Forewords
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UNESCO Policy Brief

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This UNESCO Policy Brief is a collection of policy briefs that have been produced by the research project conducted with the support of the "ODA Grants for UNESCO Activities" which was initiated by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Our project was initiated in 2012 collaborating with UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau of Education (UNESCO Bangkok) and a network of Asian researchers on inclusive education was formulated to conduct this research project. The network was consisted of young scholars and fellows who were researching inclusive education in Japan and other Asia Pacific countries. The first period of the research project was led by Waseda University, and then CICE, Hiroshima University took over the initiative for the second period. The members continued the research works throughout the two periods.

Thanks to the hard works and collaboration of participating members, the project was successfully completed with the fruits of many research papers to present possible solutions for various issues and areas concerning inclusive education. Equally importantly, the project left another valuable and useful public bedrock, which was an international and inter-university researcher-to-researcher network across Japan and Asia Pacific countries in the field of education. Their strong commitments of participating universities and researchers have led the network for continuation and further strengthening of this collaborative relationship.

Each member of the project selected one or more study theme(s) in the field of inclusive education, and they are listed in table of contents. To ensure the variety of the studies, each member developed its own conceptual framework for each research theme and conducted the actual research. In order to maintain a certain level of quality, we organized three international meetings and symposiums where members gave comments and feedbacks to each other. These meetings and symposiums also provided useful and fruitful opportunities for exchangeable learning among the members. We certainly hope that these researches will have some impacts on inclusive education policies and practices in Asia Pacific.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation not only to the authors of this publication but also UNESCO Bangkok staffs involved in the research projects for their great contributions. I do hope this research endeavor will further develop.

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1. Reconsidering the Meaning of Inclusive Education

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Introduction

Inclusive education is today understood as 'educating all children equally without any discrimination'. However, while inclusive education, in the sense of welcoming children of all abilities into mainstream schools, is believed to be the best way of promoting social participation of disadvantaged people and of achieving Education for All, there is a counterargument that education in special schools is in fact better in helping children with special educational needs. According to the latter view, special schools assist children with special needs to gain higher self-esteem.

This paper will begin by examining the educational situation in the United Kingdom (UK) and the background for inclusive education. Next, the shifts in the meaning of inclusive education will be examined and five definitions will be introduced. Following this review of the history of inclusive education and its original meaning, the effects, methods and indicators will be discussed.

Social inclusion

First of all, let us examine the origins of the term 'social inclusion', which has similar connotations to 'inclusive education'. It is often presumed that there is a consensus as to what is being referred to when the term 'inclusive education' is used, and people tend to discuss the topic as one, singular concept. Yet, the concept of 'inclusive education' is multiple and ambiguous; there are almost as many definitions of inclusive education as there are researchers (Shimizu, 2007, Warnock, 2005).

Although 'inclusive education' is sometimes seen as a way to achieve 'social inclusion', the terms have different backgrounds. In the early industrialization era in the United States (in the early to mid-1800s), large numbers of unskilled workers migrated from rural to urban areas and from European countries. The number of migrants in major cities increased significantly in the late 1800s, and immigrants filled the urban ghettos (Danforth, Taff and Ferguson, 2006). As a result, the ghettos were overcrowded and typically lacked adequate running water and sanitation systems, electrical power, garbage collection and health care. Crime was high and people were plagued by disease. Immigrants and low-paid workers were discriminated against and were excluded from other sectors of American society. Many immigrant children did not understand English so teachers had difficulties teaching them (Danforth, Taff and Ferguson, 2006).

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, governments began to consider the rights of people who had hitherto faced discrimination. Later, following the adoption of the United Nations Convention Against Discrimination in Education in 1964, governments placed greater emphasis on preventing and eliminating discrimination in education, and promoting equal educational opportunity. This was further strengthened with the establishment of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966.

Subsequently, in the 1980s, governments in Europe and the United States paid greater attention to providing support for people who had been excluded from society, including racial and religious minorities. At this time, discrimination against disadvantaged peoples came to be called 'social exclusion'. Accordingly, the phrase,

'social inclusion' came to be seen as a way of countering social exclusion. Thus, when the phrase first started being used, the main subject of social inclusion was immigrants.

While the main subject of social inclusion was immigrants, the main subject of special needs education, integration and 'inclusive education' was children with disabilities.

Warnock's view of special educational needs

In 1974, the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People was established in the UK, based on the 1972 education law, which sought to give all children the right to education. One of the tasks of the committee was 'to articulate a concept of education that could make sense in the context of any child, anywhere on the continuum of ability or disability' (Warnock, 2005, p.18). Accordingly, the committee set three common educational goals: independence, enjoyment and understanding for all children. The president of the committee, Mary Warnock, expressed the committee's view as follows: '[t]he path towards these goals was smooth and easy for some, but beset with all kinds of obstacles for the children who were our concern (Warnock, 2005, p.18).

According to Warnock, the 'special educational needs' approach sought to provide proper education with proper support that met each child's needs, in order to achieve common educational goals. Under this approach, children could choose the best place to take proper education for themselves, and by doing so, achieve the three educational goals. Thus, neither she nor the committee as a whole promoted integrating all children into mainstream schools but, rather, simply regarded children as people who should participate in education so as to expand their abilities.

However, the government of the United Kingdom wanted to integrate most children into mainstream schools and decrease the number of special schools (Warnock, 2005). Some members of the committee likewise believed that the ideal of inclusion would not be achieved unless all children were integrated into mainstream schools and all special schools closed. They believed that if proper educational support were provided to the children with special needs in mainstream schools, they would not need special schools. For the government, sending children with severe disabilities to special schools was the last resort (Warnock, 2005).

In the 1978 Warnock Report, the committee proposed a 'statement system', which provided support for children with special educational needs based on the contents of a 'statement', issued by the child's local government. Such 'statements' were expected to help children with special educational needs to receive proper support in mainstream schools and help them to attend special schools if those were better for them. Warnock and the committee thought the system would protect all children in school whatever their abilities were. However, when the committee suggested the 'statement system', they neglected to define details such as to whom and for what the statements would be issued. They did not define what was meant by 'special needs' or what kind of provisions could be given for each need. As a result, integrating children with special needs into mainstream schools on the basis of a 'statement' involved much confusion. For instance, two children with the same disability could be provided with different support or possibly none at all. Moreover, many children with special educational needs were not able to receive a 'statement' because the committee had not provided any concrete standards or definitions regarding who had the right to receive such 'statements' from local

governments. Whether or not such children could get 'statements' depended on the budget of each local government. This vague system led to conflicts between local governments and parents with disabled children. In her 2005 paper, Warnock expressed feeling responsible for the lack of concrete concepts in the 'statement system', and requested that the government improve the system.

From integration to inclusion

In the early 1990s, it became apparent that many children with special needs were being excluded, in effect, within mainstream schools as they were not keeping up with the coursework. Without sufficient knowledge about disabilities, many teachers had no idea or direction regarding how to solve the problems that students with disabilities faced (Florian, 2008). In addition, due to their lack of training in special needs education methods, teachers often restricted integration. For example, some teachers allocated seats at the back of classroom for disabled students so that they would not disturb other students, thus labelling the disabled students as failures (Stoughton, 2005; Lewis-Robertson, 2005; Brantlinger, 2005).

A report by the Royal National Institution of the Blind (RNIB) found that around a third of the visually-impaired children at mainstream schools had experienced being bullied because of their disability (Cole- Hamilton, 2000). Similarly studies by Taub and Greer (2000) and Maher (2013) indicated that children with physical disabilities frequently experience exclusion and isolation from their classmates in mainstream schools, making these children more likely to lack confidence and social skills. These reports also revealed that due to physical and social barriers to physical

activity, disabled children often experience low fitness levels and cardio-respiratory endurance, and interpersonal isolation. A similar report, published in the United States in 1983, argued that visually-impaired girls who had attended mainstream schools tended to lack confidence (Kent, 1983). This study by Kent found that female adolescent students with visual impairment had difficulty in establishing positive identities due to teasing by other female students. Consequently, visually-impaired women tended to have a negative image of makeup, and did not voluntarily use makeup after graduation because of the negative memory of using makeup to prevent teasing (Kent, 1983). With regard to life-skills training, only three tenths of the visually-impaired children at mainstream schools had received training in going out by themselves using a white cane (Cole-Hamilton, 2000).

The term 'inclusion' came to replace the term 'integration', which been deemed a failure as it was viewed as a policy of 'dumping'. In the new and improved ideal of education based on 'inclusion', children with special needs were not only to be physically integrated into mainstream schools but also provided with proper support to study. However, as Warnock points out in her paper of 2005, because the concepts of 'inclusion' and 'inclusive education' were unclear, children with special needs were still emotionally excluded in mainstream schools even after the 1990s.

At the time, all children in the United Kingdom followed the same national curriculum and their educational achievements were assessed based on a common test, in accordance with the education law of 1988. According to Warnock, this old-fashioned evaluation system forced children to compete against each other on the basis of academic results, and schools were ranked based on students' test scores. The concept of 'inclusion', which

respects each child's ability, was not compatible with an assessment system or indicators of educational achievement that evaluated all children's abilities through a common examination (Warnock, 2005).

This contradiction between goal of inclusive education and education indicators was also apparent in the United States. This was exemplified by the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), introduced in 2001 and established in 2002. The law sought to guarantee equal opportunity in terms of access to education, so as to enhance all children's abilities. Based on this law, all children are equally required to obtain high quality education, and they are expected to reach a minimum proficiency in the challenging state academic achievement standards and assessments. Proponents of the bill claimed that 'requiring all students to achieve mastery of state-mandated proficiencies by the 2013-2014 school year will result in better quality education for students with disabilities' (Harvey-Koelpin, 2005, p.119).

Although a guarantee of equal opportunity for all students to receive a high quality education is appealing, it has not always been achieved. 'Students with disabilities' include those with learning disabilities and mental impairments, and many such students face great difficulty in keeping up with regular classes and achieving the required test scores.

The supporters of the NCLB have demanded that 'school districts must exert more effort to raise the achievement levels of students with disabilities' (Harvey-Koelpin, 2005, p.120), but this places great pressure on teachers and on disabled students. Educational achievement is only judged by test scores and if disabled students cannot achieve the required test scores, they are labelled as failures. Needless to say, labelling students as failures affects them greatly, depriving them of their confidence and

hindering them in fitting into social life. The irony of the NCLB is that although disabled children are physically included in schools and are guaranteed access to equal, quality education, they find themselves excluded emotionally and socially.

Teachers who have disabled students in their class are faced with particular difficulties. When a school cannot raise the achievement levels of students with disabilities, the teachers are also labelled as failures (Harvey-Koelpin, 2005). The government and media require teachers put in more effort without consideration of the efforts they already make and their difficult situations. Many teachers have more than ten years' teaching experience and work longer hours than average, but are criticized as failures. In such circumstances it is difficult for teachers to maintain their motivation to teach disabled students.

'inclusive' in international conventions and goals

In 1989, the United Nations established the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out the rights of children, including the right of all children to education. The following year, the World Declaration on Education for All demonstrated the will of countries to overcome inequality in education. Emphasis was placed not only on access to basic education, but also on the quality of education and actual learning outcomes. The associated 'Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs' put forward a six- point framework of goals to provide all children with access to education. These goals drew attention to the importance of improving educational systems for marginalized children, including those with disabilities. This led to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, which

was adopted at the 1994 World Congress on Special Needs Education. The statement emphasized the importance of fundamental policy shifts towards promoting inclusive education and ensuring that schools serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs (UNESCO and MoES Spain, 1994). This expectation for inclusive education was expressed in *Embracing Diversity*, a UNESCO toolkit for teachers, as follows:

> An inclusive, learning-friendly environment (ILFE) welcomes, nurtures, and educates all children regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other characteristics. They may be disabled or gifted children, street or working children, children of remote or nomadic peoples, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, children affected by HIV/AIDS, or children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.
> (UNESCO, 2004, p.6)

However, the meaning of an 'inclusive, learning-friendly environment' was left unclear. Accordingly, understanding of 'inclusive learning-friendly environment' depends on each person's perspective.

The term 'inclusive' has been used in international statements since the 1990s, not only in education but also in other fields such as economics and human rights. For instance, in 2015 UN Women established the 'inclusive electoral process', a guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women's participation, and UNDP is promoting the 'growing inclusive markets' initiative, which 'seeks to understand, enable and inspire the development of more inclusive business models around the globe that will help to create new opportunities and better lives for many of the world's poor' (2007). The United Nations has thus used the ambiguous yet seemingly positive connotation of the term 'inclusive' to describe various initiatives, as the term conveys the sense that the initiative is comprehensive and flexible enough to fit all countries, cultures and situations.

While the use of 'inclusive' in international initiatives and statements has led to each country trying to introduce inclusive policies, such as inclusive education, these policies have been based on each country's particular understanding of the term 'inclusive'. The policies and the resulting initiatives, therefore differ from country to country. For example, in Botswana 'inclusive education' has been defined as education in which '[c]hildren with disabilities, who are integrated in regular schools, would need additional provision and support in order to benefit socially, psychologically and educationally from any existing education system' (Charema, 2008, p. 89). In this case, inclusive education is premised on integrating all children into regular classrooms. On the other hand, a rehabilitation law for people with disabilities in the Philippines that seeks to be 'inclusive' states that 'the Department of Education, Culture and Sports shall establish, special education classes in public schools in cities, or municipalities' (Government of the Philippines, 1993, Section 14). In this case, children with special needs should learn in special classroom for some classes, although they should also be enrolled in mainstream schools. Both cases are promoting 'inclusive education' but the results are remarkably different. Thus, each country, government, and researcher has understood or defined 'inclusive education' in their own way, because the concept of 'inclusive education' is unclear.

