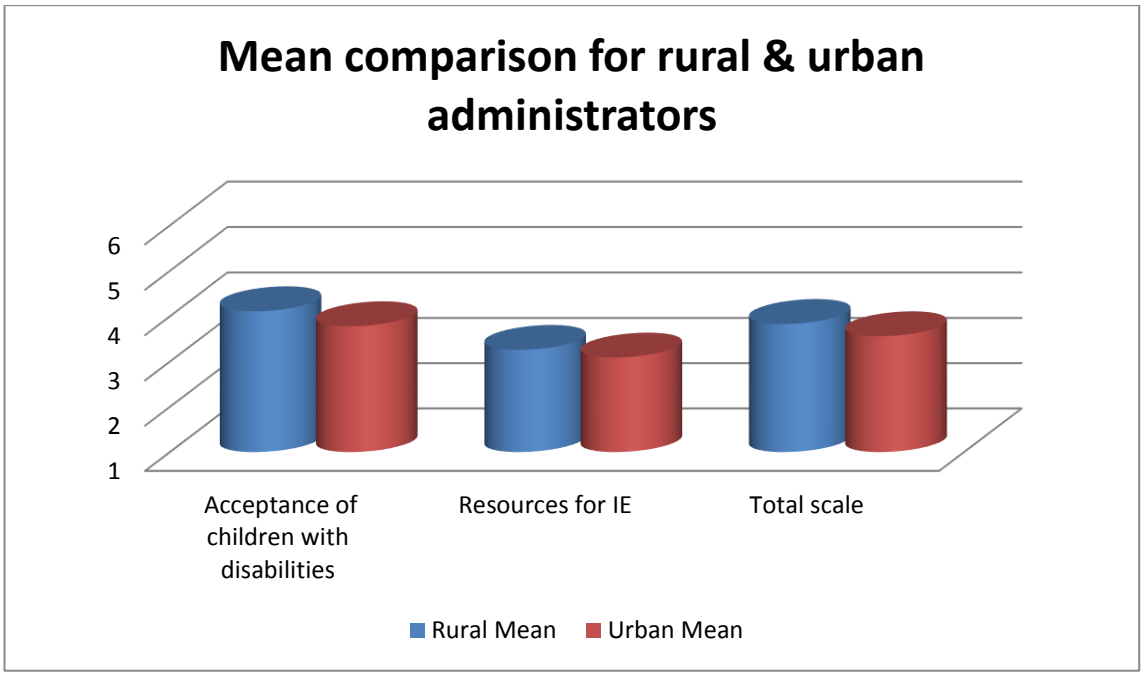

Figure 27: Rural and urban administrators' mean scores on the ADATIE scale.

The results presented in Table 14 revealed that work settings/locations had a significant effect on administrators' attitudes. The differences of attitude mean scores for total scale and its Factor 1 were significant. The magnitude of the difference in attitude means for total scale (mean difference=0.27, 95%*CI*: 0.14 to 0.41) was very small (eta squared=0.025). Administrators whose workplaces were located in rural areas scored a higher attitude mean on Factor 1 (Acceptance of students with disabilities), in comparison to urban administrators. The magnitude of the difference in means for Factor 1 (mean difference=0.33, 95%*CI*: 0.18 to 0.47, $p<0.05$) was very small (eta squared=0.030). However, no significant difference was observed in Factor 2 mean scores between rural and urban administrators. (See Table 14.)

Table 14

Comparison of attitude scores of administrators by work location

ADATIE scale	**Rural**		**Urban**		**df**	***t* value**	***p* value**
	M(SD)	N	M(SD)	N			
Total score	3.83(0.88)	381	3.56(0.71)	226	605	3.966	0.00*
Factor 1: Acceptance	4.11(0.96)	405	3.78(0.82)	244	647	4.475	0.00*
Factor 2: Resources	3.26(1.09)	402	3.09(0.95)	239	639	1.887	0.06

*p <0.05

RQ 8.*Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward Inclusive Education based on gender?*

An independent *t*-test was conducted in order to identify the relationship between administrators' gender and their attitude scores. Overall, male administrators were found to be more positive than their female counterparts regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities as evident in the ADATIE total score and Factor 1(Acceptance of children with disabilities) scores (see Table 15).

Table 15

Comparison of male and female administrators' attitude scores toward inclusive education (ADATIE and its factors)

ADATIE scale	***Male M(SD)***	***Female M(SD)***	***Mean Difference***	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.81(0.87)	3.65(0.78)	0.16	2.45	0.014*
Factor 1: Acceptance	4.08(0.96)	3.89(0.87)	0.19	2.73	0.006*
Factor 2: Resources	3.24(1.04)	3.11(1.04)	0.13	1.66	0.098

*p <0.05

Given the significant difference found in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education based on gender, further investigation was undertaken to identify whether administrators' level of work had any impact. Independent *t*-tests were conducted in order to identify the differences for different level administrators' attitude scores based on gender.

The results presented in Table 16 indicated there were statistically significant differences in attitude mean scores for males and females on the ADATIE total scale and its two factors for school level. The *t* value was found t=2.55(538), p=0.01 for total scale, t=2.25(573), p=0.03 for Factor 1 and t=2.21(566), p=0.03 for Factor 2. The magnitude of differences in the means was very small (eta squared= 0.01). The eta squared statistics for Factor 1 (Acceptance of students with disabilities) (n^2=0.008) and for Factor 2 (Resources for IE) (n^2=0.008) were very small.

Table16

Comparison of male and female administrators' attitude scores (on ADATIE and its factors) at school level

ADATIE scale	**Male M(SD)**	**Female M(SD)**	**Mean Difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.85(0.89)	3.66(0.80)	0.19	2.55	0.011*
Factor 1: Acceptance	4.11(0.99)	3.93(0.89)	0.18	2.25	0.025*
Factor 2: Resources	3.31(1.07)	3.11(1.05)	0.20	2.21	0.027*

*p <0.05

The differences in mean scores were not significant for district and DPE levels. The results are presented in Table 17 and Table 18.

Table17

Comparison of male and female administrators' attitude scores (on ADATIE and its factors) at district level

ADATIE scale	**Male M(SD)**	**Female M(SD)**	**Mean Difference**	***t* values**	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.43(0.63)	3.47(0.79)	-0.042	-0.18	*0.856*
Factor 1: Acceptance	3.81(0.68)	3.62(0.84)	0.19	0.79	0.434
Factor 2: Resources	2.71(0.66)	3.06(1.04)	-0.35	-1.33	0.190

Table18

Comparison of male and female administrators' attitude scores (on ADATIE and its factors) at DPE

ADATIE scale	**Male M(SD)**	**Female M(SD)**	**Mean Difference**	***t* values**	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.46(0.48)	3.41(0.43)	0.043	0.22	0.829
Factor 1: Acceptance	3.92(0.62)	3.66(0.59)	0.262	1.08	0.287
Factor 2: Resources	2.79(0.69)	2.68(0.93)	0.104	0.34	0.736

RQ 9. *Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward Inclusive Education based on their Special Education qualification?*

In order to answer this question, independent *t*-tests were conducted to determine the differences in administrators' attitude scores based on their special education qualification status. A total of 433respondents reported they had a special educational qualification, while 245 reported they did not. The findings revealed that administrators with a special education qualification had slightly higher mean attitude scores on the total scale as well as the two factors than that of administrators without

special education qualifications. Except for Factor 2, no significant difference in administrators' attitude scores was found (see Table 19).

Table19

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores based on their special education qualification

ADATIE scale	**Without SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**With SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**Mean Difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Mean attitude	3.65(0.75)	3.77(0.87)	0.14	-1.72	0.086
Factor 1: Acceptance	3.97(0.85)	3.99(0.95)	0.01	-0.26	0.796
Factor 2: Resources	2.96(0.98)	3.31(1.07)	0.38	-4.07	0.000*

*p <0.05

Further investigations were undertaken to identify whether administrators' attitudes based on special education qualification differed at different levels of administration. A number of *t*-tests were conducted splitting administrators' responses by their level of work. The results of the analysis of *t*-tests are presented in Tables20, 21and 22.

Table 20

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores based on their special education qualification (on ADATIE and its factors) at school level

ADATIE scale	**With SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**Without SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**Mean difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.80(0.90)	3.67(0.77)	0.14	1.81	0.082
Factor1:Acceptance	4.03(0.98)	4.02(0.85)	0.01	0.12	0.905
Factor 2: Resources	3.34(1.08)	2.96(1.00)	0.38	4.08	0.000*

*p <0.05

The results of the *t*-tests for school level show that difference of attitude between administrators with and without special education qualifications was statistically significant.

The results of the *t*-tests for district level and DPE level administrators are presented in Tables21 and 22respectively.

Table 21

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores based on their special education qualification (on ADATIE and its factors) at district level

ADATIE scale	**With SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**Without SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**Mean difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.46(0.74)	3.56(0.67)	-0.10	-0.39	0.703
Factor 1:Acceptance	3.78(0.81)	3.64(0.70)	0.15	0.52	0.606
Factor 2: Resources	2.83(0.80)	3.42(1.07)	-0.59	-1.87	0.070

Table 22

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores based on their special education qualification (on ADATIE and its factors)at DPE level

ADATIE scale	**With SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**Without SpEd qualification M(SD)**	**Mean Difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.45(0.46)	3.36(0.48)	0.089	0.43	0.673
Factor1: Acceptance	3.83(0.45)	3.70(0.55)	0.13	0.60	0.558
Factor 2: Resources	2.69(0.83)	2.68(0.48)	-0.010	0.03	0.974

None of the differences shown in Tables 21 and 22 were found to be statistically significant.

RQ 10. *Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward Inclusive Education based on their knowledge of IE related policy?*

The analysis of this research question was carried out in a similar fashion to research question 9 by using independent sample *t*-tests. The results of *t*-tests for all administrators are presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores based on their knowledge of IE related policy

ADATIE scale	**With knowledge M(SD)**	**Without knowledge M(SD)**	**Mean difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.75(0.81)	3.67(0.85)	0.08	1.12	0.265
Factor1: Acceptance	4.01(0.89)	3.94(0.97)	0.07	0.97	0.332
Factor 2: Resources	3.22(1.04)	3.07(1.06)	0.14	1.58	0.115

Further investigation was undertaken to look for differences at various levels of administration. The results of these investigations are presented in Table 24. However, no significant difference in administrators' attitudes based on their knowledge of IE related policy was observed on the ADATIE scale and its two factors for any level of primary education administration in Bangladesh.

Table24

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores (on ADATIE and its factors) based on their knowledge of IE related policy at different levels of administration

ADATIE scale	With knowledge of IE M(SD)	Without knowledge of IE M(SD)	Mean difference	*t* values	*p* values (two-tailed)
		School			
Total score	3.79(0.83)	3.69(0.89)	0.10	1.28	0.201
Factor 1: Acceptance	4.05(0.90)	3.99(1.00)	0.06	0.72	0.469
Factor 2: Resources	3.26(1.05)	3.08(1.08)	0.18	1.79	0.074
		District			
Total score	3.45(0.74)	3.60(0.59)	-0.15	-0.48	0.637
Factor 1: Acceptance	3.71(0.81)	3.83(0.50)	-0.12	-0.36	0.720
Factor 2: Resources	2.92(0.90)	3.13(1.09)	-0.21	-0.51	0.611
		DPE			
Total score	3.48(0.45)	3.35(0.53)	0.13	0.59	0.561
Factor 1: Acceptance	3.83(0.48)	3.79(0.55)	0.04	0.17	0.865
Factor 2: Resources	2.78(0.63)	2.49(0.83)	0.30	0.96	0.348

RQ 11. *Are there any significant differences in administrators' attitudes toward IE based on their professional development (PD) training?*

Independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to answer this research question. The results indicated that differences in attitudes based on professional development training were not statistically significant. These findings are presented in Table 25.

Table25

Comparison of administrators' attitude score (on ADATIE and its factors) based on PD training

ADATIE scale	**With training M(SD)**	**Without training M(SD)**	**Mean difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.74(0.81)	3.66(0.84)	-0.08	-1.22	0.22
Factor 1: Acceptance	4.00(0.90)	3.93(0.92)	-0.07	-0.95	0.34
Factor 2: Resources	3.22(1.06)	3.09(1.01)	-0.12	-1.47	0.14

Further, independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to determine if administrators at different levels of administration differed significantly in their attitudes toward inclusive education based on their PD training background. Comparisons of participants' mean scores along with results of *t*-tests are presented in Table 26 for different levels of administration that include school district and DPE levels.

Table 26

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores (on ADATIE and its factors) based on PD training at different levels of administration

School

ADATIE scale	**With training M(SD)**	**Without training M(SD)**	**Mean difference**	***t values***	***p* values (two-tailed)**
Total score	3.79(0.83)	3.66(0.88)	0.13	1.67	0.094
Factor 1: Acceptance	4.06(0.90)	3.95(0.96)	0.11	1.27	0.203
Factor 2: Resources	3.26(1.07)	3.09(1.05)	0.17	1.78	0.075

		District			
Total score	3.23(0.64)	3.87(0.69)	0.13	-2.79	0.008*
Factor 1: Acceptance	3.50(0.75)	4.13(0.69)	0.04	-2.43	0.020*
Factor 2: Resources	2.68(0.82)	3.37(0.83)	0.30	-2.37	0.023*
		DPE			
Total score	3.51(0.52)	3.31(0.40)	0.19	0.96	0.352
Factor 1: Acceptance	3.89(0.55)	3.68(0.44)	0.21	0.97	0.345
Factor 2: Resources	2.74(0.87)	2.58(0.51)	0.17	0.53	0.606

*p <0.05

The differences among district level administrators mean attitudes scores reached statistical significance for the ADATIE scale [t=-2.79(36), p=0.008] and for its factors [Factor 1:t =-2.43(36), p=0.020; Factor 2:t=-2.37(36), p=0.023] (see Table 26). No significant differences were observed for the other two groups (administrators from school level and DPE level)(See Table 26). Surprisingly, participants with training had lower attitude scores at district level.

RQ 12. *Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward IE based on following demographic characteristics?*

d) Years of administrative experience
e) Years of teaching experience
f) Age.

Analysis of this research question was carried out using analysis of variance. The data consisted of responses from participants from three levels of administration. Responses from district and from DPE levels were combined for analysis. A series of one-way ANOVA was used for analysis. Assumption testing was conducted before

conducting the parametric test. There was no violation of assumption to use ANOVA for this analysis. Level of significance was set at 0.017(Bonferroni adjustment) to identify whether there is any difference between the groups of demographic variables. Eta squared effect size were computed (see Table 27).

Table 27

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores by demographic variables

Variable	**Sub-sets of overall participants**	**Mean on ADATIE**	**Mean on Factor1:Acceptance**	**Mean on Factor 2: Resources**
		M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
Administrative experience	<=10 yrs	3.72(0.81)	4.01(0.90)	3.11(1.02)
	11-20 yrs	3.58(0.78)	3.82(0.86)	3.05(1.02)
	>20yrs	3.90(0.86)	4.11(0.92)	3.43(1.12)
	F value(df)	5.84* (2,552)	4.58* (2,589)	6.18* (2,582)
Teaching experience	<=10 yrs	3.71(0.79)	4.01(0.89)	3.07(0.99)
	11-20 yrs	3.57(0.79)	3.82(0.87)	2.98(0.97)
	>20yrs	3.92(0.88)	4.13(0.97)	3.48(1.11)
	F value(df)	8.75* (2,571)	5.58* (2,610)	14.01* (2,600)
Age	<=30 yrs	3.92(0.84)	4.15(0.88)	3.35(1.09)
	31-40 yrs	3.63(0.79)	3.96(0.89)	2.94(0.97)
	>40yrs	3.76(0.85)	3.99(0.94)	3.27(1.07)
	F value(df)	3.13 (2,607)	0.96 (2,646)	7.60* (2,640)

******p* value significant after Bonferroni adjustment <=0.017 level

The results indicated:

- Length of administrative experience had a positive effect on attitudes of administrators. The findings showed that participants having 11 to 20 years of administrative experience had the lowest attitude mean score while administrators having 20 years or more experience had the highest attitude mean score. The difference in attitude due to length of administrative experience was found to be significant on the ADATIE scale [$F(2,552)=5.84$, $p=0.003$] on Factor 1[$F(2,589)= 4.58$, $p=0.011$](Acceptance of children with disabilities) and Factor 2[$F(2,582)=6.18$, $p=0.002$] (Resources for IE).
- Length of teaching experience had a significant effect on ADATIE and its two factors scores. In particular, administrators with teaching experience of over 20 years had significantly positive attitude scores compared to those who had less than 20 years' teaching experience. The differences in attitudes were significant on the ADATIE scale: $F(2,571)=8.75$, $p=0.000$on Factor 1: $F(2,610)=5.58$, $p=0.004$ and Factor 2: $F(2,600)=14.01$, $p=0.000$.
- Younger administrators tended to have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education. However, the differences in attitude were not significant for age except on Factor 2. The difference in administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education on Factor 2 (resources) was significant: $F(2,640)=7.60$, $p=0.001$.

Further investigations were undertaken to examine the impact of administrative experience, teaching experience and age on attitudes of participants at different levels of administration. The mean and standard deviation (for each variable) for participants at two levels (school and higher level), were computed to determine differences within levels of administration. A series of ANOVA tests was conducted. The results are presented in Table 28.

Table 28

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores by demographic characteristics for administrators at different levels

Levels of work/ administration	Variables	Mean on **ADATIE** M(SD)	Mean on Factor1 **Acceptance** M(SD)	Mean on Factor 2 **Resources** M(SD)
Administrative experience				
School level	<=10 yrs	3.73(0.82)	4.03(0.92)	3.12(1.04)
administrators	11-20 yrs	3.63(0.83)	3.85(0.89)	3.14(1.06)
	>20yrs	3.91(0.88)	4.11(0.94)	3.45(1.14)
	F value(df)	3.67(2,479)	2.97(2,509)	4.50***** (2,503)
Higher level	<=10 yrs	3.52(0.65)	3.77(0.74)	2.95(0.91)
administrators	11-20 yrs	3.35(0.59)	3.71(0.70)	2.64(0.74)
	>20yrs	3.74(0.72)	4.04(0.78)	3.14(0.91)
	F value(df)	7.22(2,56)	0.62(2,62)	1.63(2,61)
Teaching experience				
School level	<=10 yrs	3.71(0.81)	4.03(0.91)	3.03(0.91)
administrators	11-20 yrs	3.58(0.82)	3.84(0.89)	3.00(0.98)
	>20yrs	3.91(0.89)	4.13(0.98)	3.47(1.12)
	F value	7.27*(2,525)	4.36***(**2,560)	12.25*****(2,551)
Higher level	<=10 yrs	3.61(0.72)	3.70(0.81)	3.34(0.89)
administrators	11-20 yrs	3.56(0.51)	3.85(0.71)	2.57(0.51)
	>20yrs	4.00(0.86)	4.06(1.00)	3.89(0.83)
	F value	0.93(2,24)	0.47(2,27)	5.35*****(2,26)
Age				
School level	<=30 yrs	3.93(0.88)	4.17(0.91)	3.34(1.12)

Levels of work/ administration	Variables	Mean on **ADATIE** M(SD)	Mean on Factor1 **Acceptance** M(SD)	Mean on Factor 2 **Resources** M(SD)
administrators	31-40 yrs	3.65(0.82)	3.99(0.92)	2.97(1.00)
	>40yrs	3.80(0.86)	4.02(0.95)	3.32(1.08)
	F value	2.64(2,530)	0.75(2,562)	6.37*****(2,557)
Higher level	<=30 yrs	3.60(0.80)	3.63(0.64)	3.53(1.29)
administrators	31-40 yrs	3.39(0.52)	3.74(0.67)	2.55(0.55)
	>40yrs	3.45(0.68)	3.76(0.76)	2.88(0.91)
	F value	0.15(2,57)	0.04(2,63)	1.94(2,62)

*****p value significant after Bonferroni adjustment <=0.017 level

The mean and standard deviation for three subgroups of each variable were computed for different level administrators (school level and higher level). Results of ANOVA presented in the above Table 28 revealed the following:

- Length of administrative experience had a significant effect on ADATIE Factor 2 scores at school level. No other significant differences in administrators' attitudes were observed for length of administrative experience. Post-hoc analysis using Scheffe's test indicated that school level administrators with administrative experience of over 20 years had significantly higher attitude scores on Factor 2 compared to the attitude scores of administrators who had administrative experiences for less than 20 years: $F(2,503)=4.50$, $p=0.012$.
- Length of teaching experience had a significant effect on ADATIE and its two factors scores at school level. In particular, school level administrators with teaching experience of over 20 years had significantly higher attitude scores compared to administrators who had teaching experiences upto 20 years. The differences in attitude were significant on the ADATIE scale: $F(2,525)=7.27$, $p=0.001$; on Factor 1: $F(2,560)=4.36$, $p=0.013$ and on Factor 2: $F(2,551)=12.25$,

p=0.000. However, the length of teaching experience had a significant effect only on Factor 2 of the ADATIE scale at the higher level. Higher level administrators with teaching experience of over 20 years had significantly higher attitude scores compared to administrators with upto 20 years' experience on Factor 2. A post-hoc analysis using Scheffe's test indicated that higher level administrators with 20 or more years of teaching experience (M=4.00, SD=0.86) were significantly more positive towards inclusive education than administrators with 11–20 years of teaching experience requiring resources: $F(2,26)=5.35$, p=0.011.

- Younger respondents had significantly higher attitude scores on Factor 2 of the ADATIE scale at school level. No other significant differences in administrators' attitudes were observed for age variables at any level of administration. Post-hoc analysis using Scheffe's test revealed that school level administrators who were aged 30 years or below had significantly higher attitude scores on Factor 2 (resources for IE) compared to administrators who were more than 40 years of age[Factor 2 $F(2,557)=6.37$, p=0.003].

RQ 13: Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward Inclusive Education and their following knowledge variables:

a) Highest level of education

b) Knowledge of IE priority

c) Knowledge of resources for IE

d) Duration of PD training

e) Effectiveness of the training for implementing IE.

Analysis of research question 14 was carried out, following similar analysis procedures as those employed for research question 13. Results of ANOVA tests are presented in Table 29.

Table 29

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores by knowledge variables

Variable	Sub-sets of participants	Mean on **ADATIE** M(SD)	Mean on Factor 1 **Acceptance** M(SD)	Mean on Factor 2 **Resources** M(SD)
Highest level of education	HSC or equivalent	4.01(0.83)	4.17(0.96)	3.64(1.08)
	Bachelor degree	3.78(0.80)	4.08(0.87)	3.15(1.04)
	Masters degree	3.54(0.81)	3.80(0.90)	2.98(0.97)
	F value(df)	15.70***** (2,605)	10.37***** (2,646)	19.87***** (2,637)
Knowledge regarding priority in IE policy	None or very little	3.54(0.78)	3.79(0.88)	3.00(0.99)
	Little	3.80(0.87)	4.07(0.98)	3.21(1.03)
	Good or very good	3.91(0.75)	4.12(0.80)	3.51(1.08)
	F value	7.72***** (2,520)	5.67***** (2,559)	9.86* (2,552)
Knowledge regarding resources for IE	None or very little	3.62(0.80)	3.85(0.91)	3.12(0.98)
	Little	3.71(0.81)	3.99(0.92)	3.09(0.06)
	Good or very good	4.09(0.78)	4.28(0.81)	3.75(1.07)
	F value	13.11***** (2,513)	8.47***** (2,551)	19.84***** (2,544)
Duration of training	One day/ half day	3.77(0.78)	3.97(0.83)	3.27(1.01)
	Three days	3.65(0.77)	3.91(0.88)	3.11(1.04)
	Five days	4.24(0.94)	4.45(0.97)	3.75(1.10)
	>Five days	3.70(1.03)	3.84(1.24)	3.66(1.13)
	F value	8.20***** (3,393)	6.09***** (3,422)	6.20***** (3,414)
Effectiveness of training for implementing IE	None or very little	3.72(0.82)	3.90(0.95)	3.14(1.02)
	Little	3.69(0.89)	3.90(0.98)	3.24(1.02)
	Good or very good	3.83(0.77)	4.09(0.87)	3.30(1.08)
	F value	1.54 (2,423)	2.41 (2,455)	0.58 (2,446)

**p* value significant after Bonferroni adjustment <=0.017 level

Results presented in Table 29 revealed:

a. Highest level of education

Administrators' educational level had a significant impact upon their attitudes toward including students with disabilities into regular classrooms. Overall, administrators with the lowest education level (HSC or equivalent) had better attitudes toward inclusive education. Results of the ANOVA indicated the effects of administrators' education level on their mean attitude scores of ADATIE and its two factors. Administrators with HSC or an equivalent degree were significantly more positive compared to administrators with either a Bachelor's or Masters degree on ADATIE: $F(2,605)=15.70$, $p=0.000$ and its two factors. The differences in administrators' attitudes on Factor 1(Acceptance of children with disabilities): $F(2,646)=10.37$, $p=0.000$ and on Factor 2(Resources for IE):$F(2,637)=19.87$, $p=0.000$.

b. Knowledge regarding priority in IE policy

The variable, 'Knowledge regarding priority in IE policy' was significantly associated with administrators' attitude scores on ADATIE and its two factors. Administrators who indicated having "no" knowledge or "very little" knowledge of priority in IE policy held less positive attitudes toward inclusive education compared to those having good or very good knowledge of IE priority. Administrators who indicated having good or very good knowledge of IE priority had the highest attitude scores on the ADATIE scale as well as on both factors of the scale. The differences in administrators' attitudes were found significant on the ADATIE scale: $F(2,520)=7.72$, $p=0.000$ on Factor 1: $F(2,559)=5.67$, $p=0.004$; and on Factor 2: $F(2,552)=9.86$, $p=0.000$.

c. Knowledge of resources and support for IE

Administrators' knowledge of resources and support needs for IE was found to be a significant factor influencing their attitudes toward inclusive education. The results

indicated that administrators with “good” or “very good” knowledge were significantly more positive than those without such knowledge. The results show significant differences in administrators’ attitude scores on the ADATIE scale and on the two factors. The magnitude of differences are: on ADATIE scale: $F(2,513)=13.11$, $p=0.000$ on Factor 1: $F(2,551)=8.47$, $p=0.000$and on Factor 2: $F(2,544)=19.84$, $p=0.000$.

d. Duration of PD training

Duration of PD training had a significant impact on administrators’ attitudes toward including students with disabilities in the regular school system. The administrators who received five days training were more positive towards inclusive education than those who had less than five days or more than five days training. The findings reveal significant differences in administrators’ attitude scores on the ADATIE scale and on the two factors based on duration of training. The degree of differences revealed through ANOVA are: on ADATIE scale: $F(3,393)=8.20$, $p=0.000$ on Factor 1: $F(3,422)=6.09$, $p=0.000$and on Factor 2: $F(3,414)=6.20$, $p=0.000$.

e. Effectiveness of training for implementing IE

Administrators’ attitude scores varied based on administrators’ consideration of different effectiveness levels of training for implementing IE. However, the differences in school level administrators’ attitudes based on such consideration of the effectiveness of training were not found significant.

The findings presented in Table 29 indicated a significant impact upon knowledge variables of overall respondents’ attitudes toward inclusive education, which leads to more investigation in order to identify the impact at different levels of

administration. The respondents were divided into two categories: school level and higher level administrators. The latter group included both district and DPE level administrators. A series of ANOVA tests were conducted to determine if any difference in attitudes toward inclusive education existed among the participants at different administrative levels based on these knowledge variables. The results of ANOVA tests are presented in Table 30.

Table 30

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores by knowledge variables at different levels

Levels of work/ administration	Variable	Mean on ADATIE M(SD)	Mean on Factor1 **Acceptance** M(SD)	Mean on Factor 2 **Resources** M(SD)
	Highest level of education			
School level administrators	HSC or equivalent	4.00(0.84)	4.16(0.98)	3.67(1.09)
	Bachelor degree	3.78(0.81)	4.08(0.86)	3.15(1.06)
	Masters degree	3.58(0.86)	3.84(0.95)	3.03(1.00)
	F value(df)	9.96*(2,523)	6.26*(2,557)	16.25* (2,503)
Higher level administrators	HSC or equivalent	4.28(0.63)	4.45(0.50)	3.64(1.06)
	Bachelor degree	4.03(0.80)	4.23(0.62)	4.10(0.71)
	Masters degree	3.36(0.55)	3.66(0.68)	2.73(0.77)
	F value(df)	6.24*(2,56)	3.71(2,66)	5.65*(2,61)
	Knowledge regarding IE priority			
School level administrators	None or very little	3.54(0.80)	3.80(0.88)	3.00(0.99))
	Little	3.87(0.88)	4.13(0.99)	3.26(1.05)

Levels of work/ administration	Variable	Mean on ADATIE M(SD)	Mean on Factor1 **Acceptance** M(SD)	Mean on Factor 2 **Resources** M(SD)
	Good or very good	3.97(0.77)	4.16(0.83)	3.62(1.07)
	F value	8.84*(2,447)	6.32*(2,479)	11.71*(2,474)
Higher level administrators	None or very little	3.16(0.23)	3.45(0.36)	2.86(1.04)
	Little	3.29(0.72)	3.57(0.84)	2.70(0.74)
	Good or very good	3.64(0.59)	3.95(0.68)	2.94(0.93)
	F value	2.52(2,50)	2.30(2,56)	0.461(2,54)
Knowledge regarding resources for IE				
School level administrators	None or very little	3.63(0.81)	3.87(0.91)	3.13(1.00)
	Little	3.76(0.82)	4.04 (0.94)	3.15(1.00)
	Good or very good	4.16(0.79)	4.33(0.82)	3.83(1.09)
	F value	13.05*(2,440)	8.50*(2,471)	18.37*(2,466)
Higher level administrators	None or very little	3.15(0.17)	3.49(0.36)	2.84(0.68)
	Little	3.35(0.71)	3.66(0.82)	2.60(0.84)
	Good or very good	3.74(0.58)	4.02(0.70)	3.26(0.86)
	F value	3.03(2,50)	2.06(2,56)	3.49(2,54)
Duration of training				
School level administrators	One day/ half day	3.82(0.75)	4.02(0.81)	3.30(1.01)
	Three days	3.67(0.78)	3.93 (0.89)	3.14(1.04)
	Five days	4.30(0.94)	4.50(0.98)	3.83(1.06)
	>Five days	3.80(1.24)	4.21(1.42)	3.97(1.21)
	F value	8.19*(3,347)	5.59*(3,371)	7.11*(3,367)

Levels of work/ administration	Variable	Mean on ADATIE M(SD)	Mean on Factor1 **Acceptance** M(SD)	Mean on Factor 2 **Resources** M(SD)
Higher level administrators	One day/ half day	3.23(0.89)	3.39(0.98)	2.91(0.96)
	Three days	3.32(0.58)	3.65(0.66)	2.66(0.88)
	Five days	3.87(0.87)	4.28(0.69)	3.04(1.37)
	>Five days	3.51(0.52)	3.33(0.78)	2.93(0.42)
	F value	1.07(3,35)	1.89(3,39)	0.34(3,36)
Effectiveness of training for implementing IE				
School level administrators	None or very little	3.53(0.71)	3.85(0.89)	2.93(0.88)
	Little	3.64(0.85)	3.93 (0.95)	3.07(1.01)
	Good or very good	4.12(0.78)	4.28(0.90)	3.69(1.04)
	F value	18.95*(2,369)	7.98*(2,393)	21.54*(2,391)
Higher level administrators	None or very little	3.04(0.30)	3.37(0.52)	2.63(0.27)
	Little	3.32(0.73)	3.56(0.83)	2.70(1.02)
	Good or very good	3.72(0.70)	3.93(0.73)	3.05(0.98)
	F value	2.52(2,38)	1.78(2,42)	0.76(2,39)

**p* value significant after Bonferroni adjustment <=0.017 level

The analysis revealed that school level administrators' attitude scores differed significantly due to various effects based on level of education, knowledge of priority in IE policy, knowledge of resource support, duration of PD training, and effectiveness of training for implementing IE. Significant difference in administrators' attitude scores was found at the higher level only based on the variable "level of education". The following findings derived from results are presented in Table 30:

- School level administrators with HSC or equivalent degree were significantly more positive compared to administrators with either a Bachelor or Masters degree as evident on their overall ADATIE mean score *[F*(2,523)=9.96, *p*=0.000]. Similar differences were observed for both factors on the ADATIE scale [Factor 1: *F*(2,557)=6.26, *p*=0.002 and Factor 2:*F*(2,503)=16.25, *p*=0.000].
- Higher level administrators with HSC or equivalent degree had higher attitude scores than administrators with either a Bachelor or Masters degree as evident on their overall ADATIE mean score *[F*(2,56)=6.24, *p*=0.003]. Similar differences were observed for Factor 2 of the ADATIE scale: *[F*(2, 61)=5.65, *p*=0.005].
- School level administrators who indicated having "no" knowledge or "very little" knowledge of priority in IE policy were less positive in their attitudes compared to those having "good" or "very good" knowledge as evident on their overall ADATIE mean score[*F*(2,447)=8.84, *p*=0.000]. Similar differences were observed for both factors of the ADATIE scale [Factor 1: *F*(2,479)=6.32, *p*=0.002 and Factor 2 : *F*(2,474)=11.71, *p*=0.000].
- School level administrators who indicated having "good" or "very good knowledge" about resources and support for IE were more positive than those having no knowledge or very little knowledge as evident on their overall mean score: *F*(2,447)=13.05, *p*=0.000. Similar differences were detected for both factors of the ADATIE scale: [Factor 1: *F*(2,471)=8.50, *p*=0.000 and Factor 2: *F*(2,466)=18.37,*p*=0.000].
- School level administrators who received five days' training (M=4.30) had higher attitude scores compared to those who received one day/half day (M=3.82) or three days' training (M=3.67). This was evident in school level

administrators' overall mean score on the ADATIE scale: [$F(3, 347)=8.19$, $p=0.000$]. Similar differences were observed for both factors on the ADATIE scale: [Factor 1: $F(3,371)=5.59, p=0.001$ and Factor 2: $F(3,367)=7.11$, $p=0.000$].