Definitions of 'inclusive education'

A review of the literature found that definitions of 'inclusive education' can be divided into five main categories:

Ⅰ. Integration

Some researchers, such as Campbell and Gilmore (2003) and Florian (2008), use 'inclusion' to mean the same thing as 'integration'. For example, Florian describes inclusive education as being 'based on the principle that local schools should provide for all children, regardless of any perceived difference, disability or other social, emotional, cultural or linguistic difference' (2008, p. 202). Under this view, the emphasis is placed on integrating all children into the same schools, but meeting each child's needs is ignored. The basic argument here is that separating children with special educational needs from the mainstream is discriminatory, and that such children should be regarded as equal community members and therefore learn in the same schools. Thus, the focus is on every child's right to learn in mainstream schools, but this approach fails to address their right that their individuality be respected, their right to expand their abilities and their right to establish higher esteem as a minority. Accordingly, this type of definition can be seen to be synonymous with 'integration' and should not be regarded as 'inclusive education'.

Ⅱ. Extra support

Other researchers, such as Charema (2007), Lindsay (2003), Peters (2004), Slee and Allan (2001) and Zollers, Ramanatha and Yu (1999), believe that while all students should be integrated into mainstream schools, students with special needs should be provided proper support in inclusive classrooms. This view can be considered to be the original meaning of 'inclusive education' that was introduced in the United Kingdom as means of improving on 'integration'. This type of

definition not only respects the right of learn in the same environment as regular students, but also respects their differing educational needs and uniqueness. Peters (2004, p. 5) expresses this approach as follows:

> The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities.

Ⅲ. Participation

According to this view, 'inclusive education' is a system that seeks to achieve social inclusion, in which all community members have responsibility for taking care of the children in their communities. For instance, Ferguson (2008) argues that not only teachers but also parents, administrators, politicians and all other community members should participate in inclusive education as supporters or even as learners. She believes that new school systems, teachers and teaching methods are needed to improve current inclusive education because more and more students with special needs are entering mainstream schools. She argues that the key challenge facing inclusive education in the twenty-first century is developing community-based education so as to expand the abilities of students with special needs in mainstream schools. However, although she proposes a new concept of inclusive education, she assumes the existing assessment system,

based on test scores, will remain in place to assess student's abilities and achievements.

Ⅳ. Special schools

This approach places the focus on meeting the needs of all children. Warnock (2005), for example, argues that having special schools is part of inclusive education. She criticizes the situation in the UK in which children with special needs are emotionally excluded in mainstream schools and she believes that 'it is their right to learn than we must defend, not their right to learn in the same environment as everyone else' (Warnock, 2005, p. 39).

Ⅴ. A process of education

Under this approach, inclusive education is not a goal but a process of school education that seeks to expand each student's ability. This approach, like the previous one, also sees special schools as part of inclusive education. For example, the National Association of Head Teachers defines inclusive education as follows:

> Inclusion is a process that maximizes the entitlement of all pupils to a broad, relevant and stimulating curriculum, which is delivered in the environment that will have the greatest impact on their learning. All schools, whether special or mainstream, should reflect a culture in which the institution adapts to meet the needs of its pupils and is provided with the resources to enable this to happen.
> (2003, p. 1)

While all five approaches describe 'inclusive education', they differ significantly. Furthermore, while some researchers imagine 'inclusion' as referring to including students with physical disabilities, others see the concept as relating to students with all kind of special needs, and yet others expand the concept to encompass the inclusion of gender and ethnic minorities. Given these differences in understandings of 'inclusive education', assessing the advantages and disadvantages of 'inclusive education' requires each country to first define which 'education system' and what 'mainstream' is being talked about and who is to be included.

Changes in the meaning of inclusive education

The understanding of the meaning of inclusive education has changed over time even in the United Kingdom and the United States, where the concept originated. For example, some now argue that 'inclusive education' should refer to flexibility in curricula, learning materials and teaching methods, so as to meet the needs of each child, in response to the criticism that some children have difficulty in meeting the requirements of the national curriculum, regardless of the support they receive (Simizu, 2007). Some researchers also argue that the possibility of attending special schools if children have difficulty learning in mainstream schools is also a form of 'inclusive education' (Shimizu, 2007; Warnock, 2005).

In 2001, the Government of the United Kingdom distributed an official document titled, *Index for Inclusion*, which laid out the goals of an inclusive school. The indicators listed in the document for achieving an 'inclusive' school included: 'establishing an inclusive community', 'everyone can be comfortable in school', 'teachers and students respect each other', 'partnerships with parents and welfare specialists', 'inclusive values' and 'decreasing all kind of discrimination'. While these indicators of inclusive education are valid in terms of the government's goals, they are far from the original meaning of 'inclusive education': integrating all children into mainstream schools with support.

Some researchers, including Erevelles and Kanga (2013), believe that the expansion of the concept of 'inclusive education' to incorporate other groups of children is necessary, as children from ethnic, religious and gender minorities face similar issues in terms of access to education as children with disabilities, and hence, inclusive education with flexibility is a way of covering all children's needs. Others argue that the meaning of 'inclusive education' in the United Kingdom should remain flexible so that children with severe disabilities can go to special schools rather than mainstream schools (Shimizu, 2007, Warnock 2005).

On the other hand, other researchers, such as Kalyanpur (2014), have criticized this flexible definition, arguing that it creates ambiguity in that it can be used in a negative way to promote insincere ambitions of governments or dominant groups. Kalyanpur points out that with an ambiguous definition, the government can proceed with any sort of education policy in the name of 'inclusive education' without being criticized. She also argues that 'developing' countries are forced to accept a Westernised education system in which 'inclusive education' is regarded as a flexible education system that fits all countries' situations. That is, by putting forth the achievement of inclusive education as an international goal, Western countries are in effect promoting their own education goals in 'developing' countries, even if those goals may not be suitable for those countries' situations. Thus, when 'inclusive education' is vaguely defined, there is a danger that it may not be used to meet each student's needs but instead to achieve political ends (Kalyanpur, 2014; Peters, 2004).

Conclusion

The original meaning of inclusive education was 'integrating all children into mainstream schools with proper support for children with special needs'. However, since the concept of 'special needs', 'propersupport' and 'inclusion' were not clearly defined, 'inclusive education' has been understood in multiple ways, even in the United Kingdom, the very country in which the concept originated.

Furthermore, with the use of the term 'inclusive education' in international conventions and statements, the concept of 'inclusive education' has come to have various, complex meanings. As 'inclusive education' is an international goal, many initiatives in the field of education go beyond the original meaning of 'inclusive education' such that the term now describes education that covers the needs of children of minority religions, ethnicities and genders. Thus, the meaning of the concept has changed and there are various different definitions of 'inclusive education' in circulation, many of which are far from the original meaning. Five categories of definitions of 'inclusive education' can be identified and there is no consensus as to what the term means.

While there are advantages and disadvantages in using the term 'inclusive education' in multiple ways, the lack of agreement on the meaning of the term, and the lack of acknowledgement of such disparity in definitions, means that every researcher, government and educator imagines a different education system when they talk about 'inclusive education', even though it is an international educational goal that many countries are aiming to achieve. It is indeed strange that most countries trying to achieve inclusive education do not seem to notice that there is no clear consensus regarding goals or indicators with regard to 'inclusive education'. Furthermore, the lack of agreement on the meaning of 'inclusive education' has the danger that the term will be misused to achieve political ends, because the ambiguity allows whatever

ambitions governments may have to be legitimized as being 'inclusive education'.

It is recommended that for future research, the different education systems that are described using the all-too-handy term 'inclusive education' be discussed separately, so as to avoid confusion. It is necessary to categorize each education system and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each category, based on the viewpoints of both governments and minority groups.

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2. An Exploration of Education Experiences and Identity Construction of Blind Students in the United Kingdom

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Introduction

Social inclusion is a key international goal, and inclusive education, which involves including all children in the same classes, tends to be regarded as the best way to achieve this goal. However, some argue that special schools education is better at assisting disabled students to establish a positive identity. This study, comparing disabled student graduates from mainstream schools with those from special schools, found that in terms on their experiences and identity as disabled people, an education system that enables disabled students to participate in society with confidence is more beneficial.

Background

The United Kingdom (UK) was the first country to implement 'inclusive education': integrating children with special needs into the mainstream education system. After advocating for inclusive education for 30 years, British expert Warnock switched sides on the argument in 2005 and drew attention to the importance of special schools. Defining inclusive education as 'meeting each student's needs', she argued that special needs schooling also belongs in the sphere of inclusive education, and is better for some disabled students. Accordingly, there is a choice between attending mainstream or special schools today.

Most papers on special needs education address topics such as teacher training, high school education and social impact. These are valuable, but a comprehensive perspective that includes students' experiences at school, life-skills training, communication skills, identity formation as person with disabilities and the next stages of education, employment and future social participation is vital for understanding the content and impact of special needs education.

The study described here examined the experiences of three blind students and analyses them from an insider's viewpoint. It hopes to inspire further research into education for disabled students that facilitates their social participation.

Method

This study focused on the experiences of blind students and was analysed from the perspective of the visually impaired, since the researcher is also completely blind.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with three blind UK university graduates (Respondents A, B and C) who had lost their vision before the age of 5. The responses were analysed by comparing each case based on five codes: learning Braille; life-skills training; class participation; friendships; and confidence in social participation. The researcher used the capability approach and social identity theory as the framework of analysis.

The findings of the study are limited in that the study only examined three cases, and did not cover partial visual impairment, multiple disabilities, vision loss after matriculation, and students participating in both mainstream schooling and special schools. Furthermore, the sampling of university graduates may show only the experiences of privileged students. Some bias on part of the researcher/author must be acknowledged, particularly regarding experiences that were similar to or different

from the researcher's. Despite such limitations, however, the author believes that a focus on disabled people's voices is useful and an analysis from an viewpoint of a blind person is valuable in exploring the relationships between school experiences, identity construction and confidence in social participation.

Research findings

Ⅰ. Learning Braille

Respondent A went to a school for the blind during primary and secondary education, and learned Braille from six years old. Braille class consisted of six or seven blind students surrounding a table equipped with synchronised braille key pads, Perkins Braillers talking calculators and an abacus that students learned to use. Since all of the teachers were able to read Braille, not only were reading material and exams provided in Braille, but homework and answer sheets were also submitted in Braille.

Respondent B chose mainstream school, because of his blind mother's lonely childhood at a school for the blind, where she lived away from her family. Respondent B started learning Braille from the age of 4, during free periods between classes. In primary school, he took notes in Braille, then used a laptop in secondary school, and resumed Braille at university. His primary school had three Braille teachers and another blind student. He sat twice as long during examinations, which meant up to six hours. Reading material was transcribed into Braille, and the few materials that were not transcribed were read aloud by support workers, while assignments were transcribed back into printed letters. For these reasons, both Respondent A and Respondent B feel their education achievements were assessed fairly.

Respondent C went to a mainstream school. She did not know schools for the blind schools existed at the time. She was unable to read printed letters, but did not use Braille, citing the following reasons:

> I was a very competent touch typist and this was definitely my preferred method. Secondly, I was never a child who wanted to be associated with something that made me different - and Braille definitely made me different! By the time I got to university there were computer-based solutions, and Braille no longer seemed like a necessary thing to learn.

Being illiterate in primary school, she had reading material read aloud to her and notes taken by her support worker, but later used her laptop to take notes. Examination questions were read aloud and her answers were written down by her support worker. This method did not pose a problem for her, even for complicated math equations. She is satisfied with her academic assessment being fair, since it was the only method known to her.

Ⅱ. Life-skills training

When asked why he attended a school for the blind, Respondent A replied, 'I think it was social workers and teachers [who] suggested a school for the blind as being the best education and means of learning life skills'. His parents sought advice after A lost his vision. The school for the blind was far from their house so he moved into a dormitory at the blind school from the age of 7. He described how he learned practical skills as follows:

> We had what you call life-skills lessons. So I learned how to, like, wash clothes, clean our rooms, make beds. We also cooked together [...] once a week or once a couple of

weeks. So we knew how to pour water into cups, how to use a hotplate, how to dish up the meal.

As part of the curriculum, he started cooking classes at the age of 7:

> It was, like, sandwich making, like, we had to toast bread, had to cut the bread, had to cut cheese, had to cut vegetables ... had to cut our fingers as well. (Interview notes, 25 May 2015)

Cane training was provided from Grade 1 of primary school, while ironing came later. He considers that life skills and mobility skills were the most important things he learned, and they have helped him to continue his higher studies and work, and therefore to participate in society.

Respondent B initially dropped cane training although it was provided in school, saying, 'I can do what everybody else can'. Not wanting to be different from sighted students, he chose to walk with his friends or with support workers. Life skills, such as pouring hot water into a cup and bed making, were taught in secondary school during free periods, at the request of his parents. Although they wished for him to be independent, he lived with his family, which meant he had few opportunities to practice such skills. Lacking mobility skills, he was rejected from his university of first choice at the last minute, despite having been accepted earlier. From the following year, his partner took him to university, although the university was near their house. He is accompanied by his partner whenever he goes outside.

Respondent C also did not take cane training until attending university. In fact, she did not take any life-skills training until then. The reasons she gave were as follows:

> It was mainly because I was never shown (information about life-skills training), but at that age, I also did not ask to be shown, because I did not want to be different.

She tried to fit herself into the mainstream, but she faced difficulties at university. She lived with her family as a child and had help from a support worker, so when she completed school and moved into a university dormitory she was not able to cook or to go out to eat by herself. She reconsidered life skills as she realized such skills were essential in giving her independence. Consequently, she slowly acquired life and mobility skills through training, and was able to reach a level of independence at which she can go out by herself half the time.

Ⅲ. Class participation

Being at a school for the blind, Respondent A naturally participated in all classes. His school followed a similar curriculum to mainstream schools, including an extensive physical education course. In art class, students used clay and paint, and learned design. His school life also included extracurricular activities, such as Christmas parties, camping, picnics, musical instruments and visits to museums. His school regarded practical experiences to be valuable because being blind made learning through observation impossible. The safe environment of the special school allowed them to run around and even ride bicycles during break time.

The other two respondents attended mainstream schools, so faced difficulties in some classes. For example, Respondent B could not participate in laboratory work, although he understood the content, and he took a separate physical education class (with other disabled students). He thought some activities were inaccessible and he

thought he had no choice. Respondent C found physical education the most difficult class, as she was simply given a ball to play with (by herself). She also did not sufficiently participate in art, laboratory work or home economics, and most school facilities, including classrooms, were inaccessible for her, increasing her dependency on support workers.

Ⅳ. Friendship

Respondent B admits to having difficulty socializing in school, often feeling isolated during breaks, so he did homework during breaks. Making a large number of friends was difficult, and he came to cherish the quality of the friendships with the few friends he had. However, he was often left observing his peers play, though he participated in few games, like *jenga*.

> I was quite happy to be there but it wasn't always a comfortable experience. [...] So I wouldn't say I was bullied but I suffered terribly.

This issue continued to plague him, even in university, where he found polite and helpful peers but not mutual friendship. While most students socialized in nightclubs, he mostly stayed home with his partner. He mentioned not needing sighted friends' help, however everything was provided by support workers. When asked how he contributes to sighted friends, he paused significantly, and after some thought, answered that he could type for them. The delay in his response suggests that he had not considered the idea before. Having been brought up in mainstream schooling, he might not recognize the constant help he receives, because it has been normal for him.

All three respondents, regardless of their differing backgrounds, faced difficulty socializing at university, and did not spend much free time with friends.

Respondent A faced difficulty socializing after graduating from the school for the blind. Furthermore, preparing for lectures and obtaining reading material meant he had no time for other activities. He spent break time in his room, and like Respondent B, valued quality over quantity of friendship. When asked about help from his friends, he said 'I might ask friends to guide me through the corridor to go to football together'. He saw mutual and natural friendship instead of being the sole recipient of help. He believed he contributed by working together with friends and hearing friends out.

Respondent C felt that at primary and secondary school she sometimes had opportunities to talk to friends during breaks, but she mentioned 'friends' only once during the interview. When pushed about her social life at university, she answered that her part-time job and preparing for lectures kept her busy. When asked if she needed help from sighted friends, she answered 'not really', though she reluctantly added that being accompanied when shopping was helpful.

Regarding leisure activities, Respondent A listed walking, visiting galleries and museums with tangible works, church, visits to friends' houses, blind football, cricket and horse riding with friends, as well as cooking and reading when at home. Respondent B spends time with his partner or with family at his house, listening to music or the radio, although he sometimes visits the cinema, town or his family, accompanied by his partner. Being a fan of football, he once tried to join a blind team, but gave up since the field was an hour and a half away from his house. Respondent C goes to the theatre for comedy performances, has practiced Aikido for two years and generally spends her free time outside, and mentioned few relationships with friends.

Ⅴ. Confidence in social participation

Respondent B reported high confidence in social participation in terms of being integrated into the mainstream and knowing how the 'real world' is, a phrase he emphasized many times during the interview. He argued that graduates of schools for the blind must be frightened of confronting the real world, having been in a fully-protected bubble, and he felt that they would not be familiar with socializing or using visually- oriented language, unlike him who was brought up with sighted people. He said, 'I am very comfortable in society and I am very confident. With my experience from a young age, I know the right way to do things', and he gave his marriage to a sighted partner as an example. Interestingly, when talking about social participation, he always compared himself to graduates of schools for the blind. Yet he acknowledged an inequality due to limited opportunity and choice of jobs for the blind, and was the only respondent who had never been hired.

> I think I sent more than 92 applications, but my argument is I am limited in terms of a choice of working place, because most working places are inaccessible. But I was quite sure I could convince [them] I could do the job. But after I sent applications, I never received even a single offer of an interview.

At the time of the interview, Respondent B was working from home with an unstable income, hoping to be employed someday. He had been a volunteer at the blind-friendly Royal National Institution of the Blind, which he found comfortable, but soon left saying he could not spoil himself like graduates of blind school, in a fully protected environment away from the real world.

Respondent A remarked that participation in society is difficult, despite his active life and work experience. While confident in his abilities to contribute to society and be independent, he acknowledged that this confidence is not necessarily shared by his sighted peers, and he believed getting employment would be difficult even after finishing his doctoral course. For him, life skills for being independent and specific skills are necessary in order for blind people to get a job.

Respondent C, who had the longest working experience of the three, had a part-time job at university and had since had two jobs (access development executive and project coordinator), obtained through ordinary procedures. As she noted,

> It is definitely more difficult to get a job if you have a disability, as there is such a negative stigma. I got my jobs through having a good degree, experience and a lot of networking.

While achieving high social participation, she reported that she was not confident, due to emotional barriers, with some regarding her as different from them. She remarked that 'to be honest', she would probably face many challenges in her efforts to participate in society.

Discussion

Ⅰ. School experience

The findings of the interviews show that each respondent had completely different school experiences, despite all being blind.

Respondent A chose a school for the blind, feeling it would be the most suitable, and felt that the most important things he learned at school were life skills and mobility skills. He is proud of having such abilities, which have helped him progress through the next stages of his life. He has

had many positive experiences, such as participating in all class activities, playing with friends, engaging in practical experiences such as contact with art work and living with flatmates. Being a blind person was natural for him and his needs were properly addressed because the teachers at his school were specialists. On the other hand, this suggests he was not aware of the challenges of the 'real world', such as facing isolation, prior to leaving school.

Respondent B chose a mainstream school, feeling that learning with non-disabled children would help him in social participation in the future. He feels that he was able to integrate into mainstream society and become familiar with the 'real world'. He prides himself on his communication skills and is very confident in social participation. At the same time, he has experienced feelings of isolation, and there were many school activities that he was not able to participate in. He feels however, that this prepared him for survival in mainstream society.

For Respondent C, mainstream school was the only option available. She feels that communication skills were the most important thing that she learned at school. She regrets missing opportunities at an earlier age to learn acquire skills for the blind such as Braille, use of the cane and life-skills training. She was not given enough information about how to become independent and she distanced herself from her blindness for fear of appearing different. As a result of her lack of skills for the blind, she faced many difficulties at university.

Overall, the benefits of schools for the blind were the opportunity to participate in all school activities and to acquire useful life skills. The benefits of mainstream schooling included being integrated into mainstream society and acquiring communication skills. On the other hand, the negative aspect of attending a school for the blind was that students in such schools are in a fully-protected environment and do not learn about the real world. The negative aspect of attending a mainstream school was being isolated in class.

II. Life-skills training for capability

The capability approach focuses on what each individual is capable of doing and being in terms of making 'meaningful choices from a range of options; hence, having the freedom to choose a life they have reason to value' (Walker, 2005, p.103). It examines whether people have equal, or at least sufficient, choices and opportunities to achieve their goals in daily life.

Seen from this perspective, the interview findings indicate that the respondents' capabilities were not guaranteed at some stages of their lives. For example, mainstream school was the only option for Respondent C because she did not know about schools for the blind at the time. Respondents A and B, who chose their school by themselves, were satisfied with their choices and assessment systems, but Respondent C regretted not being provided a choice and missing out on skills training.

Regarding opportunities for enhancing learning skills, Respondents B and C, who went to mainstream schools, were excluded from some classes and activities, especially Respondent C, who could not enhance her physical abilities, as she was left to play alone with a ball. Respondent C also missed the opportunity to acquire Braille skills, despite it being provided, because she did not want to appear to be different. This made her illiterate during primary school.

As for life-skills training, Respondent A had sufficient opportunities to enhance his abilities for independence, through daily class activities and by living in a dormitory. He naturally acquired mobility skills through cane training, allowing him to visit various

places in his free time, as well as get a job. On the other hand, Respondent C did not receive life-skills training until she was 18, and Respondent B acquired almost no life skills, even though some training was provided. Lack of life skills kept Respondent B from going to his first choice of university, from being employed and from going out by himself, although he seems satisfied with his situation, in which he depends on his partner. However, it can be said that he has missed opportunities to gain independence and participate more in social life. Respondent C acquired sufficient skills at university, but admits that having training from an earlier age would have been better. Her school environment had not taught the importance of acquiring life skills as a blind person because she had been the only one taking such training.

Overall, life-skills training, especially for mobility skills, seems to be necessary for social participation and acceptance. By acquiring such skills, blind people can enhance their independence and participate more fully in society, such as by being employed, accepted into university and spending free time in public. Their capabilities are guaranteed when they have sufficient abilities and opportunities to take part in society. Therefore, acquiring proper life skills is the key to social participation and ensuring people value their lives.

Ⅲ. Identity construction based on social identity theory

Kent (1983), Cole-Hamilton (2000) and Warnock (2005) have discussed the difficulty special needs students face in gaining high self-esteem and confidence when they are included in classes with non- disabled students. Indeed, the experiences of Respondents B and C showed they faced difficulty in socializing in mainstream classes, although they were physically included. As Concley, Ohlen and Foulkes

(2007) argue, it is difficult to accept one's disability positively when one is left behind in class activities, misunderstood by teachers and isolated from friends. By comparing themselves to others, such students begin to focus on what they cannot do, rather than what they can, and can begin to lose their self-confidence (Cole-Hamilton, 2000).

According to social identity theory, people establish their identity in relation to similar or different groups. It is among people with similar characteristics that they are able to have confidence as someone belonging to a group (Stets and Burke, 2000). For students with special needs in mainstream schools, their identities are formed solely on the basis of observed differences between themselves and non-disabled students, and they are often unable to find a relatable group. In trying to establish a positive identity as someone in the mainstream, both Respondent B and Respondent C tried to fit in, tried not be different and refrained from learning special skills and using special equipment.

Studies have shown disabled students in special schools are more apt to establish a positive identity because they can be the dominant group within the special education school (Conley et al., 2007). The case of Respondent A supports this argument. Respondent A was never a minority at his school, and he was able to access all school facilities accessible and class content. Meeting other blind students made him confident as a blind person. As C explains, establishing a positive blind identity is necessary for social participation, helping one to find ways to contribute to other in society; an attitude that creates equal friendship, as in A's case. Respondent B's case verifies the difficulty of maintain a friendship when the help is one-sided. From these reasons, establishing positive identity as blind persons, and identifying strengths,

weaknesses and ways to contribute are vital for social participation. Accordingly, blind schools may be better than mainstream schools in enabling blind students to construct positive identities.

Ⅳ. Self-confidence and confidence in social participation

Given that this study only examined three cases, it is not possible to make any confident assertions about how a blind person's projected confidence will affect their performance in society, or whether higher participation in society translates into higher confidence in social participation, or if lack of practical experience translates into low confidence in social participation.

Respondent A reported feeling challenged in many ways, saying, 'it is very, very difficult to participate in society' as a blind person, in spite of having a positive identity as a blind person, fruitful working experience, spending leisure time outside and working on a doctoral degree. He emphasised that the acquisition of the ability to participate in society does not necessarily mean that others will acknowledge those abilities.

Respondents B and C tried to fit into mainstream schools and tried to act in the same ways as sighted people. For Respondent B, being one of the mainstream members of society was more preferable to being a blind person, and he therefore refused to acquire the skills that would make him independent as a blind person, which, arguably, disabled him. In spite of this, Respondent B saw himself as being very confident in social participation as a result of his experience of integration, even though he had not established a positive identity as a blind person and had little practical experience in social participation. Respondent C was particularly determined

not to be different, as she did not want to be a minority, but was therefore unable to establish a positive identity as a blind person. Respondent C had the longest and most experience in mainstream society of the three, and she mentioned that positive recognition of her disability and networking were reasons she gained employment. However, although she seems to be participating in society, she lacks confidence in social participation.

Contrary to popular belief, being integrated into the mainstream at an early age may not necessarily guarantee smooth social participation in the future, as was seen in the case of Respondent B. Therefore, a special school background may not lead to exclusion in later years. Respondents A and C, who were employed and spent their free time in public, emphasized high mobility skills and positive identity as blind persons as being vital for social participation. Their experiences indicate that regardless of the kind of schooling or the educational situation blind people go through, a positive sense of identity and high self-esteem as a blind person are the factors that are most useful in enabling them take part in society without difficulty. Thus, perhaps the place of learning is secondary to the content learned, when social participation is considered.

Conclusion

While inclusion is a major theme in education policy, little attention is given to disabled students' experiences. In an effort to address this, the study examined the experiences of three blind people and analysed them from an insider's viewpoint.

Analysis of the findings led to three conclusions. First, integration into the mainstream at an early age does not always help blind student socialize and participate in society smoothly in later years, and, on the contrary, can reduce confidence and limit a

child's ability to establish a positive dentity, due to feelings of isolation or an inferiority complex. Second, high self- esteem and positive identity as blind persons and life skills for independence contribute to employment, regardless of the kind of schooling. Third, there may be no link between projected confidence and actual performance in terms of social participation.

The researcher/author suggests that positive identity construction as a blind person and life skills are the factors that are essential for confident social participation, and these must be fostered in education for the blind. Constructing a positive identity as a blind person involves identifying one's strengths and weaknesses, and finding ways to contribute to others. These processes can contribute to blind children engaging in mutual friendships and later finding employment. At the same time, acquiring useful life skills such as mobility skills and housework skills enable blind people to become independent.