- School level administrators who perceived "good" or "very good" effectiveness of training were more positive in their attitudes compared to those perceiving "none" or "very little" effectiveness. This was evident on school level administrators' overall ADATIE mean score: [F (2, 369) =18.95, $p=0.000$]. Similar differences were observed for both factors of the ADATIE scale:[Factor 1: $F(2,393)=7.98$, $p=0.000$ and Factor 2: $F(2,391)=21.54, p=0.000$].

RQ 14: Is there any significant difference in administrators' attitudes toward Inclusive Education and the following support variables:

a. Level of support received
b. Level of support provided.

This research question was answered employing similar analysis of variance tests used for the previous two research questions (12,13). See Table 31 for results of ANOVA tests.

Table 31

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores by support variables

Variable	**Sub-sets** of responses	Mean on **ADATIE**	Mean on Factor 1**Acceptance**	Mean on Factor 2**Resources**
		M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
Support received	None or very little	3.58(0.85)	3.86(0.94)	3.00(1.05)
	Little	3.75(0.76)	4.00(0.86)	3.25(0.97)
	Good or very good	4.24(0.72)	4.41(0.83)	3.81(1.00)
	F value(df)	20.16*(2,589)	12.88*(2,629)	20.51* (2,621)

Variable	**Sub-sets** of responses	Mean on **ADATIE**	Mean on Factor 1**Acceptance**	Mean on Factor 2**Resources**
Support provided	None or very little	3.58(0.83)	3.86(0.96)	2.99(0.97)
	Little	3.65(0.81)	3.93(0.90)	3.11(1.01)
	Good or very good	3.97(0.80)	4.19(0.83)	3.47(1.11)
	F value(df)	11.70*(2,581)	7.06*(2,620)	11.16* (2,612)

*p value significant after Bonferroni adjustment <=0.017 level

Administrators who answered "good" or "very good" support for inclusive education were more positive than those who did not receive similar support. The differences in administrators' attitudes based on variables "support received" were found significant. The significance of differences were: on the total scale: $F(2,589)=20.16$,p=0.000 on Factor 1:$F(2,629)=12.88$,$p=0.000$ and Factor 2:$F(2,621)=20.51$,$p=0.000$. Similarly, administrators who answered "good" or "very good" support for implementing IE had higher attitude scores (on ADATIE and on the two factors of ADATIE) than those who did not provide similar support. The differences in attitudes were found significant on the total scale: $F(2,581)=11.70$,$p=000$ on Factor 1: $F(2,620)=7.06$,$p=0.001$ and Factor 2: $F(2,612)=11.16$,$p=0.000$. A series of one-way ANOVA tests were further conducted to determine influences of support variables on attitude scores of participants at different levels of administration. The results of ANOVA tests are presented in Table 32.

Table 32

Comparison of administrators' attitude scores by support variables at different levels

Levels of work/ administration	Variable	Mean on ADATIE	Mean on Factor1**Acceptance**	Mean on Factor 2 **Resources**
	Support received	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
School level administrators	None or very little	3.60(0.88)	3.88(0.96)	3.02(1.07)
	Little	3.77(0.78)	4.01(0.88)	3.26(0.99)
	Good or very good	4.27(0.72)	4.46(0.82)	3.86(0.98)
	F value(df)	18.42*(2,517)	12.74*(2,551)	19.16* (2,545)
Higher level administrators	None or very little	3.12(0.35)	3.45(0.49)	2.63(0.68)
	Little	3.59(0.72)	3.88(0.82)	3.04(0.91)
	Good or very good	3.51(0.65)	3.53(0.79)	2.85(0.91)
	F value(df)	3.32(2,50)	2.29(2,56)	1.52(2,53))
	Support provided			
School level administrators	None or very little	3.63(0.88)	3.88(1.00)	3.05(1.02)
	Little	3.66(0.82)	3.94(0.91)	3.11(1.02)
	Good or very good	3.98(0.80)	4.21(0.82)	3.48(1.11)
	F value	9.00*(2,509)	6.43*(2,542)	8.13*(2,536)
Higher level administrators	None or very little	3.17(0.23)	3.52(0.40)	2.60(0.63)
	Little	3.52(0.79)	3.87(0.92)	2.92(0.87)
	Good or very good	3.79(0.77)	3.86(0.87)	3.21(1.11)
	F value	4.14(2,50)	1.51(2,56)	2.23*(2,53)

**p* value significant after Bonferroni adjustment <=0.017 level

In brief, the results revealed that only school level administrators' attitudes differed significantly based on their perceived levels of support variables such as "support received" and "support provided". Analysis of results indicated that school level administrators who received "good" or "very good support" for inclusive education were significantly more positive than those who did not receive such support. This was evident with school level administrators' overall ADATIE mean score: [*F*

(2,517) =18.42, *p*=0.000]. Similar differences were observed for both factors of the ADATIE scale: [Factor 1: *F* (2,551) =12.74, *p*=0.000 and Factor 2: *F* (2,545) =19.16, *p*=0.000]. Similarly, school level administrators who indicated providing support for implementing IE had significantly higher attitude scores than those who indicated not providing such support as evident on their overall ADATIE mean score: [*F* (2,509) =9.00, *p*=0.000]. Similar differences were observed for both factors of the ADATIE scale: [Factor 1: *F* (2,542) =6.43, *p*= 0.002 and Factor 2: *F* (2,536) =8.14, *p*=0.000].

Relationship between administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education and their opinions about IE policy

RQ 15: Is there a significant relationship between administrators' attitudes toward Inclusive Education and their opinions about IE policy?

To answer this research question a series of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated between attitude scores (on ADATIE scale and on two factors) and administrators' total opinion regarding IE policy. The magnitude of correlation along with their level of significance is presented in Table 33.

Table 33

Inter-correlation between ADATIE attitude scores and administrators' opinions regarding IE policy

Variable	ADATIE total score	ADATIE Factor 1 (**Acceptance**)	ADATIE Factor 2 (**Resources**)
Total opinion on IE policy	0.217**	0.245**	0.106**

**p<0.01 level

All correlations between administrators' attitude scores and their opinion regarding IE were found to be positive. Results revealed significant correlation between administrators' ADATIE mean scores (including two factors) and their opinion regarding IE policy. The correlation between total ADATIE scores and total opinion on IE policy was found to be small but significant, r=0.22. Similarly correlations between two factors of ADATIE and the total opinion on IE were found to be significantly positive (Factor 1, r=0.25 and Factor 2, r=0.11), suggesting a tendency for opinion on IE policy to improve with increasingly positive attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms.

Section 3: Facilitators of and Barriers to IE

This section presents results from the open-ended question in the survey questionnaire. Two open -ended questions sought to know what respondents identify as three important facilitators for IE and three important barriers to IE. Some participants did not answer these questions while others provided only one or two examples of facilitators or barriers, open-ended question resulting in missing data in the data set. This section is presented in two sub-sections:

a. Factors identified by administrators as facilitators of inclusive education

b. Factors identified by administrators as barriers to inclusive education.

Factors identified by administrators as facilitators of inclusive education

RQ 2:*What do administrators at different levels identify as facilitators for inclusive education?*

The open-ended question that sought to know the three most important facilitators for successful implementation of inclusive education in Bangladesh was analysed. Thematic analysis was used. Answers were listed and then coded into key themes. The findings yielded four major themes: Professional development, Resources, Positive attitude, and Support.

Professional development: The key theme that emerged from the data analysis was professional development (PD). Many responses indicated PD as an essential facilitator for inclusive education. In particular, training for staff members was found to be the most important category under this theme with a total of 319 responses (67.7% of

total cases). Some of the most common responses for the staff members category included:

- teacher training(e.g. more training for teachers; teacher training for IE; effective teacher training);
- training for administrators (e.g. training for Upazilla education officer and asst. education officer);
- School Management Committee(SMC) member training;
- training of head teachers;
- special training on disability (e.g. training based on types of disability; training through sign language; special training for teaching disabled children; special training for teachers); and
- long-term training(e.g. minimum of five days, extended training; giving importance to IE in Certificate in Education(C in Ed) and Diploma in Education(Dip in Ed) training for teachers)

Other categories comprising professional development themes were: information about IE activity (e.g. information about IE activity through teacher training; activity for IE);knowledge of teacher (e.g. teacher knowledge of IE);and developing teacher quality (e.g. training for teacher quality; training for class instruction). All these categories of responses highlighted the need for professional development as a crucial factor for inclusive education.

Resources: According to respondents, there was a need for resources to include all students in the regular education system. A number of response categories indicated the need for resources which were broadly grouped into: material resources (317 responses), human resources (109 responses) and physical resources (142 responses).

The types of resources they referred to under material resources included: necessary equipment and materials, materials for teaching, equipment and teaching aids. This indicates most of the administrators' believe that necessary classroom material and teaching materials are crucial for inclusive education to be successful.

Skilled manpower (e.g. skilled school personnel), trained teachers (e.g. teachers with existing training and skills), recruitment of skilled teachers, one skilled teacher per school and skilled supervisors (e.g. district / sub-district level administrators were referred to as supervisors as they supervise school activities) are some human resource examples. This suggests administrators believe that skilled or trained people are essential for inclusive education to be successful. Even though administrators felt the need for training staff members, discussed earlier in this chapter under professional development), at the same time they expressed the need for the presence of skilled personnel who should be trained and experienced beforehand. Therefore, it appeared that when respondents referred to either skilled manpower or trained teachers, they actually meant the need for human resources.

Physical resources as a category mainly referred to infrastructure development that included: establishing ramps for schools (e.g. a ramp for easy access); sufficient classrooms (e.g. more classrooms at school); special classrooms (e.g. classrooms with special facilities); and physical facilities. Many responses such as creating an inclusive education environment, school facilities, facilities for children with disabilities, organisational development, technological development, and development of communication (e.g. developing roads, ensuring transportation facilities for children with disabilities to come to school from their houses and vice-versa) indicated the need for physical resources as an essential facilitator for inclusive education. The responses

under this category indicated that adequate physical resources should be in place in order to include students with disabilities into regular schools. Overall, responses relating to this category indicated administrators' belief that special classrooms and necessary physical facilities should be accessible at school for implementing IE.

Positive attitudes: Another major theme that emerged from administrators' responses was positive attitudes toward inclusive education. The responses representing this major category not only emphasised the need for developing a positive attitude, but also indicated a positive attitude as an outcome in fostering inclusive education. The kind of activities that referred to positive attitude included: awareness;media campaigns to create awareness; mass campaigns for awareness; motivating guardians; motivational speakers, workshops and seminars to create awareness in teachers and officers; advertisements; government propaganda; and publicity for awareness. The responses to this category showed that participants considered the creation of awareness for members of the school community was a vital facilitator for implementing inclusive education. Other important categories that related to positive attitude were attitudinal change, equal opportunity, curriculum and textbook change and enrolment. All these categories of responses together suggested the need for developing positive attitudes among members of the school community to ensure their support for implementing IE in Bangladesh.

Support: The final theme that emerged from administrators' responses was support. This theme captured 131 responses (27.8%). Types of responses included: administrative support to include SEN; teacher support; support through Upazilla (sub-district) Resource Centre; peer support; guardian support; support from School Management Committee; financial support; and special support. These responses

indicated the need for support from all involved in the school community to implement IE.

Factors identified by administrators as barriers to inclusive education

RQ 3: *What do administrators at different levels identify as barriers to inclusive education?*

The open-ended question in the survey questionnaire that sought to know what participants identify as the three most crucial barriers to successful implementation of inclusive education in Bangladesh was analysed in order to answer this research question. Thematic analysis was used. Answers were listed and then coded into key themes. The findings yielded four major themes: attitudinal barriers, lack of resources, lack of preparation, and socioeconomic barriers.

Attitudinal barriers: Attitudinal barriers related to: lack of attitudes toward inclusive education; lack of awareness; lack of equality approach; negative societal views; acceptance of children with disabilities; and lack of effort on the part of members of the school community. Two broad responses mainly referred to attitudinal barriers. These were: lack of awareness (232 responses) and non-acceptance of inclusive education (90 responses). Some of the most common responses under 'lack of awareness' were: lack of awareness of guardian; lack of awareness of school community members; and social awareness or otherwise. Some examples of non-acceptance of inclusive education were: insincere guardians/parents; non-acceptance of guardian; non-acceptance of other children; not enrolling children with a disability; and non-acceptance of teachers. Other important responses that referred to attitudinal

barriers were societal views (75 responses, 17.9%), school problems (71 responses, 16.9%), attitude (62 responses, 14.8%), lack of support, lack of equality approach, considering disability as a problem and adverse environment.

Lack of resources: Administrators identified various limitations in relation to resources as potential barriers to inclusive education. These included: lack of materials; lack of trained teachers; lack of assistive devices; lack of funding; communication problems; and lack of physical infrastructure. Lack of physical infrastructure (108 responses) and communication problems (96 responses) were most often cited as barriers. Those responses that reflected lack of physical infrastructure were: Lack of disability friendly classroom; lack of classrooms; lack of physical facilities; and lack of school buildings. Communication problems referred to transportation for children to and from school. Road problems also hindered easy access for children to regular schools.

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Inadequate preparation: According to respondents, there were barriers that limited their readiness to include all students and meet their diverse needs. These barriers comprised organisational weakness, lack of knowledge, and lack of training.

Socioeconomic barriers: Administrators identified some problems related to socioeconomic barriers to inclusive education. These were categorised as social barriers and poverty. Of these two categories, “poverty” was identified as a crucial barrier with 106 responses (25.3%).

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a critical discussion based on key findings of the current study in relation to Inclusive Education (IE) reform efforts in Bangladesh. It begins with an overview of the research followed by a discussion of the findings.

This research study aimed to identify what was or was not working in relation to IE reform in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi administrators' understandings of and their commitment to achieving government goals of IE reform in primary education were investigated.

This study employed mixed methods design and was conducted in two phases. Phase I adopted a semi- structured interview method to probe primary education administrators' understandings of IE including barriers and facilitators for government IE reform in Bangladesh. Administrators took part in individual interviews and provided their understandings of IE. Their commitment to inclusive education was further investigated in Phase 2. In order to measure commitment, administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education were investigated using a survey method. A two-part questionnaire consisting of background information and utilising the ADATIE scale was developed to collect data for Phase 2 of the study. A total of 735 administrators completed the survey questionnaire. Participants for both phases represented all three levels of primary education administration (e.g. central, district and school) in Bangladesh.

Key findings from Phase I revealed widespread confusion in understanding inclusive education reform, with many contradictory views among administrators. A

specific emphasis was placed on children with disabilities in Phase 1, which led to the development and framing of Phase 2. Phase 2key findings revealed that primary education administrators in Bangladesh had not yet formed strong opinions about inclusive education. Background variables such as work location, gender, special education qualification, duration of professional development training, administrative experience, teaching experience, highest level of education and perceived administrative support for implementation of inclusive education were found to be significant predictors of administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education.

The findings are discussed in relation to the research questions as well as the research literature and conceptual framework. The discussion section is organised under four broad headings: a) Understandings of inclusive education, b) Barriers to and facilitators of government inclusive education reform, c) Administrators' commitment to IE reform; and d) Key elements for strategic IE reform in Bangladesh.

Understandings of Inclusive Education (IE)

A key research question aimed to investigate administrators' understandings of inclusive education (IE) in Bangladesh. Findings demonstrated that IE was understood in the following ways: a) as international policy reform, and b) educating children with disabilities.

International policy reform: Administrators understood inclusive education (IE) in a number of different ways consistent with international policies and the government's reform agenda. For example, many administrators' views revealed that IE was primarily about bringing all children into school, as targeted by the government's reform agenda (e.g. compulsory mandate) to ensure 100% enrolment, and the right to

equal access to education for all children. Some participants' understanding of IE was based on international policies such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Education for All (EFA) and the Salamanca Statement. The participants generally agreed with the principle of equity, in that no students should be discriminated against or denied education. IE was described as 'equal access', 'no exclusion', 'participation', which indicated that primarily administrators' understandings regarding IE were consistent with basic principles of international IE policy. IE was understood not only as 'access to school' but 'success in quality education'. The need for 'creating proper' facilities to ensure quality education for all was emphasised. These views from study participants are consistent with the basic principles that underpin IE reform.

Administrators' understanding of IE as international policy reform is not surprising, given that Bangladesh is signatory to UN international declarations and treaties in relation to inclusive education and, as a consequence, there is targeted IE government reform frequently visible in the media in Bangladesh. Indeed, much understanding was connected to specific IE government reform targets supported by government funding. This came with responsibility and accountability for relevant administrators to address those targets and provide appropriate support.