The author proposes further studies based on semi-structured interviews covering a greater number of cases of varying backgrounds. This would result in a reliable database that would, in turn, allow for better decision-making as regards the education methods to be considered, so that those with visual impairments can participate in society with confidence on equal grounds. For this, the author emphasizes the need to re-examine the relationships between school experience, identity construction and social participation.

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3. Inclusive Education in Singapore:
From the Perspectives of Efficiency versus Equity

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Introduction

Inclusive education, a concept to embrace diversity and to grant individuals with disabilities equal opportunities to be educated in mainstream schools, is an increasingly popular concept worldwide. Investigating how this concept of inclusive education is practiced and perceived in Singapore leads to questioning educational efficiency versus equity. Singapore is known for its highly competitive education system, in which children are sorted into different tracks early on, based on their performance in high-stakes national examinations. Turner's 'sponsored mobility' can be applied to explain the key role the school plays in efficiently sorting students into niches and identifying and selecting a group of elite students (Ye and Nylander, 2015).

How does inclusive education, which emphasizes equity, unfold in an efficiency-driven (Ng, 2008) elitist (Lim et al., 2014) education system? This study will examine this question through: (1) briefly reviewing the macro-level policy on education for children with disability in Singapore, (2) describing the meso-level mechanisms in place to implement inclusive education, and
(3) analyzing micro-level teachers' perceptions of inclusive education. This study is based on the author's visit to Singapore in February 2014, during which the author interviewed education policy-makers, experts in inclusive education, principals and teachers, and conducted a small survey in four selected schools. The survey sought to extract teachers' views on the rationale for, and the effects of, inclusive education and special schools.

Policy for students with special needs

In 2004, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong articulated, in his inauguration speech, his vision of an 'inclusive society'. This was a key turning point for education for students with disabilities in Singapore, as it was immediately followed by his call for the integration of students with disabilities into mainstream schools, and the commitment of 200 million Singapore dollars (SGD) per year for special needs training for both mainstream and special school teachers (Lim et al., 2014). This change was followed by Singapore's signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008 and ratification in 2014.

Although efforts have been made since 2004 to improve the provision of support for students with disabilities, Singapore still lacks special education legislation (Wong and Wong, 2015). Indeed, the concept of inclusion is still evolving in Singapore, and scholars have pointed out that the term 'inclusion' is rarely used in the education discourse within policies, curricula and teacher education (Lim et al., 2014). This reluctance to using the term 'inclusive' education was evident in interviews with Ministry of Education (MOE) officers, who emphasized that the Singapore model is based more on 'integration', and that a pragmatic approach is taken by trying to find the best placement for each student and providing differentiated support. In the Singaporean context, the term 'inclusion' comes with a heavy responsibility, raising the questions of 'inclusion of whom' and 'to what extent'. Researchers and MOE officers emphasized that Singapore, as a late-

comer, needs to construct its own version of culturally appropriate 'inclusive' education.

Systems to implement inclusive education

Ⅰ. Allied educators in mainstream schools

Singapore has a dual system, in which children with severe disabilities are served in separate special schools and children with mild and moderate disabilities attend general education schools. According to the 'Enabling Masterplan 2012', an estimated 2.5 per cent of children (about 13,000) aged between 7 and 18 years have disabilities, and of these about 7,600 are in mainstream schools and 5,400 in special schools (Wong et al., 2015). The government fully funds and operates more than 300 mainstream primary and secondary schools, while the 20 special schools are co-funded by the government and social organizations, leading to differing levels of quality in the special schools (Lim et al., 2014).

Following Prime Minister Lee's pledge, the Ministry of Education led two initiatives to better support students with special needs in mainstream schools. One, initiated in 2005, was the creation of a new kind of education para-professional in mainstream schools called Allied Educators for Learning and Behaviour Support (AEDs). AEDs were created to support mainstream teachers working with children with mild and moderate disabilities. Providing every mainstream school with additional human resources (AEDs) was a concrete expression of the government's commitment to include more children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. AEDs are not 'special education teachers', although they take part in a one-year full-time special education diploma programme. Their role is to complement the work of classroom teachers, through small group specialist remedial lessons, small group

skills training, individual or small group remedial support for academic subjects, and case management (Lim et al., 2014). AEDs are responsible for providing systematic structure and approaches to support students with disabilities so that those students are able to manage the academic, social, physical and emotional demands of school life. The support is provided in three ways: in-class support, withdrawal and pull-out support, and skills training. In-class support includes differentiated worksheets, instructions, charts and schedules to help students understand basic instructions of learning. Withdrawal support, usually implemented during non-core classes, and pull-out support, implemented before and after school, includes individual and small group support to boost basic literacy skills, social skills and study habit skills. Skills training includes organizing social skills camps and days in which students learn and practice basic life skills, such as table etiquette, hygiene, sandwich making, etc.

The other initiative launched by the government was to train a group of teachers in each school to become Teachers of Students with Special Needs (TSNs) and to act as resource persons in their schools. As of 2014, all mainstream schools had at least one AED, and 10 per cent of the mainstream primary school teachers and 20 per cent of the secondary school teachers had been trained as TSNs (Lim et al., 2014).

Ⅱ. Partnerships between special schools and mainstream schools

Another new form of inclusive education in Singapore, referred to as the 'satellite inclusion model', is a partnership between mainstream schools and special schools. In this model, SEN students attend classes in the partnership mainstream school with the support of special education teachers for part of the day, and attend classes in a special school for the rest of the day. The ministry describes this form of support as unique, as it is designed for

students with high severity of disability but who also have high cognitive ability. This reflects Singapore's pragmatic approach and emphasis on meritocracy, as finding the best placement of students depends not only on the severity of their disabilities but also on the students' cognitive abilities.

School visits

Ⅰ. Mainstream school with allied educators

The researcher visited two schools. The first one, School A, a primary school (Grade 1 to Grade 6), had 1,400 students enrolled, of which 55 were children with special educational needs, and had two AEDs and seven TSNs.

In School A, the AEDs not only performed the usual tasks but were also in charge of creating an inclusive learning environment and raising disability awareness among all school actors. For example, they enhance the disability awareness of school staffs through newsletters and arranging meetings with TSNs, and they raise the awareness of students without special needs through assembly and classroom talks.

The school has several programmes that aim, specifically, to create caring and compassionate peers: (1) The 'Pastoral Care Leaders' programme, in which a few students without disabilities are selected to be responsible for creating positive social, emotional and behavioural awareness and practices among all pupils; (2) the 'Classroom Buddy' programme, in which students are selected as buddies of students with special needs and receive special training on disability awareness; and the (3) 'Circle of Friends' programme, a facilitated and monitored platform through which students with special needs and students without special needs can work together through games during recess. Although these initiatives are still new and effects have not been measured, they are

recognized as a structured and pragmatic approach to create inclusive learning environments through building disability awareness of peers.

In School A, the AEDs clearly played a key role in providing systematic support through in-class assistance and withdrawal sessions. In the after-school pull-out programme that the researcher observed, for example, an AED provided a well-organized 30-minute remedial lesson to three students with dyslexia.

While the AED programme is effective, it should be noted that AEDs cannot achieve the desired results without support from other school staff. As of 2017, one or two AEDs are responsible for an unpredictable number of students with various kinds of disabilities as well as for changing the mindset of students without disabilities. For Singapore's schools to become more inclusive and more encouraging of the physical presence of SEN students and also their participation and achievement, the key may be to what extent the schools value AEDs as learning partners, and to what extent the educators and para-educators share their vision of 'inclusivity' and collaborate towards the common goal (Lim et al., 2014).

Ⅱ. Satellite model school – special school in partnership with mainstream schools

The second school visited by the researcher, School B, implements the satellite inclusion model. The school, for students from Grade 1 to Grade 6, is a special school for the deaf, with 89 students enrolled at the time of the visit, and has established partnerships with two mainstream primary schools. The school's philosophy emphasizes that students need to be emerged in a language-rich environment, as reflected in the principal's statement that 'language is caught, not taught'.

The basic model is for SEN students to learn alongside mainstream classmates, with support. Students are banded based on their ability to manage mainstream curricula and on

their linguistic (receptive and expressive language) abilities. Students at high performing levels go under full inclusion from the beginning. Students at middle performing levels have a mix of full and partial inclusion. Students at low performing levels go under partial inclusion. However, as students progress, their abilities change and they are re-assessed accordingly.

The school believes that the assessment of abilities enables the necessary remedial measures to be provided to weaker students. During the visit to School B, the researcher observed a group of hearing impaired students studying in mainstream classrooms in the morning, with the presence of special school teacher, who provided additional support and instruction whenever necessary. The special school teacher also provided informal support to students without disabilities when necessary, creating an environment similar to team-teaching. In the afternoon, the hearing impaired students went back to the special school and received remedial lessons in classes that had as few as five and a maximum of 15 students.

School B also provides SEN students with support lessons to enable them to work on their oral development capabilities, and onsite audio and technical support. The school principal has a strong leadership style, with experience as a vice principal in a reputable mainstream school prior to her current position. Furthermore, she possesses a clear vision, expressed as follows: 'inclusion cannot be some kind of [special] event but rather, a way of life'; and 'educators need to be clear on "why inclusion" [is important], and not be too obsessed with "how to include"'. She claims, with passion, that the teachers at her special school are 'school ambassadors' who, in the end, will transform the thinking of teachers in mainstream schools so they believe it is good to have students with special needs and that 'it is good to teach students with and without disabilities'.

The two systems in Singapore have very different approaches to inclusive education. The former is geared towards mild and moderate SEN students, who have high functional abilities and can therefore cope with the rigour of the national curriculum, and this system is implemented nationwide. The latter is geared towards severe SEN students and is at a pilot stage, and is considered a satellite. These approaches to integrating students into mainstream schools with different levels of support may be seen as reflecting Singapore's 'pragmatic' approach to inclusive education.

Teacher's perceptions on inclusive education: quantitative findings

This section highlights some of the findings of the teacher survey implemented in four schools in Singapore: two mainstream schools and two special schools. Three schools were primary schools and one was a junior secondary school. A total of 70 teachers responded to the survey, of which 45 were mainstream school teachers and 25 were special school teachers. The four selected schools are not, by any means, representative of schools in Singapore. The quantitative data should therefore be interpreted as summary of four cases studies, rather than an indication of the wider situation in Singapore. Hence, no statistical analysis is conducted.

The first survey question was 'Where and how should we educate children with disabilities in your country?' The respondents were given five responses to choose from (see Table 1). The first two responses can be interpreted as preferring mainstream placement, whereas the next two responses can be interpreted as preferring special school placement. The final response does not indicate a preference for mainstream or special schools. The responses indicate that a slightly larger percentage of teachers believe that students with disabilities should be

educated in mainstream schools (50 per cent) rather than in special education schools (41 per cent). When examining the responses by school types, mainstream school teachers tended to have a less favourable view of inclusive education. While, 45 per cent of mainstream school teachers believed it is better to educate SEN children in special schools rather than in mainstream schools, only 33 per cent of special school teachers felt this way. Table 1 summarizes the responses.

**Table 1 Teachers' views of mainstream and special school placements**

	All teachers	Mainstream school teachers	Special school teachers
All children with disabilities should be educated in **normal classes** with their peers without disabilities	2%	0%	4%
In principal, children with disabilities should be educated in **normal classes**, but children with severe disabilities should be educated in special schools	48%	48%	50%
In principal, children with disabilities should be educated in **special classes**, but children who are capable and/or wish to join the normal class should be educated with their peers without disabilities in normal classes	39%	43%	33%
All children with disabilities should be educated in **special classes** with their peers with disabilities	2%	2%	0%
Children with disabilities have the right to choose their education, whether it be normal class or special class	9%	7%	13%

To identify the teachers' rationales for promoting mainstream placement or special school placement, teachers were asked to rate several statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). As shown in Figure 1, in general, teachers gave stronger rationale for mainstream placement. Especially when asked in terms of human rights and political perspectives, teachers generally believed that educating SEN children in mainstream schools guaranteed the rights of children with SEN and contributed to the foundation of society without discrimination.