Educating children with disabilities: Along with those understandings of inclusive education reform, there were strong negative views focused on disability in describing IE. Despite the fact government has placed a targeted emphasis on bringing *all* children into schools; administrators were particularly concerned about children with disabilities in a number of ways. Administrators' concerns were reflected in their negative views regarding the education of children with disabilities. The prevailing

culture in Bangladesh is a likely contributor in shaping administrators' views regarding children with disabilities.

Strong negative views regarding children with disabilities were evident. For example, these children were referred to as 'sick', or a 'lump of meat'. This emotive and strongly negative language reflected many of the broader cultural views of Bangladesh society towards children with disabilities. Bangladeshi administrators' language further indicated they understood disability from a medical perspective, that is focused on 'what is wrong' and deficient with the disabled person (Albert, 2004).This perspective pathologises their condition and such a medical model is a barrier to achieving the targets of IE reform in Bangladesh. The same viewpoint in Bangladesh was shared in other Bangladeshi literature (e.g. Ahsan & Burnip, 2007; Munir & Zaman, 2009). Administrators categorised children based on their deficits and difficulties (e.g. 'unable to do normal activities', and 'uneducable'). Consideration of associated challenges in *fixing* the problems of children with disabilities is likely to have influenced administrators' views regarding IE in respect to notions of 'eligibility' along with notions of ineligibility and exclusion. These deficit views are not consistent with social justice principles of equity (fairness and inclusion) and quality that underpin IE (OECD, 2012). Nor did administrators emphasise access to schooling on the basis of the 'rights' of all children to education, as documented in international policy documents for IE(UNESCO,1994).

Administrators' understandings of IE as educating children with disabilities indicate that rather than focusing on changing the culture of the school or the educational system to enable the success of these children, Bangladeshi primary education administrators' thinking was primarily concerned with the severity of students' needs. And the problems of those children that needs to change for successful

inclusive education. This suggests that educational administrators responsible for IE reform in Bangladesh held a special education view, consistent with Slee's (2001a) warning, that those working from traditional special education paradigms may use the language of inclusive education, but continue to hold assumptions about people with disabilities based on pathological defects and abnormality.

This argument is well supported by a number of research studies that reported that IE was commonly understood as inclusion of children with disabilities into regular classrooms (Ahmmed, 2013a; Ahsan et al., 2011, 2012; Mullick, 2013) in Bangladesh. For example, Ahsan and colleagues (2012) reported that most of their study participants, who were higher education institutional heads in Bangladesh, believed that inclusive education was meant to include children with disabilities, and their concerns were mainly focused on issues and challenges regarding inclusion of these children in regular schools.

Disability was not only regarded as a personal sickness, but impairment of the body was viewed as 'shameful', reflecting another dimension of negative views. Administrators' reported that children with disabilities were considered as a 'matter of degradation' and 'backward' in Bangladeshi society and the guardians (e.g. parents) of those children were ashamed to have them (children with disabilities) be seen in public and were reluctant about schooling for them. Consequently, due to associated social stigma, these children were hidden from society as well as from schools. The negative views of Bangladeshi society are consistent with the perspectives previously reported in the Indian context, where disability is seen as 'resulting from the wrath of fate' among other negative views (Singal, 2006a, p.245). Therefore, the social stigma associated

with disability in the Indian sub-continent may contribute to shaping administrators' views regarding education for children with disabilities in Bangladesh.

In the Indian context, disability is commonly viewed as a reprisal for past 'Karma' and punishment for sins of a previous life. Researchers in this region note that such views lead to the manifestation of pity towards those so-called sinners. This pity brings about generous acts of charity allowing society to continue to overlook its own role in creation of disabling barriers that people face (Singal, 2005). This also seems to be true for Bangladesh. Indeed, consistent with the broader negative social views regarding disability, Bangladeshi administrators believed they were justified in passing on their responsibility of educating children with disabilities to the social welfare department. Some expressions such as 'outside our management' and 'handed them over to social welfare' clearly indicated non-acceptance on the part of administrators to take responsibility for educating those children under their management. In addition, administrators' expression, such as 'do not belong', clearly indicated that children with disabilities are not considered part of the regular education system. This finding demonstrated that administrators could not come out of the shadows of segregation and special education and instead preferred to exclude children with disabilities from the regular education system.

Taken together, these two key ways of understanding IE (as both international and national policy reform for all and as educating children with disabilities) is unclear as to whether primary education administrators in Bangladesh truly believed in the values espoused in IE policy and reform, or whether they were merely repeating the espoused foci of the reform agenda and privately held more exclusionary views on educating children with disabilities. Bangladeshi administrators' understandings of IE

are consistent with research conducted in the Indian context, where mixed beliefs in relation to inclusive education at the initial stage of implementation were reported (Singal, 2005). Therefore, the findings that relate to administrators' understandings of IE posit challenges to find common ground which does not result in disability denial, but rather situates the concern about the education of children with disabilities within government efforts targeted to reforming the general education system (Singal, 2006a).

Barriers to and Facilitators of Government IE Reform

The other two key research questions of this study investigated barriers to and facilitators for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh. The barriers and facilitators identified by administrators are discussed under three headings: i) What is the IE reform agenda? ii) Who is responsible? and iii) What needs to be done?

What is the IE reform agenda?

One of the key barriers identified in this study was that administrators were not at all clear, beyond the generalised targets for IE reform, about expectations and details of the proposed operationalisation of the government's IE reform plan.

The absence of shared understanding of IE is likely to result in a multitude of practices in the school system (Glazzard, 2013). For example, although administrators viewed IE as international policy reform, their views reflected non-acceptance of children with disabilities (under the management of education and administrators) expressed strong exclusionary views regarding education of children with disabilities. These children were considered a 'problem' for the regular classroom and an alternative placement (such as 'special centres') was believed to be the appropriate place for them.

This lack of acceptance of children with disabilities is a barrier to inclusive education which is about "a philosophy of acceptance where all people are valued and treated with respect" (Carrington & Elkins, 2005, p.86).

Administrators' confusion and lack of understanding regarding IE reform seem to reflect the existing policy environment of Bangladesh, which is replete with many contradictions. It is useful to look at some of the policy documents related to IE in order to understand why Bangladeshi administrators expressed different views. For example, Bangladesh enacted the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) Act (MOPME, 1990) after signing the Education for All (EFA) declaration in 1990. Although this Act made primary education compulsory and free for all children, it discouraged education for children with intellectual disability and encouraged the segregation of those children from the regular school. Section 27.3.3 (e) of the Act noted the decision of a primary education officer: "…it is not desirable to enter a child in a primary education institute on account of it being mentally retarded"(MOPME,1990,p1) which implies that a child with mental retardation can be justifiably denied access to primary schools by administrators. It is likely that contradictory views may have resulted from this clause of the *CPE Act 1990* leading to their consideration of non-acceptance of children with disabilities within the regular education system as a valid act.

The enactment of *Bangladesh Persons with Disabilities Welfare (BPDW) Act 2001*proposed the legal right of children with special needs being mainstreamed in different spheres of life including education (Ministry of Social Welfare [MSW], 2001). Although the third section of this Act emphasised creation of opportunities for children with disabilities to study in mainstream schools, in section D (1) a segregated school setting was suggested for those children. The contradiction within this policy document

might be another reason that exacerbated administrators' contradictory views regarding IE.

In addition, this study revealed administrators' concern about 'lack of specification' of details of IE reform, and a lack of 'direction' or guidelines in relation to the implementation of such reform in Bangladesh. The 'National Education Policy (NEP) 2010' (MOE, 2010), often considered the key official document reflecting the commitment by the Bangladesh government to inclusive education (Ahmmed, 2013; Mullick, 2013; Malak et al., 2014), lacks a comprehensive approach to IE while addressing issues that relate to disadvantaged children. The policy document does not even provide definitive policy on how teachers could be supported for inclusive practices (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013). Therefore, the lack of clear messages regarding the IE reform agenda in government policy documents is the likely contributor of administrators' lack of clarity about understanding IE reform agenda as well as expectations of such reform.

The confusion in understanding IE reform is further exacerbated by the different policies being executed through different ministries. More specifically, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (being the mandated agency for ensuring primary and basic education of all children in Bangladesh) still uses the combined national policy for education prepared by the Ministry of Education. Herein lies another niche for conceptual confusion regarding IE among policy makers in Bangladesh. Further, the conceptual confusion among policy makers may have contributed to various views of IE held by administrators at different administrative levels.

The issue regarding conflicting policy has been raised by a number of IE researchers in Bangladesh who pointed out that contradictory statements and viewpoints regarding IE were endorsed in most of the policy documents, but that these policy documents varied based on their particular focus (Ahsan & Burnip, 2007; Ahsan & Mullick, 2013; Malak et al., 2014). It was argued that while these policies focused on some IE issues, they failed to address the goals recommended by the International Conference on Education (ICE) 2008(Ahsan & Mullick, 2013).

One outcome of such contradictory policies is that practitioners in this context may be unsure about the government's stance in relation to the IE reform agenda. This is particularly true in relation to the findings of the current study. While administrators here emphasised that all children should be schooled and agreed in principle that no student should be discriminated against or denied education, at the same time they identified children with disabilities as a 'special' category, and denied them access to regular schools.

The absence of a common language for inclusive education has been identified as a key barrier to successful implementation of IE (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow & Miles, 2009). A clear understanding of the nature and characteristics of reform along with its implementation is critical in making effective strategies for implementing reform agenda (Fullan, 2007). Consistent with suggestions from the research literature as well as the framework for IE reform conceptualised in this study, Bangladeshi administrators strongly suggested that building common understanding among members of the community regarding the principles that underpin goals of IE reform is essential in facilitating IE reform efforts. Administrators suggested social awareness strategies to address negative views as well as to promote acceptance and responsibility towards disadvantaged people plus training to support practitioners. This demonstrates that

consistent with previous research, these elements are key in influencing success in Bangladesh.

Who is responsible?

This study demonstrated barriers in relation to the responsibility of implementation of the IE reform agenda. This was evident in administrators' views regarding two key issues: a) education for children with disabilities were not considered the responsibility of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, which is mandated for education of all children in Bangladesh, and b) special centres run by the Ministry of Social Welfare were considered ideal places for children with disabilities and further, such alternative placement is viewed as inclusive education. These two issues are of great concern for the education authorities in Bangladesh, because of confusion in relation to the responsibility of education for children with disabilities.

Given that IE demands commitment to ensure quality education for all children within the general education system, Bangladeshi administrators were not in favour of including the responsibility of children with disabilities under the education sector and this reflected their exclusionary stance. Further, they preferred provisions under social welfare as suitable for educating children with disabilities. Therefore, findings from this study indicated that responsibility by different authorities is another barrier to IE reform efforts in Bangladesh. For IE reform to be successful, the national government needs to take action to ensure that one ministry and school system is responsible for the education of all children, because that will help to ensure a comprehensive and unified approach to education that is obligated to serve everyone equally(Sight Savers, 2011).

In this study, lack of local level autonomy was identified as another barrier to IE reform efforts. This finding revealed that a centralised administrative management system prevails in Bangladesh. It indicated that local administrators were powerless and without authority to make decisions to address local issues in regard to implementation of inclusive education. These administrators pointed out the difficulties involved in implementation of central policy related to “many rules regulation and complexities”. This indicated that managerial accountability process of a centralised management system limits the ability of the local administrators to meet the challenges and dilemmas involved in IE reform. As a consequence, school level administrators (e.g. head teachers/ principals) seemed to lack administrative and decision-making powers such as reducing class size, arranging teaching schedules, mobilising resources, recruiting additional teachers, providing in-service training and/or appropriate use of specially trained teachers. The lack of authority of school level administrators is therefore a key issue, negatively impacting implementation of IE in Bangladesh. Empowerment of school level administrators is necessary to organise successful implementation of IE, because when they are empowered, they can meet the local challenges involved in IE reform, as well as involving community in school development work and in reform activities (Mullick et al., 2012).

These findings are consistent with those of another study in the Bangladeshi context (Mullick et al., 2012) that identified the administrative control system and decision-making process as a key challenge for making schools more inclusive. Similarly, findings from another study conducted in Botswana identified that school heads who lacked administrative and decision-making powers (e.g. in reducing class sizes, arranging teaching schedules, providing in-service training or appropriate use of

specially trained teachers) were similarly frustrated due to inappropriate deployment (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012).

Administrators in this study expressed the need for empowerment at the local level for IE reform to be successful in Bangladesh. Engaging the whole administrative system was suggested as a key facilitator for the effectiveness of IE reform. More specifically, administrators suggested 'initiative' at a higher level to establish communication with the local level, 'ownership' at the upper level, and autonomy at local level administration to make decisions as well as addressing local needs. This finding emphasised the need for taking responsibility and involvement of the 'whole chain' of the administrative system for facilitating effective IE reform in Bangladesh.

What needs to be done?

This study identified some barriers in relation to the operationalisation of the IE reform agenda in Bangladesh. Administrators who were interviewed in this study were aware that inclusive education is a policy reform, but they had great difficulty in articulating what needed to be done to achieve the government's targeted reform in Bangladesh. When policy makers or managers do not know how to achieve their goals, it becomes difficult nigh impossible to implement at ground level. Some strategies in relation to what needs to be done for IE reform were identified by administrators. These findings are discussed under three broad headings: a) Collaborative and coordinated effort, b) Infrastructure to support IE reform, and c) Skill and knowledge for IE reform.

Collaborative and coordinated effort. This study revealed lack of capacity of the management system to support IE reform. Administrators were of the view that lack of collaborative and coordinated effort among organisational units, as well as among

personnel within and between different levels of administration were key barriers to effective management of IE reform. Administrators pointed out that there was lack of coordination among different levels of primary education administration in Bangladesh. In relation to inadequacies in governance of IE reform, administrators expressed 'weakness' in communication links and 'lack of coordination' between central and field level administrative set-up. This study revealed lack of collaboration and coordinated effort at different levels of administration as well as among members of the school community as a barrier to IE reform in Bangladesh. This finding indicated that a systemic approach to IE reform is missing in IE reform efforts in Bangladesh.

This finding is supplemented by suggested strategies for facilitating reform efforts. For example, administrators identified coordinated efforts of implementation and accountability for processes as key to improving the governance of IE reform. Findings indicated lack of collaboration was present, even among members of the organisation. Further, the respondents were of the view that collaboration among members of the organisation was critical to the success of IE reform. Collaborative partnerships are cornerstones of inclusive education community (Sands, Kozleski, & French, 2000). The finding supports inclusive education literature that identifies collaboration as the glue that brings teachers, teacher educators, parents, leaders, community groups and students together, for the better interests of education for all (Conrad & Brown, 2011; Worrell, 2008).

In addition, active involvement of all members of the school community, such as teachers, students, guardians, the school management committee (SMC), local community and local public representatives, was viewed as essential to achieve IE reform goals. The active involvement of school community members refers to the need for representation and participation of school community members in the reform

process. This finding is consistent with inclusive education literature that suggests that transformation of inclusive practices occurs through educators, policy makers and community engaging with each other and sharing their experiences (Dukes & Lamar-Dukes, 2009; Loreman et al., 2010; Rose, 2012; Villa & Thousand, 2012). This indicates that IE reform cannot be successful if school community members do not actively get involved. This lack of involvement in the reform process seems to be true for Bangladesh, indicating that a systemic approach to IE reform is possibly non-existent. The representation and participation of school community members might help all parties realise the importance of IE in regular schools, which in turn may contribute to acceptance of children with disabilities.

It emerged from this study that administrators perceived the implementation of inclusive education could be improved by running inclusive education awareness campaigns in communities. Awareness about the rights and possibilities of education is most likely to impact upon enrolment of children with disabilities in regular schools. It is likely that awareness campaigns which involve people experiencing disabilities and significant others may improve attitudes toward people experiencing disability as well as acceptability of inclusive education.

Key Elements for Strategic IE Reform in Bangladesh

Using the literature on educational change, a conceptual framework for IE reform (see figure 28) was developed for this study to better understand the issues influencing IE reform efforts in Bangladesh.

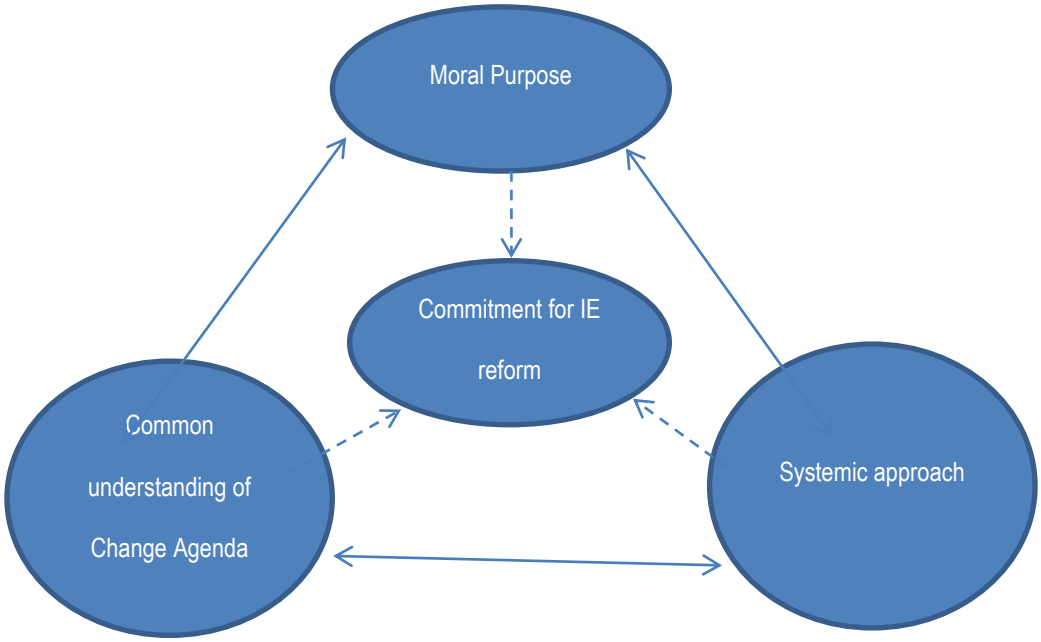

Figure 28: Conceptual framework for IE reform (outlined in Chapter 3)

Moral purpose, common understanding of the change agenda and systemic approach were identified as key to establishing commitment across an education system for IE and to determine reform strategy that focused on changes in IE reform. This conceptual framework for IE reform guided administrators' understandings of IE in this study. The findings and their analysis supported the conceptual framework and pinpointed more specific essential elements for IE reform under those three key features of the conceptual framework. For that reason, the conceptual framework has been expanded in light of findings from the current study. The expanded revised framework

best outlines key elements for strategic IE reform (see Figure 29) and is used to frame the following discussion.

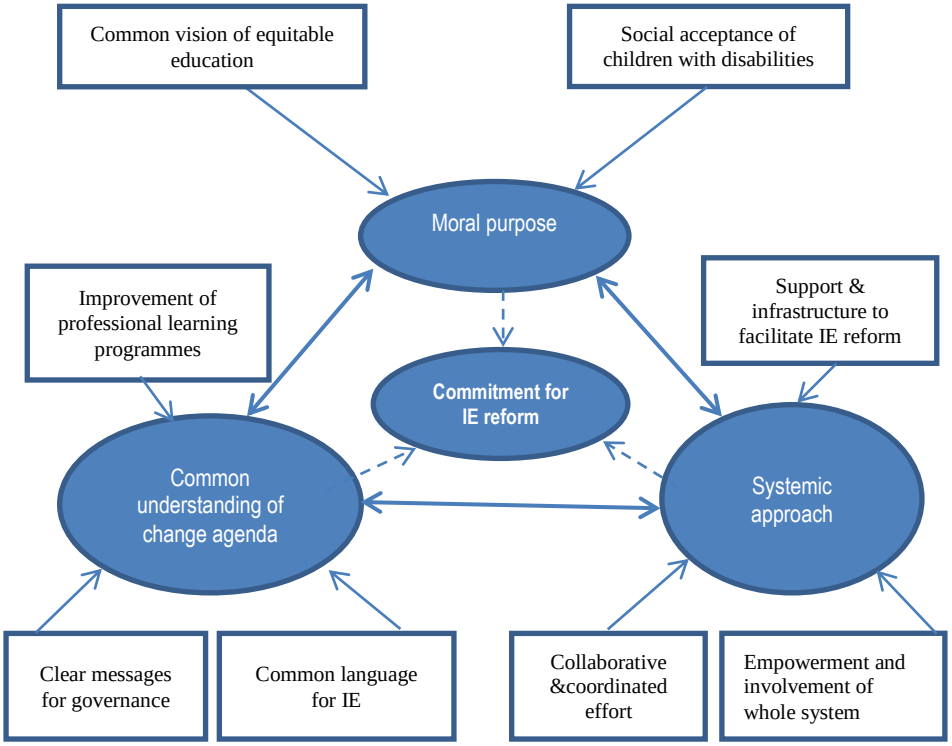

Figure 29: Expanded framework for IE reform

Common understanding of change agenda. Common understanding in educational change refers to shared understanding of members of the school community about what change means, and importantly, how to make it happen (Fullan, 2007). Thus, the common understanding of inclusive education is crucial for successful IE reform. This study found variations in views regarding IE due to lack of clear messages in policy documents as well as from the educational authority in Bangladesh. This study revealed contradictions and confusion in administrators' understanding of IE and they were not sure about the government's stance in relation to IE reform, because of different foci advanced by different policies. This finding clearly demonstrated the need for "reducing the ambiguity" (Donohu & Bornman, 2014, p.7) in existing IE policies

(by stating the goals more clearly as well as defining strategies on how to achieve them) to promote IE reform in Bangladesh.

Another important finding from administrators' understandings of IE was absence of a 'common language' in context, which is a critical barrier for IE reform to be successful. This confirmed the need for developing a common language of IE reform agenda in order to implement IE successfully. In order to develop a common language regarding the purposes and requirements of proposed IE reform, educational professionals need to be guided by some common understanding of equity based on a shared framework of values and principles and they need to accommodate different responses to diverse local needs (Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick, & West, 2012).

This study revealed that administrators did not have adequate knowledge regarding the government's IE reform agenda and were not aware of what was expected from them. For any reform to be successful, knowledge of meaning of change in terms of what it is and what needs to be done is highly recommended for stakeholders (Fullan, 2007). Consistent with this view, administrators in this study suggested a need for additional training and better preparation for administrators as well as for teachers in Bangladesh. Hence, the finding suggests that ensuring adequate knowledge for educators and leaders (i.e. more training and improving of professional learning programmes) is crucial to promoting common understanding of IE reform agenda in context.

Systemic approach. A systemic approach to reform refers to exploring and understanding a whole system, rather than to act on part of a system in isolation and from the broader context. Inclusive education like any other educational reform effort

requires systemic processes for transforming practices of schooling that involve fundamental change in organisational structures and roles and responsibilities of key players in the system (Pyhältö et al., 2011). Therefore, the concept of system thinking, devised by Senge (1990) and further expanded by Fullan (2005), is vital for IE reform to be successful.

This study identified some barriers in relation to a systemic approach to IE reform efforts in Bangladesh. Administrators' views regarding IE revealed "weakness" in communication links and "lack of collaboration" between administrative levels. This study revealed there was no coordinated effort among administrators at various levels as well as among members of the school community. For IE reform to be successful, collaboration and coordinated effort as well as involvement of all stakeholders were highly recommended strategies as revealed by the participants and the literature reviewed for this study (Conrad & Brown, 2011; Dukes & Lumer-Dukes, 2009; Loreman et al., 2010; Rose, 2012; Villa & Thousand, 2012; Worrell, 2008). The findings thus confirm that a systemic approach is critical for IE reform to be successful. It implies that school community members need to get involved in the reform process in a collaborative and coordinated way for IE reform to succeed in Bangladesh.

In addition, this study revealed that managerial accountability of the centralised management system limited local administrators' ability to meet local challenges and dilemmas involved in IE reform efforts in Bangladesh. The findings indicated the need for empowerment at local level administration to organise IE reform efforts effectively. With sufficient power, local authorities as "Place shapers" can ensure greater coordinated local action in line with an equity agenda, and can challenge locally embedded patterns of inequity (Ainscow et al., 2012). Hence, the finding of the current

study suggested the need for focusing on the capacity of various levels of administration to work together in implementing inclusive education. Administrators suggested a 'whole approach' and emphasised the need for empowerment and involvement of the 'whole chain' in the administrative system. This suggestion concurs with Fullan's(2003) argument for "Tri-level reform" that focuses on total system transformation.

The administrators identified that lack of financial and practical resources as well as lack of preparation for implementing IE as key issues limiting the capacity of the management system in IE reform efforts. This finding suggested the need for adequate support and infrastructure to facilitate management systems for effective implementation of IE in Bangladesh.

Moral purpose. Moral purpose is the fundamental guiding principal that unites an educational organisation. This study revealed that administrators held confused views regarding inclusive education with many contradictory views. While some views regarding IE were consistent with international policies, again they had strong negative understandings of IE focused on disability. Inherent in this finding, it is clear that values regarding IE underpin both inclusionary and exclusionary policies and practices (Ainscow et al., 2006a).Along with this finding, this study revealed social non-acceptance of children with disabilities as a major issue impacting administrators' views regarding IE. These findings are consistent with the literature on inclusive education that suggests that IE is still more about attitudes, and therefore inclusive beliefs and values should underpin the whole school culture because they determine the policies and practice to be put into place (Carrol-Lind & Rees, 2009 cited in Chireshe, 2013). Hence, this study confirms serious issues of social acceptance of children with disabilities among educational administrators that reflect Bangladeshi general society.

For IE reform efforts to be successful, it is crucial that members of the school community collaborate and share a common purpose in providing quality education for 'all' children including those with disabilities.

It is clear that the principles that underpin IE policy and thus the reform strategy are not shared by all members of the Bangladeshi community. The lack of acceptance of children with disabilities among the community, evident from administrators' expressed views, was confirmed by the findings in Phase 2 which completes the model regarding commitment to IE reform.

Administrators' Commitment to IE Reform

A major purpose of the present study was to examine administrators' commitment to the IE government reform in Bangladesh. Commitment is described quite broadly in the literature. In this study commitment was described as attitudes toward inclusive education. Twelve research questions (RQ4-15) of this study aimed to understand administrators' commitment by investigating their attitudes toward inclusive education and attitudes to background variables. A survey was conducted. The ADATIE scale was developed to measure participants' attitudes in this study. This discussion is divided into two parts: a) administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education, and b) the relationship between administrators' attitudes toward IE and demographic variables of administrators.

Administrators' attitudes toward IE

The findings revealed that the overall mean obtained on the ADATIE scale was 55.54. The total score on this scale can range from 15 to 90. Considering 55 as very close to the mid score (on ADATIE), administrators' attitudes toward inclusive

education was slightly positive, but very close to midpoint. It appears that primary education administrators in Bangladesh had not yet formed any firm opinions either in favour or against the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools. This finding confirmed Phase 1 results that revealed a specific emphasis by administrators' on children with disabilities in ways that were representative of an exclusionary stance. This finding is consistent with that of a recent study, reporting that Bangladeshi primary school teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education is close to neutral (Ahmmed, 2013a). Therefore, the finding from this study, combined with Ahmmed's (2013a) finding, indicate that administrators and educators in Bangladesh are still hesitant to include children with disabilities into regular classrooms. This finding is not surprising, considering that inclusive education has been implemented for over four decades in western counties such as the USA, Canada, and the UK. Moreover, unlike Bangladesh, those countries have strong policy support from their respective governments, and there are much better provisions for resources and trained personnel to support the implementation of inclusive education in these countries.

An examination of administrators' mean attitude scores on the two factors of ADATIE revealed that participating administrators demonstrated a higher degree of attitude on Factor 1 (Acceptance of children with disabilities) than they did on factor 2(Resources for IE). This finding implies that administrators held less favourable attitudes toward inclusive education due to their concern about availability of resources for IE. This finding is consistent with qualitative data from interviews in Phase 1 and from open-ended survey responses in Phase 2, where administrators identified the need for resources for IE as critical to making inclusive education happen in Bangladesh. The wide range of resources that were considered essential include: specialised resource persons; school infrastructure; additional teachers; trained teachers; and special facilities

for children with disabilities. Availability of resources is considered a crucial requisite for successful implementation of inclusive education which influences educators' attitudes toward inclusive practices (Burstein et al., 2004; Cook et al.,1999). This was also found to be true in the present study.

If resources required for effective inclusive education are not imminent, student outcomes and teachers' beliefs,and practices may change (Burstein et al., 2004).Burstein and colleagues (2004) suggested sufficient resources must be provided for classroom support, ongoing staff development, and collaborative planning. The finding in the present study recognised the importance and impact of resources for inclusive practices regarding administrators' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with disabilities. In line with administrators and policy makers in a number of countries (e.g. Australia, Ghana, India, Lebanon, South Africa), primary education administrators in Bangladesh view the implementation of inclusive education as a resource issue (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Bailey & du Plessis,1998; Khochen & Radford, 2012; Pather & Nxumalo,2013; Sharma, 2001).

In this study, participants from three different levels of primary education administration included: school district and central levels. An investigation of administrators' mean attitude scores for these three groups revealed that in general, participants were neither positive nor negative toward inclusion of children with disabilities, irrespective of their level in administration. This finding echoed the results for combined groups, indicating that level of administration did not impact the attitudes of administrators. However, the findings identified that the issue of resources impacted the attitudes of administrators, depending on their level of work. A comparison of different level administrators' attitude scores on ADATIE and its two factors identified that school level administrators were the most positive compared to district level and

DPE (central level) administrators on Factor 2, which dealt with resources for IE. This can be explained by the assumption that school level administrators are in a position to experience the reality, including students in schools, and therefore, through practice, they have developed positive opinions regarding inclusive education. This has also been recognised by researchers. For example, Ainscow viewed that educators know more than what they used to know and through practice schools find out what would work for them (2003, cited in Sharma & Chow, 2008). It is likely, as school level administrators in Bangladesh are involved in implementing inclusive education at schools following government's instruction, that their attitudes toward inclusive education have become positive.

A further examination of the mean scores on each item on the ADATIE scale for three groups of participants revealed that administrators at all three levels were greatly positive about including children with disabilities in the regular classroom with modifications to teaching (mean score of school level=5.02, mean score of district level=4.84, mean score of DPE=4.48). It was assumed that like administrators and policy makers in other countries, such as Australia, Cyprus and India (Forlin et al.,2013; Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012; Sharma, 2001), Bangladeshi administrators see implementation of IE as a teaching modification issue.

In contrast, irrespective of their level of administration, participants were negative about including children with disabilities because they did not believe that "teachers were skilled" enough to teach students with disabilities (mean score of school level=3.00, mean score of district level=2.45, and mean score of DPE=2.36). In the Bangladesh context, the reason for this finding may be explained as an impact of administrators' belief that children with disabilities are a 'specialised category' that

requires teachers' skill and administrative support to be included in regular classrooms. This finding is well supported by the findings from Phase 1 data, revealing that 'trained teachers' would be necessary to address special needs of children with disabilities. The finding indicated that administrators in Bangladesh note that a lack of suitably trained teachers is a major challenge to address diverse student needs in the regular classroom. This finding seemed to be consistent with other developing countries, as Sharma and colleagues (2013) argued in a review article, that lack of suitably trained teachers must be the priority item for inclusive education in the agenda of many developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Administrators from all three levels were negative about including children with disabilities because they believed that schools would not have enough support from administration to include them (mean score of school level=2.65, mean score of district level=2.53, and mean score of DPE=2.74). This finding indicated that participants were very much concerned about lack of support mechanisms for implementation of inclusive education. In the context of Bangladesh, this support could mean that teachers were receiving support from administrators, colleagues and parents of children with or without disabilities, and being provided with required resources, such as teaching materials, to include students with disabilities in their classroom. The finding is in line with a recent research study conducted in Bangladesh (Ahmmed, 2012) that found perceived school support for inclusive teaching practices as a significant variable in relation to teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. Ahmmed (2012) argued that stakeholders interested in implementing IE reform should ensure that teachers receive adequate support to teach students with disabilities. This argument may be useful to explain the finding of the present study in relation to school support. The researcher made an educated guess that the negative attitudes of administrators in relation to school

support may be the outcome of their concern about non-availability of support to teachers for inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms.

The finding from the present study is consistent with an international study carried out by Mukhopadhyay and associates (2012) in Botswana. The participants of the study in Botswana were significantly concerned about lack of support and non-availability of resources in primary schools. Availability of support was found to be related to administrators' attitudes both in developed and developing countries (Khochen & Radford, 2012; Mulholland, 2011; Sharma & Chow, 2008; Stainback et al., 1988). Therefore, this finding of the study has confirmed the importance of providing support for successful implementation of inclusive education in schools.

Relationship between administrators' attitudes toward IE and demographic variables

In the present study an attempt was made to determine which background variables were significantly related to administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. The results revealed that administrators' work location, gender, special education qualification, duration of professional development training, administrative experience, teaching experience, highest level of education, and perceived administrative support for implementation of inclusive education were significant predictors.