Figure 1. Teachers' rationale for mainstream and special school placement (all teachers)
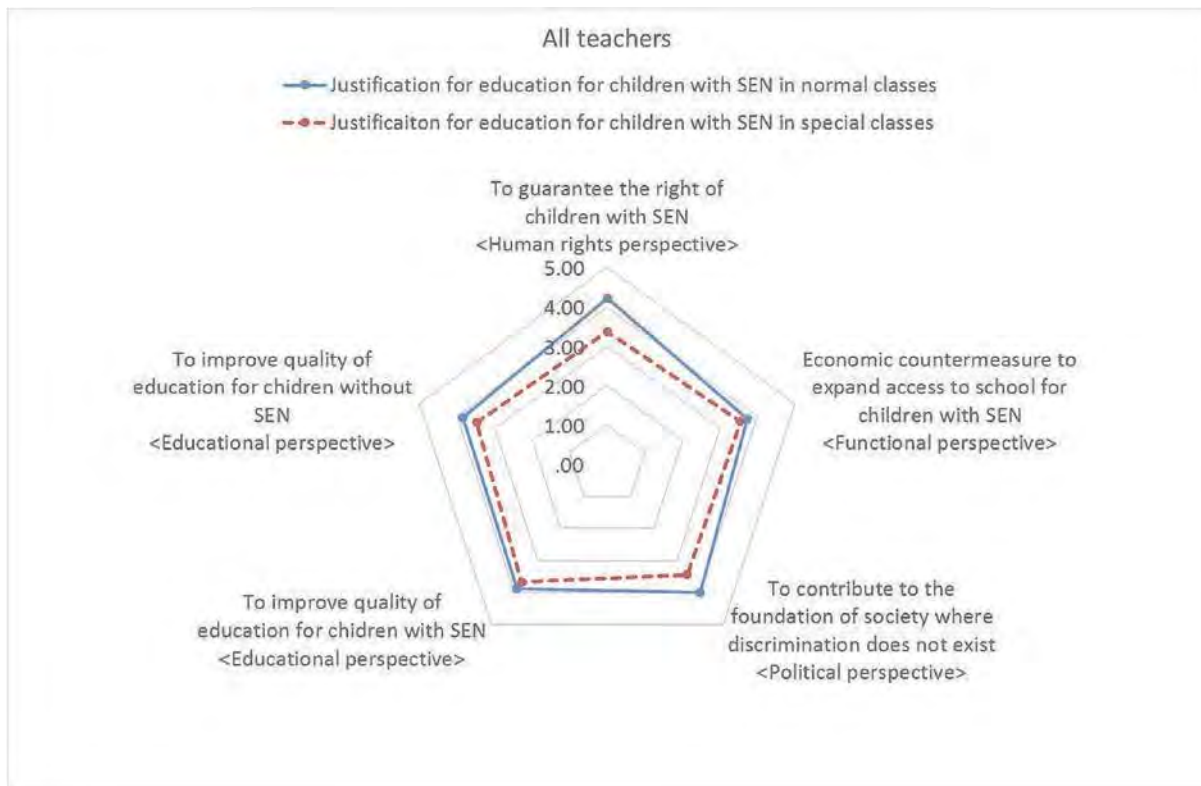
When examined by school type, the results indicate that mainstream school teachers gave approximately same levels of justification for both mainstream placement and special school placement. For example, the rating of 'to what extent mainstream placement contributes to the quality of education for children with SEN' is the same as 'special school placement'. However, special school teachers rated lower levels of justification for special school placement (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Figure 2. Teachers' justifications of mainstream and special school placement (mainstream school teachers)
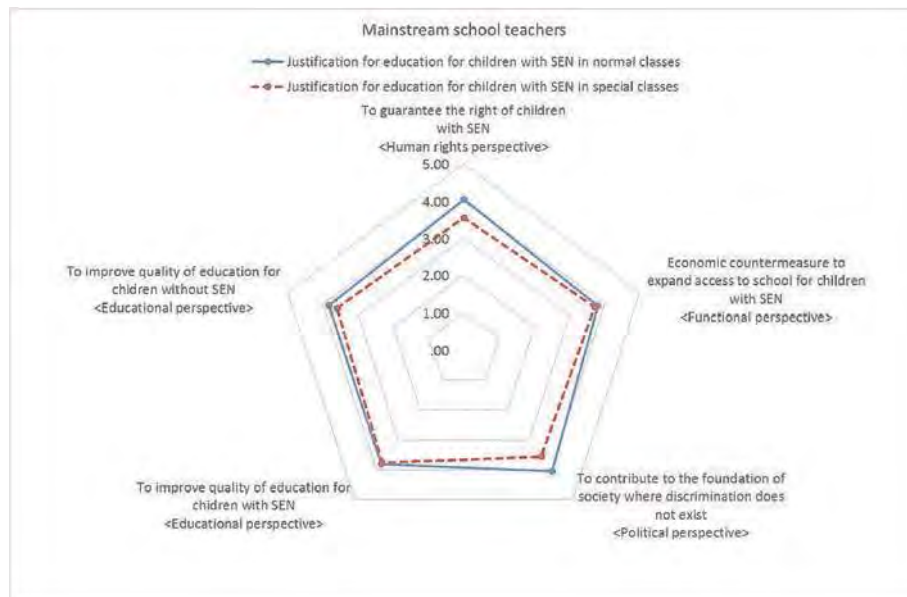
Figure 3. Teachers' justifications of mainstream and special school placement (special school teachers)
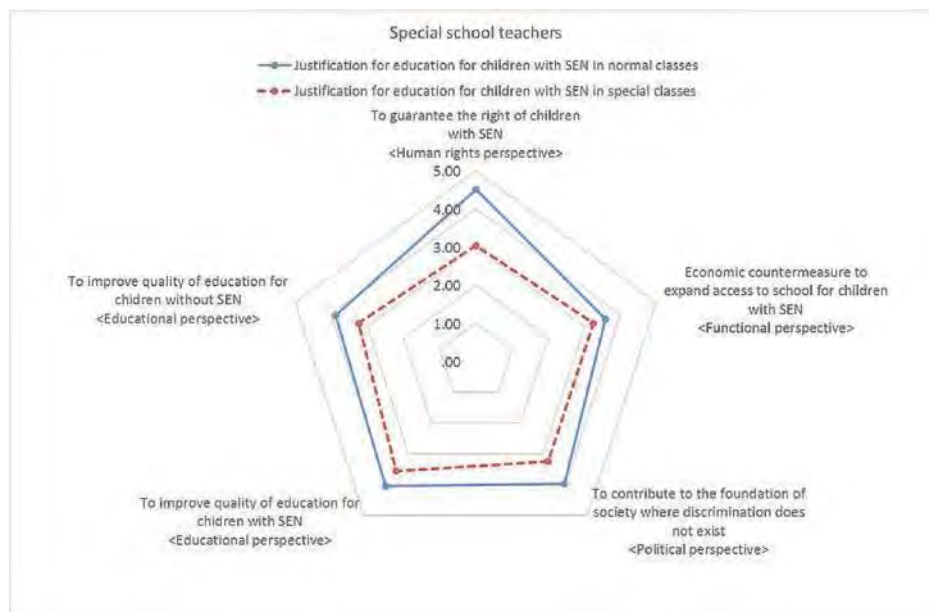
One needs to be careful in interpreting this difference because one of the two special schools surveyed (School B) was a school that was implementing inclusive education as a pilot model under the strong leadership of a principal and this may have created a more positive attitude among these teachers towards educating SEN children in mainstream schools. Nevertheless, the fact that teachers who have more experience with SEN students and more training in special education rated mainstream placement more positively may have an important implications in implementing inclusive education in Singapore.

Teacher's perceptions of inclusive education: qualitative findings

At the end of the questionnaire, mainstream school teachers were asked to write freely in response to two questions: 'In your view, how does having children with disabilities in mainstream school affect children without disability in their cognitive as well as non- cognitive skills?' and 'In your view, how does having children with disabilities in mainstream school affect children with disability in their cognitive as well as non-cognitive skills?' Many teachers wrote extensively, filling up the half-page box for each question, suggesting that teachers grappled with inclusive education as their own issues. Table 2 summarizes the key ideas extracted from the responses and the frequency with which they appeared across the 45 respondents. The concepts are grouped into cognitive and non-cognitive effects and ranked by their frequencies.

Table 2. Effects of inclusive education on students with and without disabilities

Effects on Children without Disability				Effects on Children with Disability			
Cognitive Effects		Non-Cognitive Effects		Cognitive Effects		Non-Cognitive Effects	
Slow down the progress of learning	9	Develop compassion and empathy	15	Struggle to keep with the pace; need special support	7	Develop social interaction skills	8
No or little impact	4	Develop awareness of disability	11	Better learning opportunities	5	Feel accepted in the class and society	7
Strengthen understanding	4	Learn to help others and to reach out	11	Higher motivation to learn	2	Develop life skills	6
Disruption to class	3	Inspired by resilience	6	Feel academic pressure	2	Better self-esteem	5
Learn to work harder	2	Develop social skills to build freindship with different people	6	No or little impact	1	Feel excluded	5
		Develop tolerance and patience	5			Feel inferior	1
		Develop respect	3				

Overall, more extensive comments were provided in response to the question regarding the effects on students without disabilities, especially in the area of non-cognitive effects. Teachers wrote extensively in terms of how having students with disabilities in mainstream schools positively influences the characters of students without disabilities, through developing competencies such as compassion, understanding and respect.

The responses to the questions indicated that teachers had negative views in terms of the cognitive effects for students with SEN and those without SEN. For example, one comment about the cognitive effects on children without SEN was: 'teachers need to slow down the pace of teaching' and, as a result, 'delay the learning pace of the class'.

However, there were some contradicting comments, although not a majority, such as, when children with disability learn with children without disability they 'show better cognitive results because in order to cater to the needs of all students, more differentiated curricula and evaluation systems are used. This benefits all the students since the whole school model is changed from being a product-oriented to process-oriented way of teaching'.

Some salient comments in terms of the cognitive effects on students with disabilities included the following: 'they struggle to keep up with the fast pace', and as a result are 'often left behind'. One teacher commented, 'In my view, children with disability need more support within the school environment to do,

better, otherwise they are at risk of dropping out'. Another teacher wrote that, 'As it is children without disabilities are pressured in school due to exams and an increase in content knowledge for every subject. As such, why do we need to get children with disabilities to also become more pressured, by getting them to go through the same curriculum?' However, there were also some alternative views. For example, students with disabilities 'obtain extra help through specialized resource persons who have the skills and knowledge to teach children with disabilities and meet their academic needs' and 'inclusive education is better for them; for instance, students with hearing impairments are exposed to the better language skills of the children with normal hearing'. These views reveal that the academic rigour and competition embedded in the Singapore education system leads to heated debate in terms of the cognitive effects of inclusive education on both children with and without disabilities.

Many teachers noted that when they mix with non-SEN students, students with SEN develop social skills, such as 'learning how to interact with students without SEN', and life skills, such as 'learning how to behave appropriately in social contexts and to function in a bigger community when they grow older'. Many teachers also felt that inclusive education develops a feeling of acceptance. For example, one teacher wrote that, 'Children with disabilities will know that they can stand tall and assimilate with the masses. They are no "different" to a certain extent', while another wrote that 'For them to integrate into society, the earlier the children with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities, the better they are able to find their footing in education and society'.

There were also negative comments with regard to the non-cognitive effects on children with SEN, with some teachers commenting that SEN students received negative treatment from classmates, resulting in a feeling of exclusion. However, when teachers believed that society reflects what is taught and experienced inside the classroom, they tended to emphasize the positive non-cognitive effects. Such teachers believed that a feeling of acceptance or receiving equal treatment within the classroom created a more fair and inclusive society.

The numerous negative comments regarding cognitive effects on both students with and without disabilities reveal the pressure that teachers in Singapore face to help their students excel academically. The results of national examinations are the most visible measure of achievement for teachers and parents and, as a result, greater emphasis is often put on examinable subjects, regardless of the educational discourse. As Wong et al. (2015) found, through interviews with parents, the over-emphasis on academic achievement forced parents of children with disabilities to invest in private tuition. Accordingly, Wong et al. called for Singapore to develop a broader definition of 'merit', that is, recognizing forms of achievement other than academic. The numerous positive comments regarding non-cognitive effects, especially for students without disabilities, indicate the desire of teachers to provide holistic education in an already competitive system. Teachers' comments on the impact of integrating students into mainstream schools clearly indicates that teachers face conflicting demands as they strive to help students acquire new knowledge and skills in the necessary timeframe, along with the character and values necessary to live as a global citizen in a changing world.

Conclusion

Through reviewing the policy and mechanisms of education for students with disabilities in Singapore, this study identified features of Singapore's unique and 'pragmatic'

approach to inclusive education. The 'dual system' has inherited Singapore's tradition of tracking and sorting students by ability, and the emphasis on 'finding the best placement for the student'. This approach presents an interesting case in studying how inclusive education unfolds in different social contexts.

Three conclusions can be drawn from the study. First, the new initiatives, AEDs and partnerships between mainstream and special schools, although very different in their approaches, are important steps towards inclusivity in education. In both cases, the key may be to what extent the AEDs and special school teachers are able to change the mindsets of other teachers. In other words, to what extent are mainstream teachers able to learn from teachers who have more knowledge in special education and experience with students with disability? Yeo et al. (2014) suggested that mainstream teachers be provided with opportunities to co-teach with colleagues trained in special education so as to observe effective support in action. Another means of raising awareness among mainstream teachers would be to deploy AEDs as consulting teachers so that their knowledge filters down to a larger number of teachers. In addition, teachers need to overcome the dichotomy between mainstream and special schools, and also need to end the dichotomy between teachers and para-professionals, and perceive the latter as learning partners.

The second conclusion drawn from the study is that it is necessary to examine how inclusive education affects students without disabilities. The responses to the open-ended questions revealed that teachers perceived many changes in children without disabilities as a result of their interactions with SEN students, but there is little empirical data to support these views. Most empirical studies of the effects of inclusive education focus on the effects of inclusive education on children with disabilities, by comparing SEN children in mainstream schools and special schools (Baker et al., 1995; Farrell, 2010), in regular classes versus resource classes (Elbaum, 2002), and with different models of support (Allodi, 2000), such as in-class support versus resource room support (Wiener and Tardif, 2004). While these studies are beneficial in explaining how to provide better support for students with disabilities, they do not necessarily answer the question of 'why' we should have inclusive education. Studies that investigate the effects of integrating students in mainstream schools on children without disabilities, may better answer that question. This is important, as principals and teachers need to have a clear sense of purpose for implementing inclusive education.

The third conclusion drawn from the study is that it is necessary to reconsider the issue of educational efficiency vs equity. The responses to the open-ended questions revealed that teachers in Singapore face high demands and that there is a tension between academic achievement and holistic education in the twenty-first century. It is necessary to reconsider the weight attached to developing academic excellence and perhaps give greater emphasis to diversity and equity. The importance attached by principals, teachers and parents to the development of values such as respect, compassion and caring for people who are 'different' may determine the path of inclusivity. To put it another way, having a clear purpose of inclusive education may change our mindset regarding how we think about the goal of education.

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4. Resource Room Inclusive Education in India at a Crossroads: A Case Study of Chennai, South India

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Introduction

In view of the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 1990, India launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), as India's Education for All movement. This has been a government programme since 2000/01.

The SSA reduced the gap in access to education, enabling students who had been discriminated against in the past to enter the school education system. Thus, the SSA movement enabled many children, including those from scheduled castes and other castes, ethnic minorities, language minorities and other groups to access school education.