Work location. Administrators' work setting/ location emerged as a significant predictor of administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. Rural administrators were found to be more willing to include children with disabilities than their urban counterparts. In this regard, they were particularly positive on Factor 1 which dealt with

acceptance of children with disabilities. This finding can be explained by the fact that in Bangladesh there are some special schools in urban settings such as in district towns. As a result, participating administrators in urban areas may consider that special schools are responsible for including children with disabilities. It appeared that due to this reason administrators working in urban settings were less willing to accept children with disabilities in regular settings. On the other hand, rural administrators did not identify any alternative arrangements for children with disabilities. As a result, not seeing any alternatives they possibly complied with the government's call to include all children on the basis of rights, resulting in their willingness to accept children with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Gender. The findings revealed gender was a significant predictor of administrators' attitudes toward inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms. Male administrators were found to be more willing about implementing IE than their female counterparts. In contrast to the finding of this study, Avramidis and Norwitch (2002) reported from a meta-analysis that females tend to be more affirmative and tolerant towards inclusive education than their male colleagues. In line with an international finding, recently conducted research (Ahsan et al., 2012a) in Bangladesh found female participants had more positive attitudes toward IE than their male counterparts. The explanation behind this finding regarding gender of Ahsan and colleagues'(2012) study was connected to some sociocultural contextual issues hidden in South Asian societies. According to researchers, first and foremost, females are 'motherly' which might influence their willingness to accept IE and second, the concept of IE itself seemed to be attractive to women as this promotes the importance of gender equity. Taken into consideration the contextual explanation of the impact of gender, the finding of this study needs to be considered carefully. This warrants the need for further

investigation of the issue. However, male administrators in the present study appeared to have views toward inclusive education, consistent with Johnson's (2011) study, which found that male elementary school principals concurred with IE practices to a greater degree than their female counterparts.

Special education qualification. A number of studies that examined the relationship between a special education qualification and administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education found this variable to be significantly related to their attitudes (e.g. Abernathy, 2012; Praisner, 2003; Sar et al., 2013). For example, Abernathy (2012) reported that administrators who received credit hours in special education during their college preparation exhibited more positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Similarly, Praisner (2003) reported special education credits were highly correlated to positive attitudes toward inclusive education. In the current study, although no such significant effect of special education qualification was observed in relation to the attitudes of district level and DPE (central level) administrators, significant results were evident for school level administrators. It was found that school level administrators with a special education qualification were significantly more positive towards inclusive education than administrators without special education qualifications. It is noteworthy here that although administrators reported having special education qualifications, none of them could specify the name of the degree or course relative to special education. This demographic data prompted the assumption that in-service training related to inclusive education might be regarded as a special education qualification by respondents. Taking into account such an assumption, it appeared that the inclusive education training that school administrators received (MOPME, 2011) may have provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge and enhanced their ability to include children with disabilities in their schools. Thus, the trained school

administrators may have been better informed about the availability of additional funding and local resources which their schools could use to include children with disabilities into their school. This may have consequently impacted their willingness to include children with disabilities in their schools.

From another point of view, the significant impact of special education qualification for school level administrators may be explained by the dual role played by them in Bangladesh, both as principal and teacher. Due to the impact of departmental training for inclusive education, these school level administrators as teachers might develop positive attitudes toward inclusive education, as well as feel confident to educate children with disabilities in the regular classroom. This assumption is in line with previous research studies that reported a relationship between special education training and teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. For example, Sharma, Ee and Desai (2003) found a positive correlation between training in special education and confidence in teaching students with disabilities. They argued that such training not only has a positive impact upon teacher's attitudes but it increases their confidence in teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Knowledge regarding IE. While administrators knowledge regarding IE policy was not found to be correlated with their attitudes, interestingly administrators' knowledge regarding priority in IE policy and resources and support needed for IE were found to be significant predictors in this study. It was found that those administrators who indicated having 'good' or 'very good' knowledge of IE policy were significantly more positive towards inclusive education than those who had 'little' or 'no' knowledge. Comparison of attitude scores of the three groups revealed that the impact was significant at school level. Similarly, the results revealed that administrators who had

‘good’ or ‘very good’ knowledge of resources and support were more willing to implement IE than those who had ‘little’ or no such knowledge. In particular, the impact was significant at school level. In the context of Bangladesh, the findings suggest that school level administrators with knowledge of priorities and requirements for IE, may have responded more positively based on their personal experiences and prior knowledge and skills when working with students with disabilities. This finding is consistent with one of the lessons of educational change literature that suggests that understanding change is vital for any reform effort to be successful (Fullan, 2007).

Findings revealed that the duration of professional development (PD) training was a significant predictor of administrators’ attitudes toward inclusive education. It was observed that five days’ training had a higher, positive impact in comparison to less than five days training. This finding is consistent with the general assumption that longer duration of training will have a more positive impact.

Administrative experience. In this study administrative experience emerged as a significant predictor of administrators’ attitudes toward including children with disabilities. Administrators with 20 or longer experience were more positive toward inclusive education than those with 11 to 20 years of administrative experience. This finding is contradictory with the findings of a study that reported that administrators with more administrative experience were less supportive of inclusive education (Avissar et al., 2003). Many previous studies did not find any significant impact of administrative experience on administrators’ attitudes toward inclusive education (Cruzerio & Morgan, 2006; Mthethwa, 2008; Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Ramirez, 2006; Smith, 2011). Although, findings of the present study were found to be consistent with a recent study (Shomar, 2012) conducted in the USA that reported that principals’

experience was positively related to their attitudes, but no clear reason was reported for such a relationship. It is difficult to explain this result as to why administrators with more administrative experience in Bangladesh were more positive towards inclusive education. A more in-depth study needs to be conducted to explore the issue further.

Teaching experience. Similar to administrative experience, teaching experience was found to be significantly correlated to administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education. More specifically, administrators with 20 or more years of teaching experience were more willing to implement inclusive education than those having less than 20 years of teaching experience. In particular, teaching experience had a significant impact on school level administrators' attitudes. In opposition to the findings of the present study, Sharma and Chow (2008) found that primary school administrators with less teaching experience were more positive towards integration than those with more teaching experience. The researchers explained their finding, guessing that administrators with less teaching experience were recent graduates, and probably through training they become informed about various aspects of educating students with disabilities than those with more experience. However, in the context of Bangladesh, it is assumed that school level administrators with more teaching experience may have gained experience, knowledge and skills when working with students with disabilities. This experience may have contributed to developing a positive attitude about including those children in regular classrooms. However, this finding differs from the studies conducted by Bailey and du Plessis (1997), Ngwokabuenui (2013), Ramirez, (2006), and Smith (2011) who suggested that teaching experience has no impact on school administrators' attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities into regular schools. Therefore, additional research is needed to understand this finding from the current study.

Highest level of education. In this study administrators' highest level of education was found to be a significant predictor of administrators' attitudes toward inclusion of children with disabilities. This study found that administrators with lower educational qualifications (HSC or less) were significantly more positive than administrators with higher educational qualifications (Bachelor or Masters degree). This finding resonates with a study conducted on Bangladeshi teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of children with disabilities (Ahmmed et al., 2012). Ahmmed and colleagues (2012) reported that teachers with a Masters degree or above qualification have less positive attitudes in comparison to teachers with a Bachelor degree or lower qualification. In Bangladesh, no information is being covered about inclusive education in higher education courses under Universities. They argued that attitudes of respondents in their study reflected lack of knowledge of teaching in inclusive classrooms. A similar explanation may be appropriate for less positive attitudes of administrators' with higher educational qualifications in this study. It could even be other reasons which could not be identified in this study. A more in-depth study examining the curriculum of different professional degrees in education may shed better light on this issue.

Administrative support. Perceived administrative support for implementation of inclusive education was found to be a significant predictor of attitudes toward inclusion of children with disabilities. It was found that those administrators who perceived there was support for implementing inclusive education tended to have more positive attitudes than those who did not see such support from administration. Similarly administrators who indicated that they tend to provide support for including children into regular schools were found more willing to implement inclusive education

than those who did not provide such support. Such results regarding perceived support were found to be stronger and significant in the case of school level administrators.

These findings from the present study confirm previous research suggesting that administrators' perceived support in relation to including children with disabilities into regular classrooms had strong association with their attitudes toward inclusive education (Khochen & Radford, 2012; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Mulholland, 2011; Sharma & Chow, 2008). For example, Sharma and Chow (2008) found that availability of learning support teams or remedial teachers in schools had a positive correlation with administrators' attitudes toward integration. Such findings in relation to perceived support indicate the importance of administrative support for better implementation of inclusive education.

Research studies indicated administrators' concerns in relation to making provision of required support for including students with disabilities in regular settings, as Khochen and Radford (2012) reported that even when administrators held positive attitudes toward inclusive education, they want to be better supported in terms of funding, staffing and training. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2004) stated that support from school administration would impact positively on the attitudes of teachers, students and students' parents in the school community. The findings of this study regarding perceived support of administrators echo those of previous studies in regard to the need for providing support from administration, which may lead to engaging members of the school community to act positively toward inclusive education.

In sum, this study revealed that primary education administrators' in Bangladesh have a varied understanding of inclusive education being influenced by existing policies

pertaining to inclusive education, as well as by sociocultural attitudes toward disabilities. It was found they had not formed any firm opinions either in favour or against the implementation of inclusive education. Variables such as administrators' work location, gender, special education qualification, duration of professional development training, administrative experience, teaching experience, highest level of education, and perceived administrative support for implementation of inclusive education had significant impacts on administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education.

The findings and analysis of Bangladeshi administrators' views regarding IE as well as their attitudes toward IE have been shown to reflect similar features to those outlined in the literature. There are serious implications of these findings for IE reform in Bangladesh, which are discussed in Chapter seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE WAY FORWARD

The final chapter discusses the implications of the findings of this study for government inclusive education (IE) reform and makes recommendations for moving the IE reform agenda forward in Bangladesh. In light of the limitations of the study, the study's contribution to knowledge is outlined along with directions for future research.

Implications of Findings and Recommendations

The government of Bangladesh adopted IE policy and has begun implementing IE reform. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is clearly evident that the current IE reform agenda in Bangladesh has not addressed key change features that strategise the reform agenda and what needs to be done. Many of the inadequacies of IE reform can be explained by the conceptual model that underpins this study. A number of practical implications have emerged for effective IE reform in Bangladesh. These implications are discussed under the headings for key elements of strategic IE reform: a) Common understanding of change agenda, b) Systemic approach, and c) Moral purpose.

Common understanding of change agenda: It is clear that the government of Bangladesh needs to address the lack of common understanding in its IE reform initiatives by providing clear messages about the reform agenda, establishing a common language for IE across the educational administration, and through the provision of professional development training. It suggests that "clear policy mandates" along with execution of those mandates, will be the most effective ways by which IE reform can be

effected in Bangladesh (Donohue & Bonman, 2014,p.7). There needs to be a collaborative and coordinated effort managed by government and supported by resources and infrastructure that clearly articulates the IE strategy with specific goals, accountability and responsibility. The strategic plan must be given high priority, and informed by ongoing and regular education, which includes monitoring of leadership progress towards achieving targets. In addition, government needs to have clear messages for administrators: that it is their responsibility to be accountable to supporting IE at different levels of the system.

The findings indicated the need for adequate knowledge for leaders regarding government IE reform policy. Educational change literature strongly emphasised the need for understanding the meaning of change and what needs to be done (Fullan, 2007). Educational authorities in Bangladesh need to make sure that leaders at different administrative levels understand government IE reform policies very well. The leaders of the system need to know what is required for IE reform including what resources are available for its implementation. Existing literature on IE highlighted that to become effective inclusive school leaders, principals required skills such as conflict resolution, collaborative problem solving, reflective and data gathering skills (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002; Sharma & Desai, 2008). In order to ensure that school leaders are provided with adequate knowledge and skills for effective implementation of inclusive education, the existing professional learning programmes for educational administration need to be developed to take into account challenges and possibilities for IE reform.

One of the key requirements for developing professional learning programmes is to revise the curriculum. Accordingly, existing professional learning programmes for

administrators need to be examined for further development. The review of the current training programmes and their modification require concerted efforts within educational administration to ensure administrators are receiving appropriate training and experience in special education and inclusive education. Educational administration in Bangladesh needs to identify specific training content that should be included in professional learning programmes. Some recently conducted studies in Bangladesh have identified areas for improvement such as curriculum change, knowledge of assessment techniques, and instructional techniques (Ahsan et al., 2011). The findings of the present study indicated some other components such as knowledge of IE policy, knowledge of special education, and knowledge of change that need to be included in the professional learning programmes. Educational administration in Bangladesh may include these components in revising the curriculum for professional learning programmes for administrators.

In order to develop training programmes for principals so they are able to implement successful programmes for all students in their school, Sharma and Desai (2008) suggested a number of approaches that include: concerted efforts to review the current training programme and modify them; training in aspects of special/inclusive education need to be infused and made integral to the principal's regular training programme and course offerings in the educational administration; arranging short intensive workshops as an immediate measure; and providing opportunities to observe model programmes in well-established inclusive schools as well as providing opportunities for interaction with students with disabilities and their parents. The researchers believed that such forms of training would enable administrators to identify training needs by themselves and thereby make the training contextually relevant. These approaches may also be useful for improving administrators' professional learning

programmes in Bangladesh. In addition, multiple components of professional development, such as training, implementation guides, classroom materials, and instructional coaching and performance feedback for trainees (Fox, Hemmeter, Snyder, Binder, & Clarke, 2011), need to be in place for professional learning programmes to be effective in Bangladesh.

Moreover, this study has shown that administrators who have a special education qualification had more positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Training, knowledge and credit hours in special education and inclusion were found to correlate with administrators' attitudes positively in inclusive education literature. Consequently, it is recommended that leaders should receive education and training about special education at all levels of administration.

The Training Division of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) in collaboration with regional in-service trainers (e.g. URC instructors, education officers) should organise continuous professional development opportunities for both educators and leaders about IE strategies for learners with diverse needs.

Systemic approach: For IE reform to be successful in Bangladesh, there needs to be a systemic approach that involves: support and infrastructure to facilitate IE reform; collaborative and coordinated effort; and empowerment and involvement of the whole system.

A major concern expressed by administrators at all levels in this study was the lack of human and material resources to support the implementation of the IE reform initiative. Provisions of resources and infrastructure (e.g. Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Khochen & Radford, 2012; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012) are vital for such implementation. Educational authorities charged with the

responsibility of implementing inclusive education in Bangladesh should take note of this finding. They should recognise that adequate support in the form of trained teachers, skilled manpower, adequate funding, adequate classrooms and teaching materials, appropriate infrastructural facilities at school and supportive educational administration is an essential requirement for implementing IE.

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) together with its regional offices should establish a system to provide adequate resources (both in terms of financial and human), equipment, and teaching materials for learners with diverse learning needs. The DPE should establish regional resource centres in Bangladesh and staff should provide advice to parents, local level administrators, educators, and others who are in need of information regarding regulations and support provision for children with disabilities and provide appropriate training to stakeholders. As a first step, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education should collaborate with the Ministry of Social Welfare to establish resource centres at district level. More specifically, special schools run by the Ministry of Social Welfare may be transformed into resource centres at district level. Then, gradually the existing Upazilla (sub-district) resource centres run by the DPE may be upgraded. In consultation with its associated organisation, the DPE should determine other strategies to provide necessary resources (e.g. human, financial and material) in a strategic way to meet the requirements of the whole system.

Findings indicated that lack of support from the education system was another important concern expressed by administrators in this study. For IE reform to be successful, leaders at all administrative levels need to be well supported from every corner of the education system. This support includes the availability of financial and material resources, human and instructional resources, and cooperation from the school

community (Ahmmed, 2013). Educational authorities in Bangladesh may take various strategies to ensure support for administrators. One of the strategies could be ensuring active involvement of stakeholders from the system as well as from the community to ensure support for IE reform.

Active involvement of all stakeholders and positive interaction between multiple systems are vital for successful implementation of inclusive education (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012). Existing provisions in the system including school management committees comprising representatives from teachers, parents and the local community are ineffective to ensure participation of the community and non-supportive of implementing inclusive education in Bangladesh (Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014). This situation demands attention by the educational authorities in Bangladesh. They need to develop strategies to reactivate existing provisions of the system to ensure more participation from members of the community including associated professionals (e.g. health professionals, teacher educators), parents, and community leaders through making necessary decisions and providing support for implementation of IE at school level.

Active participation by all would involve collaborative engagement, which would help in ensuring various supports for the system such as financial support, teacher support, support through Upazilla (sub-district) resource centres, peer support, guardian support, and support from school management committees. Such support may increase the levels of enrolment of children with disabilities without the adverse effects of social stigma encountered by those children (Ahmmed & Mullick, 2014). This is in line with inclusive education literature that views involvement of the school community

as one of the pillars of support for IE (Loreman, 2007), and collaboration between community and school as one of the key levers for change (Ainscow, 2005).

Lack of collaboration and coordinated effort was identified as a crucial barrier to IE reform efforts in Bangladesh. Findings here implicate the need for collaborative effort for IE reform because it allows members to identify "innovative solutions to the unique challenges in schools" and ensures incorporation of "diverse perspectives" (Loreman et al., 2010, p.87). To be successful, inclusive education reform requires not only collaboration among organisational units, but also collaborative interactions among all members involved in the school community. Moreover, the school community needs to see itself as part of a whole system which is moving towards inclusive education, and they need to think systematically to understand the interdependence and inter-relationships of their systems and beyond for effective educational change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

A systematic monitoring of IE reform progress is crucial for effective implementation. When celebrating the government's commitment to inclusive education advanced by UNESCO, the challenge to implement such educational innovation lies not entirely with policy and funding, but also with stakeholders' preparedness and leaders' engagement. Findings of this study indicated a continued need to review reform initiatives and responses to those initiatives that address inclusive education. It is therefore imperative to develop a broad follow-up system and quality indicators in order to monitor changes regarding IE reform within the system. These indicators need to show the nature, extent and processes of inclusive and exclusionary processes within the regular education system. Educational authorities in Bangladesh need to develop appropriate strategies for monitoring the progress of leaders against the target set by

indicators developed for the coordinated effort. The commitment of leaders needs to be monitored, whether they are continuous with commitment or not. If they are not, factors that will enhance their commitment need to be identified.