The SSA was followed by the *Right of the Children to Compulsory Education* (RTE) Act, which was enacted on 4 August 2009. The RTE became a landmark as the first and only law on school education that applied all over India (Juneja, 2012) and contributed to improving the gross enrolment rate.

While SSA and RTE Act were effective, some scholars have pointed out a mismatch between rhetoric and reality. Juneja (2012), for example, suggests that the act did not spell out *how* things are to be done, with no concrete methods regarding how to teach students from various groups. Another issue, as noted by Ohara (2013), was that the increase in the quantity of students led to a severe deterioration of the quality of education, particularly in government schools.

With increased diversity within the education system, with multiple ethnicities, languages, castes and abilities, alternative forms of education became more widespread. For example, the *madrasa*

education system for Muslims grew. New education institutions were established by peripheral religious groups and by those who were not satisfied with the deteriorating public education system. The government recognized such institutions because it could not cover the entire nation's education needs given the limited public budget.

While some groups succeeded in establishing their own education systems, many others remained largely excluded from education, particularly disabled people. This is an especially difficult group to reach because of obstructive factors such as concealment by parents of disabled children.

The government has sought to extend education to disabled people since the 1960s, with the philosophy expressed in a report by the Education Commission 1964-1966 (known as the Kotali Commission), as follows:.

The primary task of education for a handicapped child is to prepare him for adjustment to a socio-cultural environment designed to meet the needs of the normal. It is essential, therefore, that the education of handicapped children should be an inseparable part of the general educational system. ... The differences lie in the methods employed to teach the child and the means the child uses to acquire information. These differences in methodology do not influence the content or the goals of education. This form of education is, therefore, conveniently referred to as 'special education' (NCERT, 1966, pp. 204-5).

At the time of the Kotali Commission, enrolment rates were quite low. For example the primary school enrolment rate in 1965/66 was 76.7 per cent (male 96.3 per cent, female56.5 per cent), and the rate at the lower secondary level was 30.9 per cent (Planning Commission, 1976). It was therefore important that enrolment rates be increased. The sentiments expressed in the Kotali Commission report were not translated into effective action, however, and the gap between rhetoric and reality has not changed significantly in the ensuing years.

Disabled children were to be positioned as a disadvantaged group in the RTE Act, but were 'inadvertently' left out. After the RTE amendment bill was passed, a Rajya Sabha (Second chamber) positioned disabled children as a disadvantaged group. However, the reality for disabled children in terms of access to education has not changed accordingly.

A schooling system in which all children were included regardless of whether or not they are disabled needs specific teacher training and a huge amount of time and effort, as well as significant financial resources. Such resources have not been available, however. Under the SSA, theoretically, a teacher in regular class must teach all children, including disabled children, ethnic minorities, language minorities and lower castes. Given the lack of financial resources, however, public full- inclusion schools have not eventuated..

Research framework and methods

This study focused on how schools and NGOs are bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality, using resource rooms or centres. It was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu State, in the month of August each year in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Figure 1. Chennai city in Tamil Nadu state

Source: http://www.cantour.co.jp/images

The researchers interviewed head teachers and teachers in six education institutions that were either inclusive or special needs education institutes, as follows:
- Panchayat Union Middle School Government aided: Inclusive education
- Social Service Centre Willy's Integrated High School (Established in 1964) NGO: Inclusive education
- Paradise Home Rehabilitation Centre for the Mentally Challenged NGO: Special needs education for adults
- Vidya Sagar (Established in 1985) NGO: Resource centre and school programme
- Asha Johnnie Samuel Memorial Centre for the Handicapped (Established in 1985) Church: Special needs education
- Ambumalar Special School for the Mentally Retarded & Residential Care unit (Established in 1975) NGO: Boarding special needs education

Background information about the selected institutions

Panchayat Union Middle School is a public school that caters for children from the local area who have visual impairments. The school has insufficient furniture, so lacks desks, chairs and so on, To enrol students, teachers usually visit homes in the catchment area to

convince parents of visually impaired children who were reluctant to send their children to school to do so. In theory, the school is engaged in inclusive education. The government aim is that teachers in regular schools teach both non-disabled and disabled children in the same classrooms.
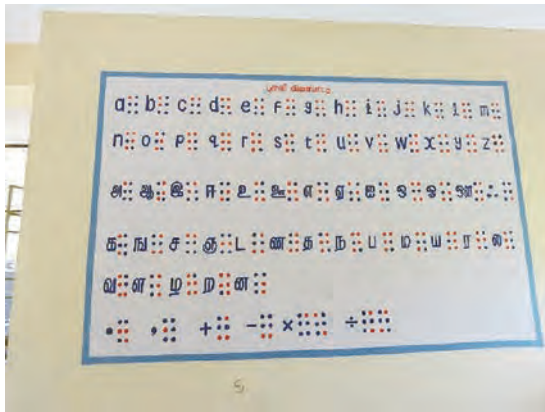
Photo1: A braille sheet in chennai

Ambumalar Special School, the Social Service Centre and the Paradise Home Rehabilitation Centre are NGO-run centres. Because rural people in India tend to conceal the existence of disabled children, due to strong beliefs in *karma* (the belief that behaviour in a previous life influences one's current life), these education centres engage in advocacy with the parents of disabled children to convince them that the disabilities are not a result of *karma*. NGO staff also try to explain the necessity of education and how it opens up the possibility of working in society. All of the selected education institutions, except the public school, have adopted the resource room/centre approach.

The resource room approach

If the rhetoric about inclusive education had been translated into action across the country, we would today observe full inclusion

of disabled children in classrooms nationwide, however the reality is that almost all schools have been unable to implement full inclusion and have instead responded by setting up special needs schools or classrooms. In some cases, however, disabled children are refused entry.

The study found, during visits over the period 2012 to 2014, that the resource room/centre approach was a key method for teaching disabled students in Tamil Nadu. A resource room or centre is a mix between a regular class/school and a special needs class/school that seeks to facilitate education for disabled students. At resource centres, disabled students visit according to a daily or weekly schedule and receive supplementary education appropriate to their handicap. The resource centres have teachers who are licensed in special needs education and who teach using various kinds of equipment, conduct supplemental coaching, and also monitor the learning results of their students and consult with other disabled students. Resource teachers engage in various activities, including translating Braille or explaining using sign language, providing mental support for disabled children, assessing students and communicating with head teachers or regular teachers. Equipment include Braille boards, audio systems, abacus, etc. The teachers at NGO schools and church resource centres also promote a more accurate public understanding of disabilities and seek to convince guardians and community members, often by home visits.

The researchers interviewed the person in charge of inclusive education at the National Institute of Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD) and discussed the effectiveness of the resource room/centre approach with him.

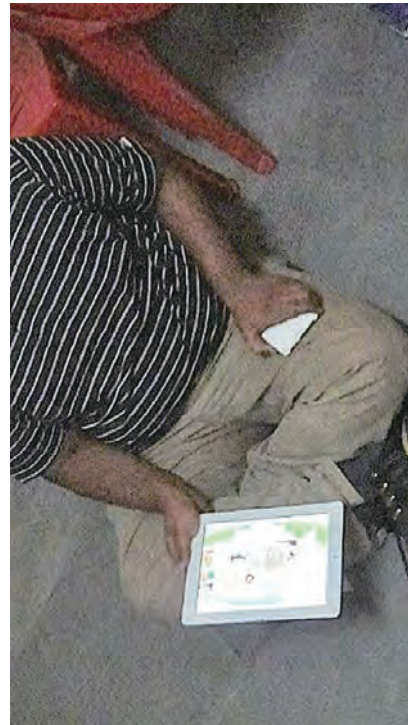According to the interviewee, 'the resource room/ centre approach is one approach to inclusive education but not the only one. Regular teachers must respond to diverse classrooms'.

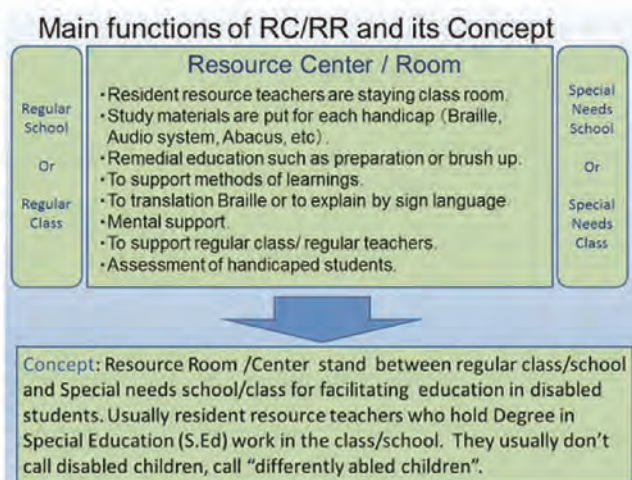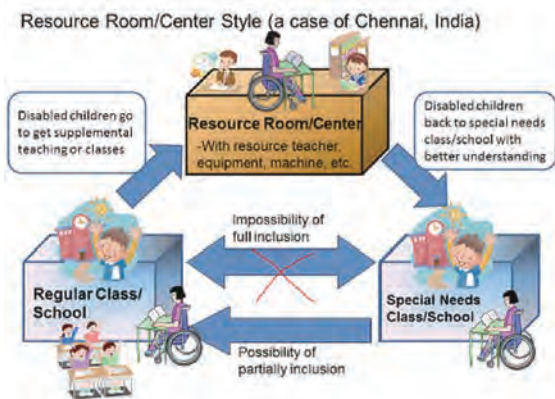**Photo2: Gymnastic equipment in a resource room**

Photo3: Digital equipment in resource centre

Figure 2: A learning flow through resource room/centre

Figure 3: Main functions of resource centres and rooms and the concept

The study found that full inclusive education could not ensure high quality education, except in a few model cases. Therefore, resource centres or resource rooms are needed as an intermediate measure in-between special needs classrooms and normal classes in inclusive education and special needs schools/classrooms.

The future of the resource room approach

The concept of 'inclusion' in India refers to the inclusion of various groups, including disabled students, castes such as Dalit, child labourers, street children and recipients of Low Fee Private Schooling (Verma, 2007). Each group had been subject to discrimination in the past, so each group needs to defend their right to social inclusion. Grass-roots activists and educationists developed the resource room/centre approach as a way to ensure better education for disabled children and other marginalized groups.

There are various notions of what constitutes inclusive education. Liasidou (2012, pp. 13-26) describes four perspectives of inclusive education:

Ⅰ. **Inclusion as a human rights issue**

The position sees inclusion as a human right. As Liasidou notes, 'Segregating practices are nothing but a violation of human rights since disabled children are treated differently from their peers and are refused access to mainstream education' (Liasidou, 2012, p. 13). Thus, this position opposes segregated schooling, such as special needs schools and schools for handicapped children.

Ⅱ. **Inclusion as a means of social cohesion and economic advancement**

The position support special needs classes and seeks both equity and better learning outcomes, despite the budget limitations. This view aims 'to render hitherto unproductive groups of individuals more productive, so as to contribute to the highly demanding and competitive workforce of the twenty first

century' (Liasidou, 2012. p. 18).

Ⅲ. **Inclusion as a special education subsystem**

This position supports a dual track system in which both regular classes and a resource room or centre are under the same roof. The position is based on the idea that it is impossible for a regular class to meet all the differing needs of all the students. According to Liasidou (2012, p. 26), such 'models of "inclusion" are merely concerned with the placement of disabled students in unchanged and monolithic mainstream settings disregarding, however, the fact that these students are also entitled to receive quality education and become active and valuable members of mainstream learning communities'.

Ⅳ. **Inclusion as education for all**

This position views inclusive education as a means of responding to the needs of a diversity of learners. From this perspective, disabled learners are considered as one of a number of marginalized groups. Other such groups include gender, ethnic, religious and language minorities and gifted learners. Accordingly, disabled children are not the only focus and the approach seeks to avoid stigmatizing disabled children. As Liasidou (2012, p. 32) expresses it, according to this view, 'Disability should be neither tackled as a distinct issue nor subsumed and diluted within the wider remit of EFA initiatives'.

In India, the approach that is being taken seems to be 'Inclusion as a special education subsystem'. However, the government is trying to shift to an 'Inclusion as a human rights issue' approach. This process has led to protests by resource teachers who have not received payment or sufficient resources for their students. In August 2012, resource teachers published an appeal in a report of a higher secondary school. The following is the full text.

AN EARNEST APPEAL FROM RESOURCE TEACHERS

We have been working as resource teachers for the past 17 years. We teach the differently-abled children, including visually challenged, hearing challenged, physically challenged and cerebral palsy children, using technology and media. We have been able to improve the educational standards, with remarkable achievements. There are far better than regular students in terms of performance. One of our students K.P distinguished himself in the Ⅶ Public Exam last year, with a score of 1020 out of 1200. We wholeheartedly dedicate ourselves for the betterment of these children, but we are grieved to bring you to your attention that we have not received our salary for 29 months (since April 2010). We humbly request that you help us, through your good office, to receive the long pending salary. Furthermore, the differently-abled children only receive stationary, uniforms and scholarships at the end of every year. We request that these children receive them at the beginning of each academic year. Your benevolent support and help will definitely enable us to improve our service.Signatures of the resource teachers

S.M

D.E

This appeal from resource teachers tells us that the resource room system is experiencing severe distress under the SSA in India. The appeal symbolizes the gap between rhetoric and reality in education and the lack of a budget dedicated to supporting the resource room approach.

Clearly, if India wishes to achieve the SSA goals, it is necessary to consider the education environment of each marginalized group, including disabled children. We must examine the education environments of each deprived group and must consider their needs so as to improve those environments. Research is needed to untangle the complexity of the relationships between the marginalized groups and to determine how to ensure inclusiveness in India.

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5. Inclusive Education in Bhutan

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Introduction

Universal primary education for all has been achieved in many countries, but in some countries, one in six children has not completed primary school (UNESCO, 2015). These excluded children include refugees, language-minority children, children suffering from HIV and AIDS, and children with disabilities, with the latter making up the highest percentage. Providing quality education for all children regardless of gender, ethnicity, or challenge (including disability) is undoubtedly important in every country, and Bhutan is not an exception.

Bhutan's first national survey to capture the nature and prevalence of disabilities (September, 2012) found that as many as 30 percent of children aged 2 to 9 years old face specific challenges (National Statistics Bureau et al., 2012). Following the previous study, this paper examines the realities and challenges of inclusive education in Bhutan.

Background

Bhutan is a landlocked country surrounded by the Himalayas, with China to the north and India to the south. The World Bank ranks Bhutan as a lower-middle-income country. It has a population of about 807,610 and a gross national income (GNI) per capita (2017) of 3,130 USD. The national religion is Tibetan Buddhism. In 2005, the country became well known for the fact that 97 percent of the population responded to a census question saying that they are happy.

The origins of the country trace back to the seventeenth century when Ngawang Namgyal, a Tibetan Buddhist lama, unified a number of fiefs and consolidated the basic nation state of Bhutan. In 1907, Ugyen Wangchuck became the first Druk Gyalpo, King of Bhutan. The country was an absolute monarchy until 2008 when the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, introduced a reform that changed the governing system from absolute monarchism to constitutional monarchism. He then abdicated the throne in favour of his son, the Fifth King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

Compulsory education does not exist in Bhutan, yet the government offers free basic education. The government has made education from pre-primary (PP) level to the tenth grade free, and the Ministry of Education has emphasized the importance of increasing access to high quality basic education. While education is not compulsory, the estimated net enrolment rate for the primary-level secondary (PP-VI) in 2013 was 96 percent and that of lower and middle secondary level (classes VII-X) was 86 percent. This high enrolment rate has contributed to a high youth (15-24 years old) literacy rate of 86 percent, which is higher than the adult literacy rate of 55 percent (Ministry of Education, 2013). However, the number of age-appropriate students in a particular grade was only 26 percent (Ministry of Education, 2012a). All classes from PP through to higher education are conducted in English, except for Dzongkha, the national language history class. Further, all aspects of life in Bhutan are bilingual, with, for instance, television broadcasts in both English and Dzongkha. Therefore, Bhutanese school children are well versed in English as well as their national language Dzongkha.[1] Table 1 summarizes Bhutan's education system.

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[1] Bhutan has more than 1000 languages, but the national language is Dzongkha.

Table 1. Bhutanese school system

Age	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
School Level	Pre-school			Basic Education											Higher Secondary Education		Tertiary Education			
	Early Childhood Care and Development Centres			Primary Education							Secondary Education				Higher Secondary School		Undergraduate Courses			
				Primary School							Lower Secondary School		Middle Secondary School							

(*Source:* Annual Education Statistics 2012: 24th Edition, p.15, Ministry of Education, Bhutan, Edited by the author)

A cultural highlight of Bhutanese philosophy that has also affected the country's approach to education is the Gross National Happiness concept, launched by the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1971. The concept was based on Tibetan Buddhism. In 2002, the government of Bhutan described the four pillars of GNH as follows: (1) sustainable and equitable socio-economic development, (2) environmental preservation, (3) promotion and preservation of culture, and (4) good governance. These four pillars are the basis of Bhutan's national policy. From 1999 to 2010, students from PP to Grade 12 studied a subject called 'values education' centred on the four pillars of GNH. In 2010, values education was expanded to include the 72 variables that fall under the nine domains of GNH. These nine domains are: ecology, (psychological) well-being, community vitality, health, education, cultural diversity, standard of living, good governance and time use. Schools were strongly encouraged to teach GNH values and initiated GNH-infused education, in accordance with the view that 'the chances of happiness will be much higher if a person pursues various elements under each of these nine domains of life' (Ministry of Education, 2011, p.2). Some critics have argued, however, that 'enforcing GNH values in education is foreign and is not Bhutanese original culture' (Tshering, 2010, quoted in Sakurai, 2011).

Development of inclusive education in Bhutan

As with many other countries, Bhutan follows the concept of the Salamanca Statement (1994), which has the goal of "mainstreaming children with disabilities in to the regular programmes." After reviewing development of inclusive education policy, this paper examines gaps between local school needs and the national policy on inclusive education. While UNESCO uses the terms 'inclusive education' and 'special needs education' to refer to education that is inclusive of all groups, including refugee children, HIV and AIDS-affected children, children with disabilities, etc., the term 'inclusive education' within this paper refers to 'education for children with disabilities' as this is how the term is understood in official documents published in Bhutan (c.f. Annual Education Statistics 2013). Other terms used in published documents are listed in Table 2.

Since Bhutan is still in the process of integrating disabled students into the mainstream, Bhutanese published documents often interchangeably use terms such as 'special education,' 'integration,' and 'inclusion.' The term 'gifted' is also used for some children with special education needs (SEN).

Table 2. Terminology

Terms	Definitions
Special education	Education programmes designed for students with special education needs that require additional support services in the form of trained teachers, teaching approaches, equipment and care within or outside a regular classroom.
Integration	A child's attendance at an integrated school and the process of transferring a student to a less-segregated setting.
Inclusive education	Inclusion in education of every child regardless of her/his disability, colour, creed, culture, religion, language and regional or ethnic background.
Child with special education needs	• Has significant difficulty in performing any activity compared with the majority of children of the same age. • Has a barrier that prevents or hinders her/him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in school. • Is gifted.

(Source: Ministry of Education, 2012b, pp. 19-20)

When enrolment rates are compared, while the net enrolment rates for secondary school (Grades 7 to 10) reached 86 percent in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.5), education for children with disabilities[2] still faces many challenges, including policy formulation, improving school infrastructure and providing appropriate teacher training programmes. The first specialized institution for visually impaired persons was built in Khaling, Trashigang, by His Royal Highness Prince Namgyel Wangchuck in 1973.It was not for another 30 years (until 2001) that the government initiated special education programmes and began to build schools and institutions for children with disabilities. This took place under an 'integration' policy: a process of transferring students to less segregated settings, i.e. regular schools with additional facilities and infrastructure (Ministry of Education, 2012b, p. 20).

During the 2000s, the number of schools and institutes for children with disabilities increased, and as of 2013 there were eight special education institutions in which 249 boys and 149 girls were enrolled (see Table 3). In terms of constitutional agreement, on 21 September 2010, Bhutan signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),[3]

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[2] Bhutan utilizes the term "disability" in the same way as in WHO's *The International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (1980)*. According to this definition, disability is an 'umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is the interaction between individuals who have a health condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, Down syndrome or depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g. negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation, or limited social support)'. http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/

[3] The United Nations General Assembly adopted it on 31 December 2006. As of 2017, more than 160 countries and territories had signed and ratified it. Japan, for instance, signed it on 28 September 2007 and ratified it on 20 January 2014.

Table 3. Enrolment in special education institute/schools, 2013

Prefecture	Name of the institute	Unit within the institute	Enrolment (Male, Female)
Mongar	Mongar LSS	Mongar LSS	43(25,18)
Paro	Drugyel LSS	Deaf Education Unit	78(48,30)
	Drugyel LSS	Main Stream	94(44,50)
Samtse	Tenduk HSS		83(53,30)
Thimphu	Changangkha MSS		48(30,18)
Trashigang	Khaling LSS		14(9,5)
	Jigmesherubling HSS	Jigmesherubling HSS	16(12,4)
	Muenselling Institute	Institute serving the blind and low vision of *Bhutan*	32(16,16)
Zhemgang	Zhemgang LSS	Zhemgang LSS	16(12,4)
Total			**424(M=249; F=149)**

(Source: Special Education Unit, 2013, p. 17)

which seeks to promote, defend and reinforce the human rights of all persons with disabilities. This signing on 21 September 2010 was around the same time as the first part of a nationwide survey titled the 'Two-Stage Child Disability Study 2010-2011', the first survey in Bhutan on children with disabilities, which sought to capture the nature and prevalence of disabilities in the country. As of March 2019, Bhutan had not yet ratified the CRPD and, hence, disabled persons organizations (DPOs) in Bhutan and other stakeholders are pushing for ratification.[4]

In 2012, the Ministry of Education completed the draft National Policy on Special Education Needs. This policy seeks to ensure that every child with special education needs has equal access to quality education that is appropriate, enabling and responsive, and to empower children with special education needs to become independent, responsible and productive citizens (Ministry of Education, 2012b, p. 7). This policy was subsequently incorporated into the National

Education Policy, implying that the government had thus integrated special education policy into the larger national education framework. In 2015, the Gross National Happiness Committee and all the other disability stakeholders drafted the 'National Policy for Persons with Disabilities.' These and other 'stepping stones' for consolidating a platform of quality education regardless of disabilities are listed in Table 4.

In the late 2000s, the Royal Government of Bhutan tried to meet the needs of all children, regardless of disabilities, and to guarantee access and encourage empowerment; thus, they implemented a national survey on disability to prepare the legal framework. The results of this national survey, the 'Two-Stage Child Disability Study 2010-2011,' shocked the nation, as the results of the first questionnaire, in which ten questions were administered to mothers or primary caretakers of children aged 2-9, indicated that about 20 percent of children aged 2-9 had at least one disability. However, in this survey 'a disability' included the need to wear glasses, which is likely to have inflated the percentage.

[4] Interview with the ECCD SE section, MoE 2 May 2016.

Table 4: History of policies and programmes for children with special education needs in Bhutan

Year	Events
1973	An institution for the visually impaired was built in Khaling, Trashigang.
2001	A Special Needs Education Programme was initiated in Changangkha MSS.
2005	The results of the National Census indicated that 3.4 percent of Bhutanese people had some disability, among whom about 12 percent were aged 5-17.
2010	Bhutan signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children with Disabilities on 21September (as of March 2019 Bhutan had not yet ratified it).
2010-2011	The National Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and UNICEF jointly conducted the 'Two-Stage Child Disability Study.' It revealed that 21 percent of children aged 2-9 had one or more disabilities.
2012	The Ministry of Education drafted the 'National Policy on Special Education Needs.'
2015	The Gross National Happiness Committee, in coordination with all other disability stakeholders, drafted the 'National Policy for Persons with Disabilities' (November).

Source: Compiled from Ministry of Education, 2012b.

The second stage of the survey assessed eight domains of disability: vision, hearing, cognition, fine motor, gross motor, speech, behaviour and seizures, and found that 21.3 percent of children aged 2 to 9 had at least one disability. Most (18.6 percent) of the children had a 'mild disability,' while 2.8 percent had a 'moderate' or 'severe' disability; therefore, the results were not as shocking as they first appeared. The factors that affected the incidence of disabilities included the following: the age of the children, maternal education level, and poverty, indicating that some disabilities can disappear as a child grows or their circumstances change. The survey had limitations, however, particularly in terms of the definition of 'disabled.' Including those who wear glasses as 'visually disabled' clearly distorted the results, and indicates a need to improve survey methods in future research studies.

Gap between policy and the situation in local schools

While government policies and programmes had been put in place to ensure access to education for children with disabilities and to empower those children, it was not clear whether anything had changed at the school level. This raised the following questions: How do local teachers conceive of education for children with disabilities? Do any obstacles exist that hinder learning in school for children with disabilities? Do the perceptions of teachers differ by school type, i.e., do teachers working at regular schools or teachers working at special institutions or schools with special units for children with special needs have different opinions regarding obstacles for quality education for children with special needs? And last but not

least, how has the "Salamanca" spirit of 1994 been explicated to the local context?

To answer these questions, the researchers conducted a survey in Thimphu and Paro in September 2012. The survey team received support from the Special Education Section, ECCD and SEN Division, DSE, of the Ministry of Education of Bhutan. Thanks to strong support from the local ministry, the observations, questionnaires and interviews were conducted as planned. The survey team visited several schools and training centres, along with the Ministry of Education, as listed in Table 5, and interviewed 20 school teachers, including head teachers or principals, at three institutions with special units for children with disabilities and NGO centres, as well as 31 teachers at three regular schools.

Table 5. Institutions/schools visited

Possession of a special education needs unit	Prefecture	Name of institution or school	Number of faculty (number of faculty interviewed)
Yes	Paro	Drugyel Lower Secondary School, LSS (pp to 8th grade)	43(11)
	Thimphu	Changangkha Middle Secondary School, MSS (PP to 10th grade)	50(5)
	Thimphu	Draktsho, Vocational Training Centre (NGO)(13 to 50)	11 (4)
No	Paro	Gaupel LSS (as of 2012)	41(9)
	Thimphu	Changzontok LSS	54(12)
	Thimphu	Jigme Losel Primary School (pp to 5th grade)	30(10)

According to the interviewees, the key obstacles included: 'insufficiency of teacher training courses', 'lack of school equipment' and 'over-capacity of teachers' (see Table 6). While the most-commonly listed obstacles to quality education for children with disabilities were school-related factors, the interviewees also listed some social factors, such as 'immaturity of the labour market' and 'lack of community understanding,' and some 'family

factors' such as 'poor economic family status' and 'lack of parental understanding.' The high frequency of school-related factors is perhaps because Bhutan has only recently begun to put effort into inclusive education, beginning only around 2010, and much remains to be done in terms of raising awareness, providing teacher training courses and building facilities so that children with disabilities can be integrated into

mainstream education.