Moral purpose: Most importantly,the findings here have implications for moral purpose, which unites an educational organisation with a common vision of having an equitable system where all students learn and are enabled to become positive and active members of the community (Fullan, 2003). One of the issues raised was that administrators negative views regarding disability may be influenced by the beliefs and views commonly held by the broader community. It will therefore be important for the government's reform strategy to include a focus to address the understandings held by the general public regarding IE and, in particular, the lack of acceptance and respect for people with disabilities, and to therefore prioritise this reform. The government's reform strategy will need to include collaboration with non-government organisations, development partners and the media. It will need to make clear that education for children with disabilities is uniquely placed within the regular education system, and it should not be considered as being separate from that system. Government needs to provide appropriate direction based on IE values so that policy makers, practitioners and members of the community can work on the same page, with the same vision to ensure quality education for all children in Bangladesh. If the IE reform efforts are to succeed in Bangladesh, the community must believe in the policy with a common vision of equitable education and accept children with disabilities. In order to achieve that, government can increase awareness of the community through various programmes so that the school becomes an extension of an equitable society.

The overall findings of this study contributed to knowledge about how primary education administrators understand inclusive education (IE) and how committed they

are in implementing IE policy in Bangladesh. Although the results of this study are focused on Bangladesh, the recommendations of this study may be useful for other developing countries facing similar challenges to IE reform.

Limitations

The findings of this study and resulting recommendations need to be understood in light of a number of limitations.

The first limitation regards participants in this study. They included administrators working at three different levels of the system (e.g. central, district and school). They did not includeteacher educators orthose at ministry and policy levels, and therefore, caution is warranted in regard to groups of administrators or educators. In addition, not all levels of central administration were represented in the sample of central administrators. For example, administrators from the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education may have differing perceptions and be more involved in the legal issues of inclusive education. Policy makers and administrators from ministry, the highest administration, are detached from day-to-day educational decisions and may have unique perceptions relating to barriers to inclusive education.

The second limitation is related to the location of the study. In Phase 2 a survey was conducted in two districts out of a total of sixty-four districts in Bangladesh. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be generalised to other districts of Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, school districts have varying levels of implementation regarding IE, differing levels of funding available for inclusive practices and different techniques for including children with diverse needs. In addition, interpretations and mandates may differ from district to district in Bangladesh. There remains a place for

investigating administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in other districts of Bangladesh.

It is possible that cultural, linguistic and / or religious backgrounds of administrators may have influenced their responses on one or more items of the survey. Therefore, future research is needed to explore the effects of such variables on administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education.

Lastly, the instrument applied in Phase 2 of the study was a self-report survey, which may produce different interpretations of the same question by different administrators. This limitation might be relevant, especially in relation to understanding the term 'inclusive education'. This could lead to perceiving the questions in the survey in many different ways, in turn affecting the findings of the study.

Despite the limitations discussed above, the investigations made by this study have offered direction for future researchers to investigate many other important areas relating to IE reform in Bangladesh

Contribution to Knowledge

This study investigated educational administrators' perceptions of inclusive education (IE) reform in the context of Bangladesh. It has contributed to the knowledge by showing what elements of change are influencing IE reform efforts in Bangladesh. A framework for IE reform was conceptualised for this study which guided analysis of the findings. Using the conceptual framework for IE reform (see Figure 2.7 in Chapter 2), this research study has made policy and practice related contributions to the knowledge regarding IE reform. For instance, the framework not only guided in identifying factors

which are negatively influencing IE reform efforts in Bangladesh, but it guided in making recommendations for effective implementation of IE. The evidence from this study raised the need for clear messages making IE a high priority, common understanding of the IE agenda and a systematic monitoring of IE reform progress as vital to the effectiveness in implementing inclusive education. Based on the experience of this study, it appears that the conceptual framework for IE reform developed here may be applicable in thinking about reform strategies in Bangladesh as well as in other countries facing similar challenges.

Identifying strong negative views regarding children with disabilities from Phase 1 of this study, a context specific, 'Administrators' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education'(ADATIE) scale was developed and applied to measure administrators' commitment towards inclusive education in Phase 2 of this study. The findings provide preliminary evidence that ADATIE (with 15 items) meets the standard for reliability. The findings from the data indicate that the ADATIE scale promises to be a useful tool by which to measure administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education in Bangladesh as well as in other Asian countries.

Directions for Future Research

A number of directions for future research have already been given, accompanying some findings and limitations of this study. Based on the experience of this study, the following constitute a few more recommendations to guide future studies regarding IE reform in Bangladesh:

- Research is needed to examine the perceptions of teacher educators, administrators working at the highest level (Ministry) and policy makers in

regard to inclusive education with a specific focus on inclusion of children with disabilities.

- Qualitative long-term research is needed to investigate the actual implementation of inclusive education in Bangladesh. That research may investigate the causes of successes and /or challenges that administrators face in their daily life when managing implementation of inclusive education. Further, a qualitative approach can address in depth the variables found to have significant correlation with administrators' attitudes in this study.
- Although this study employed a mixed methods approach, it used only interview and survey. It seems that school activity observation and focus group discussion may provide enriched data to understand actual practice relating to inclusive education in Bangladesh. Future study is needed using those methods for a more in-depth understanding of IE reform in Bangladesh.
- The results of this study suggested a number of issues that should be examined more closely. Administrators across all levels had divergent views and opinions about inclusive education. Most were not yet comfortable to accept children with disabilities into the regular education system, nor did they feel that teachers were ready for its implementation. Therefore, further investigation is warranted on definitions, organisational structures, and skills and training needed by leadership to create inclusive environments. It is essential to have a better understanding of the relationship between restructuring for IE reform and leadership style. The added knowledge would be useful to formulate recommendations for a) required role change for administrators in inclusive settings, and b) critical competencies required by leaders to manage the programme well.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Ethics approval of Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**10 May 2012**
Project Number:	**CF12/1079 – 2012000514**
Project Title:	**Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh**
Chief Investigator:	**Assoc Prof Joanne Deppeler**
Approved:	**From: 10 May 2012 To: 10 May 2017**

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.**
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

[redacted]

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Umesh Sharma, Mr AQM Shafiul Azam

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix B

Approval of the Directorate of Primary Education, Bangladesh

Director General
Directorate of Primary Education
Section 2, Mirpur, Dhaka 1216
Phone: 8057877, Fax: 8016499
Web: www.dpe.gov.bd

Permission Letter

Ref: "Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh"

Date:.....04.....April.2012

AQM SHAFIUL AZAM
Doctoral Degree Candidate
Faculty of Education, Clayton
Monash University, VIC- 3800
Australia.

Dear Mr. A.Q.M Shafiul Azam,

On behalf of the Directorate of Primary Education in Bangladesh, I have read and understood the explanatory statement of your PhD research project titled "*Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh*" which has been kept for the record of the office. You are, hereby, granted permission to conduct this research in the primary education sector of Bangladesh involving administrators working at various levels (e.g. central level, mid level and school level) of the primary education organisations. This approval is valid up to the research project period that ends in May, 2015.

On behalf of the Directorate of Primary Education, I thank you for choosing primary education sector of Bangladesh to do your research and wish you good luck in your study.

W[redacted]ur findings

Be[redacted]

(Shyamal Kanti Ghosh)
Director General
Directorate of Primary Education, Mirpur-2
Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Appendix C

Letter to the Directorate of Primary Education, Bangladesh

MONASH University

Faculty of Education
Clayton Campus
Gippsland Campus
Peninsula Campus

The Director General
Directorate of Primary Education,
Mirpur-2,Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: 4th April,2012

Dear Sir,

Subject: Approval for conducting the research study titled **"Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh"**

My name is A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam and I am a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) research student in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia. As a part of my study I am required to undertake a research project under the supervision of Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler and Dr. Umesh Sharma of Monash University. My research topic is as follows: "*Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh*" and the research is planned to be conducted by May 2015.This research aims at investigating how administrators at different levels interpret inclusive education (IE) and what they consider to be facilitators and barriers to its implementation in Bangladesh. It is anticipated that the study can potentially inform the ongoing development of inclusive education reform strategy in Bangladesh and the findings from this research can inform the future development of initiatives.

I am writing to you, in your capacity as the head of the Directorate of Primary Education in Bangladesh, to seek your permission to conduct the research in the primary education sector. Please find enclosed an explanatory statement for your kind consideration and also a consent form for you to consent to nominate administrators. If you are interested to give permission for the conduct of this research study, you will need to sign the consent form and provide a letter of approval from you.

[redacted]

Doctoral Degree Candidate
Faculty of Education, Clayton
Monash University, Victoria 3800
Australia
Email: aqm.azam@monash.edu.au

Monash University, VIC 3800, Australia
Building 8, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
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Appendix D

Explanatory statement to the DG of Directorate of Primary Education, Bangladesh

MONASH University

Faculty of Education
Clayton Campus
Gippsland Campus
Peninsula Campus

Explanatory Statement
for
The **Director General (DG)** of the **Directorate of Primary Education (DPE),** Bangladesh.

Title: Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh

NOTE: This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam and I am a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) research student in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia. As a part of my study I am required to undertake a research project under the supervision of Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler and Dr. Umesh Sharma of Monash University. **My research topic is as follows: "*Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh*".** This research project is being planned to be conducted in the primary education sector of Bangladesh by collecting data from the administrators working at various levels (e.g. central level, mid-level and school level) of the primary education organisations. This explanatory statement is, therefore, to invite your support for this study. Should you agree to do so, it would involve you in nominating 15 administrative positions from the central level administration at DPE, 15 administrative positions from the district/subdistrict level administration, 15 primary schools which have direct involvement in implementing IE reform strategy and, also in providing access to the address of those nominations. The nominees will then be invited to participate in this research study. Please be informed that participation in this study is voluntary and the participants are under no obligation to consent to participation. At any stage of the study the participants can withdraw, or avoid answering questions which are felt too personal or intrusive. All the administrators will be anonymous in the study and their identity will not be mentioned in the data or in any published materials but a code name or group representations will be used.

Please read this Explanatory Statement in full for your kind consideration.

Leaders are known to be key in any educational reform. The administrators play a vital role between government's priority and its implementation, in the reform process. The government of Bangladesh has made inclusive education (IE) a national priority as articulated in the National Education Policy 2010. Through this policy, schools are now directed to ensure all children's access to their local school and to provide support and resources necessary to ensure their success. Hence, it is of the most importance to know how the educational administrators perceive inclusive education in Bangladesh.

The study will seek to know how primary education administrators interpret Inclusive Education (IE) and what do they consider as facilitators and barriers to the implementation of IE. The study aims to explore how administrators in the primary education system of Bangladesh envisage goals and vision regarding IE, what is their understanding about the changes they have to bring for IE reform and what are their experiences with the ongoing practices. By doing this, the study seeks to identify what is or is not working about the IE reform process in Bangladesh.

The study will be carried out in the government primary education organisations of Bangladesh. During the study three methods of data collection will be used. First, administrators from three different levels (e.g. central level, mid-level and school level) will be interviewed on individual basis using a semi-structured interview schedule. The Director General of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) will be invited to nominate administrators from three different levels (15 from each level) of primary education administration. Upon receiving the list of the nominees, the nominated administrators will be invited for their participation in the study and those who voluntarily wish to participate will be interviewed. Individual interviews will take about one hour and will be conducted at time convenient to each participant. Second, some documents pertaining to inclusive education that may be in the respective offices of the interview participants such as national or school

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policies, rules and regulations, government orders, project document, training materials, meeting minutes and resolutions will be collected and analysed. Full consent will be sought from the respective person who is in charge of these documents. Third, a cross-sectional survey will be conducted for collecting quantitative data from a wider group of participants in two selected districts. The participants of survey will need to complete a survey questionnaire which will take about 40-50 minutes. An invitation package containing the questionnaire and the explanatory statement will be distributed to all mid-level and school level administrators of the two selected districts. On the basis of voluntary response the completed questionnaire will be collected.

The proposed study has the potential to make a contribution to national benefits by providing new data on primary education administrators' perception on inclusive education and provide some policy directions for better implementation of inclusive education in Bangladesh. By investigating administrators' perception of IE, it is expected that the facilitators and barriers that influence to the inclusion of students with special needs can be identified for improvement of current practices for IE reform in Bangladesh.
This research study has the approval of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) and confidentiality of all records regarding this research will be strictly maintained. All data and information collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on university premises in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. Electronic files will be accessible only by using the computer of the researcher which is password protected and after five years these information will also be destroyed using the secure disposal mechanisms of Monash University. The ethical risks of this study have been assessed as equivalent to everyday situations while the potential benefit to advance knowledge is high.

If you have any other concerns or complain concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:

Executive Officer,
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Building 3e Room 111; Research Office, Monash University VIC 3800
Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au

Participants of this study requiring any support regarding further information about the research or for counselling supports in Bangladesh, may contact the following person:

Professor Nazmul Haq
Chairman
Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance
Institute of Education and Research (IER)
University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh
Phone: +880-1819277497; E-mail: nazmulhaq@yahoo.com

If you would like to have any further clarification about the study or if you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact the Doctoral researcher, A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam, Phone: +8801817546186 (Bangladesh); +61 406789910 (Australia); Email: aqm.azam@monash.edu.au or asaza3@student.monash.edu.au or azam-estb@hotmail.com .You can also contact my Doctoral Supervisors, (Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler, Monash University; Phone: +610399055689; e-mail: joanne.deppeler@education.monash.edu.au and Dr. Umesh Sharma, Monash University; Phone: +610399054388; e-mail: umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au) for more information about the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study by providing the position titles of the administrators and names of the relevant primary schools along with office addresses- a consent form has been provided to give consent.

[redacted]

Faculty of Education, Clayton
Monash University, Victoria 3800
Australia
Email: aqm.azam@monash.edu.au

Appendix E

Explanatory statement for Phase I participants

For
Primary Education Administrators (Phase-I)

Title: Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh

NOTE: This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam and I am a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) research student in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia.As a part of my study I am required to undertake a research project under the supervision of Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler and Dr. Umesh Sharma of Monash University. **My research topic is as follows: "*Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh*".** This research project is being planned to be conducted on the primary education sector of Bangladesh and by collecting data from the administrators working at various levels (e.g. central level, mid-level and school level) of the primary education organisations. This letter therefore, serves to formally invite you to take part in this research. Your consent to participate in this study means you will be interviewed for approximately one hour to explore your views regarding inclusive education (IE), challenges for achieving IE goals and what you perceive as necessary to foster inclusive education. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed. You can ask to see the record of interview and you may also request that information you have provided be withdrawn without having any explanation. You will be given a transcript of data for your approval before it is included in the write up of the research. Please be informed that participation in this study is voluntary and the participants are under no obligation to consent to participation. At any stage of the study the participants can withdraw, or avoid answering questions which are felt too personal or intrusive. All the administrators will be anonymous in the study and their identity will not be mentioned in the data or in any published materials but a code name or group representations will be used.

Should you wish to participate in the above mentioned research, you will need to sign the enclosed consent form and return it to the researcher in the reply paid envelope provided herewith.

Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

Leaders are known to be key in any educational reform. The administrators play a vital role between government's priority and its implementation, in the reform process. The government of Bangladesh has made inclusive education (IE) a national priority as articulated in the National Education Policy 2010. Through this policy, schools are now directed to ensure all children's access to their local school and to provide support and resources necessary to ensure their success. Hence, it is of the most importance to know how the educational administrators perceive inclusive education in Bangladesh.

The study aims to explore how administrators in the primary education system of Bangladesh envisage goals and vision regarding IE, what is their understanding about the changes they have to bring for IE reform and what are their experiences with the ongoing practices. By doing this, the study seeks to identify what is or is not working about the IE reform process in Bangladesh.

The study will be carried out in the government primary education organisations of Bangladesh. During the study three methods of data collection will be used. First, administrators from three different levels (e.g. central level, mid-level and school level) will be interviewed on individual basis using a semi-structured interview schedule. The Director General of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) will be invited to nominate administrators from three different levels (15 from each level) of primary education administration. Upon receiving the list of the nominees, the nominated administrators will be invited for their participation in the study and those who voluntarily wish to participate will be

interviewed. Individual interviews will take about one hour and will be conducted at time convenient to each participant. Second, some documents pertaining to inclusive education that may be in the respective offices of the interview participants such as national or school policies, rules and regulations, government orders, project document, training materials, meeting minutes and resolutions will be collected and analysed. Full consent will be sought from the respective person who is in charge of these documents. Third, a cross-sectional survey will be conducted for collecting quantitative data from a wider group of participants in two selected districts. The participants of survey will need to complete a survey questionnaire which will take about 40-50 minutes. An invitation package containing the questionnaire and the explanatory statement will be distributed to all mid-level and school level administrators of the two selected districts. On the basis of voluntary response the completed questionnaire will be collected.

The proposed study has the potential to make a contribution to national benefits by providing new data on primary education administrators' perception on inclusive education and provide some policy directions for better implementation of inclusive education in Bangladesh. By investigating administrators' perception of IE, it is expected that the facilitators and barriers that influence to the inclusion of students with special needs can be identified for improvement of current practices for IE reform in Bangladesh.

This research study has the approval of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) and confidentiality of all records regarding this research will be strictly maintained. All data and information collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on university premises in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. Electronic files will be accessible only by using the computer of the researcher which is password protected and after five years these information will also be destroyed using the secure disposal mechanisms of Monash University. The ethical risks of this study have been assessed as equivalent to everyday situations while the potential benefit to advance knowledge is high.

If you have any other concerns or complain concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:

Executive Officer,
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Building 3e Room 111; Research Office, Monash University VIC 3800
[redacted]

Participants of this study requiring any support regarding further information about the research or for counselling supports in Bangladesh, may contact the following person:

Professor Nazmul Haq
Chairman
Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance
Institute of Education and Research (IER)
University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh
[redacted]

If you would like to have any further clarification about the study or if you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact the Doctoral researcher, A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam, [redacted] You can also contact my Doctoral Supervisors, (Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler, Monash University; [redacted] and Dr. Umesh Sharma, Monash University; [redacted]) for more information about the study.

Thank you,

(A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam)
Doctoral Degree Candidate
Faculty of Education, Clayton
Monash University, Victoria 3800,Australia.
[redacted]

Appendix F

Explanatory statement for Phase 2 participants

For

Primary Education Administrators (Phase 2)

Title: Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh

NOTE: This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam and I am a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) research student in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia.As a part of my study I am required to undertake a research project under the supervision of Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler and Dr. Umesh Sharma of Monash University. **My research topic is as follows: "*Administrators' preparedness for inclusive education reform in Bangladesh*".** This research project is being planned to be conducted on the primary education sector of Bangladesh and by collecting data from the administrators working at various levels (e.g. central level, mid-level and school level) of the primary education organisations. This letter therefore, serves to formally invite you to take part in this research. Your wish to participate in this study would involve you in completing the attached survey questionnaire that will take about 40-50 minutes time at your convenience. By completing this survey and submitting your answers, you are agreeing to participate in this study. The information provided by the administrators in this survey will remain confidential and the reporting of the results will be by group analysis only. Please be informed that participation in this study is voluntary and the participants are under no obligation to consent to participation. At any stage of the study the participants can withdraw, or avoid answering questions which are felt too personal or intrusive. All the administrators will be anonymous in the study and their identity will not be mentioned in the data or in any published materials but a code name or group representations will be used.

Should you wish to participate in the above mentioned research, you can complete the survey questionnaire and leave it in the drop-box or return to the researcher in the reply paid envelope provided herewith. If you do not wish to participate, you need not complete the questionnaire.

Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

Leaders are known to be key in any educational reform. The administrators play a vital role between government's priority and its implementation, in the reform process. The government of Bangladesh has made inclusive education (IE) a national priority as articulated in the National Education Policy 2010. Through this policy, schools are now directed to ensure all children's access to their local school and to provide support and resources necessary to ensure their success. Hence, it is of the most importance to know how the educational administrators perceive inclusive education in Bangladesh.
The study aims to explore how administrators in the primary education system of Bangladesh envisage goals and vision regarding IE, what is their understanding about the changes they have to bring for IE reform and what are their experiences with the ongoing practices. By doing this, the study seeks to identify what is or is not working about the IE reform process in Bangladesh.

The study will be carried out in the government primary education organisations of Bangladesh. During the study three methods of data collection will be used. First, administrators from three different levels (e.g. central level, mid-level and school level) will be interviewed on individual basis using a semi-structured interview schedule. The Director General of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) will be invited to nominate administrators from three different levels (15 from each level) of primary

education administration. Upon receiving the list of the nominees, the nominated administrators will be invited for their participation in the study and those who voluntarily wish to participate will be interviewed. Individual interviews will take about one hour and will be conducted at time convenient to each participant. Second, some documents pertaining to inclusive education that may be in the respective offices of the interview participants such as national or school policies, rules and regulations, government orders, project document, training materials, meeting minutes and resolutions will be collected and analysed. Full consent will be sought from the respective person who is in charge of these documents. Third, a cross-sectional survey will be conducted for collecting quantitative data from a wider group of participants in two selected districts. The participants of survey will need to complete a survey questionnaire which will take about 40-50 minutes. An invitation package containing the questionnaire and the explanatory statement will be distributed to all mid-level and school level administrators of the two selected districts. On the basis of voluntary response the completed questionnaire will be collected.

The proposed study has the potential to make a contribution to national benefits by providing new data on primary education administrators' perception on inclusive education and provide some policy directions for better implementation of inclusive education in Bangladesh. By investigating administrators' perception of IE, it is expected that the facilitators and barriers that influence to the inclusion of students with special needs can be identified for improvement of current practices for IE reform in Bangladesh.

This research study has the approval of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) and confidentiality of all records regarding this research will be strictly maintained. All data and information collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on university premises in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. Electronic files will be accessible only by using the computer of the researcher which is password protected and after five years these information will also be destroyed using the secure disposal mechanisms of Monash University. The ethical risks of this study have been assessed as equivalent to everyday situations while the potential benefit to advance knowledge is high.

If you have any other concerns or complain concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:

Executive Officer,
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Building 3e Room 111; Research Office, Monash University VIC 3800
[redacted]

Participants of this study requiring any support regarding further information about the research or for counselling supports in Bangladesh, may contact the following person:

Professor Nazmul Haq
Chairman
Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance
Institute of Education and Research (IER)
University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh
[redacted]

If you would like to have any further clarification about the study or if you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact the Doctoral researcher, A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam, [redacted] or [redacted] .You can also contact my Doctoral Supervisors, (Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler, Monash University; [redacted] and Dr. Umesh Sharma, Monash University; Phone: [redacted] for more information about the study.

Thank you,

(A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam)
Doctoral researcher
Faculty of Education, Clayton Campus
Monash University, Victoria 3800,Australia.
[redacted]

Appendix G

Phase-I Participants' profile

Phase 1: Participants' profile

Coded Name	Age	Gender	Highest Academic degree	Level of administrative assignment	Location Work	PD training on IE(days)
C1	52	Male	Masters	DPE	Urban	1 day
C2	53	Male	Masters	DPE	Urban	None
C3	46	Male	Masters	DPE	Urban	1 day
C4	55	Female	Masters	DPE	Urban	1 day
C5	56	Male	Masters	DPE	Urban	1 day
C6	42	Male	Masters	DPE	Urban	5days
L1	42	Male	Masters	District	Rural	5 days
L2	44	Male	Masters	District	Rural	5 days
L3	31	Female	Masters	Sub-District	Rural	3days
L4	40	Male	Masters	District	Rural	None
L5	35	Female	Bachelor	Sub -District	Rural	3days
L6	57	Male	Masters	Sub-District	Rural	None
S1	37	Female	Masters	School	Urban	3 days
S2	42	Male	Bachelor	School	Urban	1 day
S3	41	Female	Masters	School	Rural	1 day
S4	35	Male	Masters	School	Rural	None
S5	33	Female	Bachelor	School	Rural	3days
S6	46	Male	Bachelor	School	Rural	1day

Appendix H

Interview protocol: primary education administrators (Group 1,2&3 participants for interview)

Preamble: My name is A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam and I am conducting a research project as a part of my PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) programme in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia.

The study will be carried out in the primary education system of Bangladesh involving central level, district/sub-district level and school level (Principal) administrators. The study will seek to know how administrators' at various levels of administration interpret inclusive education, what is their understanding about the changes they have to bring and what do they consider from their respective position as facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education. By doing this, the study aims to identify the aspects particularly in Bangladeshi context that promote or hinder IE reform. To put it in simple words, it aims to spot what is or is not working in the Inclusive Education reform process in Bangladesh. Hence, this study can potentially inform ongoing development of the IE reform strategy in Bangladesh. It is likely that IE reform will take place in Bangladesh over a number of years; therefore, findings from this research can inform the future development of initiatives.

This research has the approval of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) and the Director General of the Directorate of Primary Education has given his kind consent to conduct the study.The study involves participating in interview. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed. You will be given a transcript of data for your approval before it is included in the write up of the research. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time of the study before it has been published or submitted as a thesis. Your name will not be used in any reports including publications arising from this project.

Questions:

1. Do you have any question before we begin?
2. What is your understanding of inclusive education (IE)?
3. Do all the children in the system/in your district/ in your school catchment area attend school? Are there any who do not attend? If so, who are those? Why do these children not attend?
4. Are you aware of any IE policies (if so, ask the participant to list these)?
    a. What is your understanding of those IE policies?

    Are you aware of any other initiatives directed toward achieving IE?

    --please describe your experience about that/those initiatives for you? For your district? -----For your school?
5. How do you think inclusive education might be achieved?
6. What do you think is required to achieve IE?

    What do you think is required for this to happen at a Central level?

    At a district level?

In schools?

7. Why are these levels different /same?
8. Who should be involved in achieving IE? Why is it important for these people to be involved?
9. Are there any challenges in achieving IE, if any?
   -if yes, what are the challenges, in achieving this goal at your district/subdistrict/school?
10. What is your role in achieving IE?
11. What resources, training or other things, do you think can assist in the achievement of IE?
12. How will you/we know that inclusive education has been achieved/ or progress has been made?
    -/ how will you know progress has been made at your district/subdistrict/school?
    -What indicators will show that these have been achieved?
13. Is there anything else you wish to discuss about this topic?
14. Do you have any other question before we conclude?

Questionnaire for Demographic Information of interview participants

Please fill up and circle/tick on the line as appropriate.

A. What is your age?

---------- (in completed years)

B. What is your gender?

Male Female

C. What is your position level?

Level of involvement-:

School

District/Sub-district

DPE

Location:

Rural Urban

D. What is your highest academic degree?

Bachelor degree

Masters degree

PhD

Other (Please specify).....

E. Have you participated in any professional development training /orientation on IE (please circle)?

None Half/1 day 3 days 5 days More than 5 days

F. Do you have any experience of IE? Yes....No

If yes, How long?

i. Less than 5 years

ii. Between 6-10years

iii. Between 10-15years

iv. Other: please specify: ……

G. What is the nature of your experience of IE? (Circle as many as are applicable to you)

As a relative.....

As a principal.....

As an administrator

Other (please specify):

.

Appendix I

Request letter to expert review panel of the survey instrument

MONASH University

Questionnaire for Administrators' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education

(ADATIE)

Internationally, inclusive education (IE) has been established as a significant education reform that focuses on redressing continuing inequities in schooling and ensuring that all students are able to access and be successful in their local schools. Leaders are known to be key in any educational reform strategy. They are expected to design, lead, manage and implement programmes for all students including those with disabilities. It is also evident that attitudes of administrators towards students with disabilities are vital in facilitating inclusive practices. Hence, it is important to know what attitudes the administrators hold toward inclusive education and how their background variables are related to their respective attitudes.

The *Administrators' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education* has been designed to measure the extent to which factors such as experience, work setting classification, training, awareness of support and knowledge of policy are related to administrators' attitudes toward inclusive education (IE). IE is based on social justice philosophy that aims to fulfil the learning needs of all students in the regular classroom. For the purpose of this study, IE in this survey is limited to the process of including children with disabilities in the regular classroom. The functional descriptors used in this questionnaire are consistent with current Inclusive Education concept in Bangladesh where emphasis was given on the required support and services to include children with disabilities in the regular classroom.

Would you please review the survey items and where you deem appropriate provide comments or any relevant suggestions that may improve the quality of the survey to administrators? In reviewing the items of the survey, would you please consider the following:

1. Are the item descriptors clear and free from ambiguity?
2. Are the words easily understandable to a person with no or limited knowledge in inclusive education?
3. Could each item be interpreted differently than intended?
4. Are there any biases in any of the aspect of the questionnaire?
5. In the demographic information part, does each item have an answer in relation to every respondent?

I would like to request you to review each item to ensure that it is measuring the construct and also for clarity by placing tick in the box for **Yes** or **No**. If your response is **NO** for either the construct or for clarity, please feel free to make changes in the item as required or provide your comments /suggestions for improvement in the spaces just below each item.

Spaces for comments are marked with a: ⇨

If you would like to have any further clarification about the study, please feel free to contact me A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam, [redacted] you can also contact my Doctoral Supervisors, Associate Professor Joanne Deppeler, Monash University; [redacted] and Dr. Umesh Sharma, Monash University; [redacted]

Your help is highly appreciated. Thank you.
Regards,
SAzam
(A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam)

Appendix J

Questionnaire used in Phase 2 of the study

Administrators' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education (ADATIE)

Questionnaire for Attitudes toward Inclusive Education

The statements below are related to inclusive education (IE). IE is a national priority of the Bangladesh government. The National Education Policy 2010 includes IE as an approach to ensure the right of all children to access to general educational institutions and to ensure that they are provided with quality education regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disabilities and/or disadvantage so that all children can participate fully and succeed to complete the primary education cycle. This scale however, refers to the inclusive education (IE) of *students with disabilities* in regular classrooms in primary school.

Please rate your degree of agreement or disagreement with each item. Please note there is no right or wrong answer. This scale is about your opinions. Please tick ONE box only for each item.

Sl	Item descriptor	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Teachers are willing to teach children with disabilities in their classroom.						
2	Teachers receive support to teach children with disabilities in their classroom.						
3	Parents are supportive of inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classroom.						
4	Parents of children without disabilities are supportive accepting of the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classroom.						
5	Inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classroom benefits the school (academically and socially).						
6	Inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classroom is beneficial for the teacher.						
7	Inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classroom is beneficial to other students.						
8	Schools are resourced to provide education to the children with disabilities.						
9	Teaching in regular classroom will require substantive modification for children with disabilities,						
10	Children who require extra resources (e.g. Braille, large print, sign language) should be included in regular classroom.						
11	Children who display challenging behaviours should be taught in regular classrooms.						

12	Schools will require modification to the building and infrastructure before children with physical disabilities, can be included in regular schools.						
13	Teachers should include all children in their classrooms irrespective of the severity of their disability.						
14	Lack of resources is a good reason for excluding children with disabilities in regular classrooms.						
15	Children with disabilities should be taught in special schools.						
16	Teachers are skilled to teach students with disabilities						
17	Schools are well supported from administration to include students with disabilities.						

Part 2 : Background Information

Please use the space provided to answer the following questions:

1.Completed years of primary educational administration experience.....

2. Completed years of teaching experience.....

3. Your age in **completed** years.....

Please tick (✓)as appropriate:

4. Gender: _____ Male ____ Female

5. Levels of work and setting: School _____District _____DPE____

6.Your school/work setting classification: Rural ____Urban____

7. Your highest academic degree: Bachelor degree ____Masters degree____

Other (please name) ____

8. Do you have Special Education Qualification (s) :

Yes.....No..... If yes please name _____.

9.Do you have knowledge regarding the local legislation and/or policy related to inclusive education: Yes.....No.....

If yes, please rate your level of knowledge against the following areas:

9.1 Inclusive Education priority:

None ____Very little____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

9.2 Resources and support required for implementing inclusive education

None ____Very little ____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

10. Indicate the level support that you receive to implement inclusive education?

None ____Very little ____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

11. Indicate the level support that you provide to implement inclusive education?

None ____Very little ____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

12. Did you participate in any professional development training on IE? Yes____ No ____

If yes,

12.1 How long was the training?

Half/1 day ____Three days____ Five days ____ More than five days ____

12.2 How effective was the training in understanding the goals of inclusive education?

None ____Very little ____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

12.3 How effective was the training in implementing inclusive education?

None ____Very little ____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

13. Did you receive any government material related to inclusive education (e.g. guidelines, brochures, training manuals, policy documents etc.): Yes____ No ____

13.1 How helpful were the guidelines to understand the goals of inclusive education?

Not at all ____Very little ____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

13.2 How helpful were guidelines in implementing inclusive education?

Not at all ____Very little ____ Little ____Good____ Very good ____

14. Please rate your opinion about the inclusive education policy?

Strongly disagree ____ Disagree ____Disagree Somewhat ____Agree Somewhat ____Agree ____Strongly Agree

Please use the space provided to answer the following questions:

15. What are the three priorities of the Directorate of Primary education regarding inclusive education?

1. ----------
2. ----------
3. ----------

16. What are the three things that would support you to implement inclusive education?

1. ----------
2. ----------
3. ----------

17. What are the three things that act as barriers in your local context to implement inclusive education?

1. ----------
2. ----------
3. ----------