Table 6. Obstacles that hinder learning in school for children with disabilities

Order	Item	Average	Factor type
1	Insufficiency of teacher training course	4.44	School Factor
2	Insufficiency of appropriate facilities and equipment	4.27	School Factor
3	Over-capacity of teachers	4.13	School Factor
4	Immaturity of appropriate curriculum, teaching materials and textbooks	3.87	School Factor
5	Immaturity of the labour market	3.87	Social Factor
6	Lack of special education classes or formal classes for children with disabilities	3.67	School Factor
7	Poor economic status of home	3.56	Family Factor
8	Lack of community understanding	3.20	Social Factor
9	Lack of parental understanding	3.15	Family Factor
10	Difficulty of going to school on road	3.11	School Factor

Note: The questionnaire was 5-Likert, with 5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree, and 3 = fair.

The survey also found that when tests were performed with regard to institutional category or school type (regular school vs. school with special unit, special school or NGO), gender, age and position (head teacher/director vs. regular teacher), the obstacles that were reported changed significantly. The most striking difference was found for school type. For instance, for regular schools, 'immaturity of the labour market' was 3.43 in 5-likert scale but was 4.4 for schools with special classes and special schools (n=30; 25; $p<0.01$). Similarly, while regular school teachers considered 'lack of community understanding' as an obstacle with a score of 2.87, teachers working at special schools and special units gave a score of 3.60 (n=30: 25; $p<0.05$). Accordingly, it was apparent that those who work with children with disabilities considered social factors as more serious problems than did those working at regular schools.

In a similar vein, the teachers differed in their scores for 'lack of parental understanding' (2.8 vs. 3.56; n=30; 25, $p<0.05$) and 'insufficiency of appropriate systems to analyze results of student learning (for children with disabilities)' (3.21 vs. 4.08; n=30; 25; $p<0.01$), with teachers working with children with disabilities giving higher scores than those working at regular schools. This could imply that those regularly working with children with disabilities understand their abilities more fully and feel stress resulting from the reality in which children with disabilities are not valued or judged fairly in families, schools, or society.

Significant differences were also observed when the results were examined by the position of the teachers (whether they were head teachers or directors vs. regular teachers). Head teachers or directors considered 'lack of community understanding' and 'lack of parental understanding' as more serious problems than did regular teachers (4.17 vs. 3.06; n=6.48; $p<0.05$; and 4.33 vs. 3.00; n=6.48; $p<0.05$). These differences are perhaps because head teachers are more aware of the job market and thus understand the realities more clearly than regular teachers. On the other hand, head teachers and directors have less direct involvement with parents. It should be noted that these perspectives could affect

the job hunting success of children receiving special education.

Another significant difference was found when comparing the responses of teachers (including head teachers and regular teachers) and ministry officers. While ministry officers considered 'immaturity of legal aspects' as the most serious problem, teachers considered 'insufficiency of teacher training courses and experiences with children with disabilities' as the most serious problem. These differences may perhaps reflect the experiences of the respondents. Although the Bhutanese MoE has been providing workshops on SEN for teachers, NGOs, ECCD facilitators and others   teachers

are only permitted to attend one workshop per year, which they perceive as insufficient.

Finally, when asked 'where and how should we educate children with disabilities,' as Table 7 indicates, 32 percent of interviewees answered that, except those with are severely disabled, children with disabilities should be educated in regular classes, while another two percent answered that children with disabilities should have the right to choose between regular or special classes. This implies that at least the promotion of inclusive education, or mainstreaming children with disabilities as stated in the Salamanca statement, seems to be disseminating.

Table 7. Answers to the question: 'Where and how should we educate children with disabilities?'

Item	Percent
All CDWs should be educated in regular classes with their peers without disabilities	5%
In principle, CDWs should be educated in regular classes, but children with severe disabilities should be educated in special schools.	32%
All CDWs should be educated in special classes with their peers with disabilities	7%
In principle, children with disabilities should be educated in special classes, but children who are capable and/or wish to join the regular classes should be educated with their peers without disabilities in regular classes.	27%
Children with disabilities have the right to choose their education, whether it be regular or special classes.	29%

Conclusion

In Bhutan, the process of transferring a student to a less-segregated setting, such as from a special school to a special class in a regular school is referred to as 'integration,' while 'inclusion' refers to 'including all children in education regardless of disability, colour, creed, culture, religion, language, region and ethnic background' (Ministry of Education, 2012b, p. 19-20). The interview responses indicated that while many interviewees considered the promotion of inclusive education as a '(very) good initiative', still some felt differently. For instance, one teacher working in a special education unit stated that while inclusive education is good, the teacher was 'not sure whether full inclusion, where all children with/without disabilities learn in the same classroom is good or not.' Such views shall be conveyed to officials, as these dissenting views indicate a gap with regard to the ideal image of 'inclusive education.' While the long-term objective of the special education programme is 'to provide access to general education in regular schools for all children with disabilities and special needs, including those with physical, mental and other types of impairment' (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 17), this goal may not be realistic as of today.

Bhutan is just beginning to push for inclusive education and is working to improve education for children with disabilities, but the country still has far to go. The different voices and perspectives, appraising the problem from their particular points of view, have meaning and should influence future actions towards improving education for children with disabilities. Furthermore, the differing views indicate that those at the policy level may not have the same outlook as those at the school level, which indicates that aspects of implementing inclusive education may be challenging and that there is no consensus on what form of 'inclusive education' should

be implemented in Bhutan.

Way forward

The GNH education policy lists the 'quality of education' as one of the most important aspects of policy. From the perspective of the schools that implement special education, it is apparent that special education units have much better classroom quality; for instance, special classes have wooden walls and floors and bright lights, whereas regular classes often have concrete walls and floors and broken light bulbs. Special units have multiple teachers (including assistants) for a smaller number of students, while regular classrooms have only one teacher. Special units also use sign language and other teaching methods where necessary (see picture 1). In addition, individual education programmes have been implemented in which students learn reading, writing, mathematics and behaviour as agreed upon by parents, classroom teachers, subject teachers, special education coordinators and principals, so that quality of education can be assured. Quality in special units is also ensured through establishing minimum standards. That is, just as with students in regular classes in Bhutan, if students in a special unit fail an exam, they also repeat the same grade. However, while students in special units have good quality education, it is not clear how non-cognitive skills have been taught in special classes or how discriminatory attitudes among all students would have been raised or diminished if educated together in the regular classes.

Like other developing countries, Bhutan has been trying to encourage the concept of inclusive education matching Salamanca's goal of 'mainstreaming children with disabilities.' Accordingly, for example, the Annual Education Statistics of 2013 shifted from using the term 'special education' to using 'inclusive education.'

However, the ideal vision of inclusiveness is yet to be defined for the purposes of policy and administration. In 2013, for the first time, B.Ed students who had received special education became graduates of the Paro College of Education. No special education major had previously existed at the tertiary level. While there is still far to go, and monitoring is needed, such as following up on these graduates from Paro College of Education, it is apparent that government officials, local teachers and NGOs are sincerely trying to consider what is best for all students, including students with special needs. With the endeavours of teachers and government officials, inclusive education should take root in Bhutan, and the future of education of students with special needs shall be brighter.

Picture 1. Sign language in Dzongkha
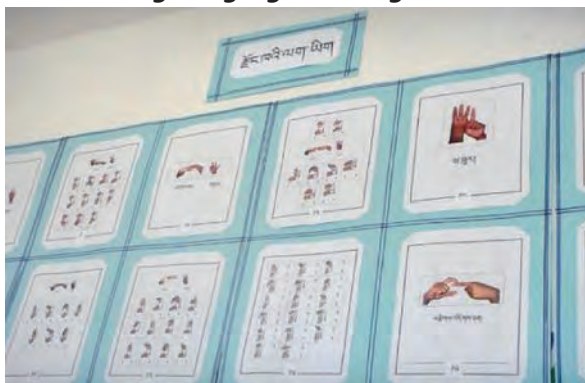
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Note: This manuscript was originally prepared in 2015 and was accepted in August 2016; thus, the situation described in this paper might not reflect the current situation in Bhutan.

6. Inclusive Education in Sri Lanka: Factors Contributing to Good Practices

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Introduction

As argued by Dyson (2004), instead of thinking about inclusion as a single reality, we should think in terms of varieties of inclusion. Similarly, as noted by Lin and Thaver (2014), the challenges associated with promoting and implementing inclusion across different countries around the world are context-dependent, which warrant local considerations and solutions that are particular and indigenous to each country. Accordingly, this paper examines the current state of inclusive education in Sri Lanka, with consideration of the differences in the meaning and modes of practices of 'inclusive education' in the Sri Lankan context, and discusses the factors that contribute to good practices in inclusive education.

Background

Sri Lanka is an island nation located in South Asia, with a population of 20 million people. Schooling is compulsory from the age of 5 to the age of 14. Between 1983 and 2009, Sri Lanka experienced armed conflict, which had a negative impact on education.

The government school network is vast. Sri Lanka has over 10,100 government schools, with about 4 million students enrolled and has 78 private schools, with approximately 125, 000 students enrolled (Ministry of Education, 2013). Sri Lanka has 92 education zones across its eight provinces and these zones serve as the administrative and support centers for government schools. Each education zone is divided into 298 education divisions.

National schools are managed by the central Ministry of Education and provincial schools managed by provincial education departments.

Sri Lanka has 4 types of schools: 1AB schools which offer science, arts and commerce subjects for General Certificate Examination/Advanced Level (A/L), 1C schools which offer arts and commerce subjects for A/L, Type 2 schools which offer education up to Grade 11, Type 3 schools which offer education up to Grade 8.

The quality of education differs depending on the areas: urban/rural, and conflict-affected, and depending on the sector, e.g. tea plantation. Thus, there are regional differences as well as language differences. Sinhala and Tamil are spoken in government schools, while private and international schools also use English as a medium for teaching.

History of special education and inclusive education in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has a more than hundred years of recorded history of special education. Initially, beginning in 1912, special education was provided in segregated, residential institutions for deaf and blind children. Later, special education was expanded to cater for other categories of children with disabilities. Most students identified as having special needs have intellectual disabilities, hearing and visual impairments, and/or physical disabilities.

In accordance with the universal agreement on inclusive education, Sri Lanka took steps to adopt the concept of inclusive education and prepared related national education policies. One outcome of this process was The Compulsory Education Act, passed in 1997.

In 2003, the government adopted the 'National Policy on Disability' (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2003), which promoted inclusive education.

Current status of inclusive education

In Sri Lanka's complex education system, many variables affect provisions of education for students with special needs. According to a report by UNICEF (2003) on inclusive education in Sri Lanka, despite the country's long history of special education, less than half of all school-aged children with disabilities were benefitting from education services.

As of 2014, the number of children with

disabilities was higher in government schools than in special schools. Furthermore, more students with disabilities were enrolled in provincial schools than in national schools (Table 1).

Table 1. Special units, special schools and students with special needs, by province (2014)

Province	Number of Special Units / Schools				Number of Students with Special Needs			
	Special Units in Government Schools		Subtotal: Special Units in Government Schools	Number of Assisted Special Schools	Number of students with Special Needs in Government Schools		Subtotal: Students with Special Needs in Government Schools	Number of Students with Special Needs in Assisted Special Schools
	National	Provincial			National	Provincial		
Western	19	111	130	10	179	958	1137	1098
Central	16	61	77	02	298	411	709	148
Southern	17	88	105	04	237	1316	1553	478
North Western	14	73	87	02	127	764	891	200
North Central	03	50	53	01	58	470	528	77
Northern	04	112	116	01	19	940	959	180
Eastern	05	32	37	01	57	448	505	50
Uva	14	17	31	02	144	186	330	220
Sabaragamuwa	12	56	68	02	101	730	831	162
Total	104	600	704	25	1220	6223	7443	2613

Source: Ministry of Education, 2014

According to King (2005), the incidence of students with special needs learning in inclusive classes fluctuated from year to year. In the absence of widely-available documented data, it is difficult to identify the number of children with special needs in inclusive classes, such as children with learning difficulties or autism. Still, many children with special needs under the age of compulsory education lack access to education.

To solve this problem, some forms of non-formal education exist. For example, Furuta (2009) reported a case of a provincial social service department providing special preschools for both school-age and preschool children with disabilities. Private and international schools, mostly located in suburban Colombo, also catering to students with special needs in diverse ways. Thus, various modalities of inclusive practices have emerged in Sri Lanka.

Study of good practices of inclusive education in Sri Lanka method

To identify good practices in inclusive education, the researchers examined schools in three education zones: P, Q and R. The 'P' education zone represents areas of Sinhalese rural communities, the 'Q' education zone represents suburban coastal communities, and the 'R' zone represents Tamil tea plantation communities.

In each education zone, the researchers visited three schools; one of each type, i.e. one 1AB, one 1C and one Type 3. The three schools were selected by the assistant directors of education in special education (ADESE) in the P, Q and R zonal education offices.

All of the schools were mixed schools, except one (school Q-1), which was a girl's school. Of the nine schools visited, five had special units (three had units for all types of disabilities and two had units for students with intellectual disabilities).

The school visits were conducted in 2012 and

2013. At each school, the researchers collected basic information on the school, such as the numbers of teachers and students, and conducted interviews with the principals, four regular classroom teachers and the teachers of the special units, if the schools had them. The researchers employed interpreters during the interviews (translating from Sinhalese/Tamil to English) and transcripts of the interviews were prepared. Table 2 provides information about the schools the researchers visited.

Table 2. Overview of selected schools

Zone	District / Province	Schools	Controlling Government	Type of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Students	Special Units
P	Kurunegala/ North Western	P-1	Central	1AB	80	1250	ID
		P-2	Province	1C	39	663	ID
		P-3	Province	primary	5	38	none
Q	Kalutara/ Western	Q-1	Central	1AB (girl's)	143	3800	ID
		Q-2	Province	1C	40	800	none
		Q-3	Province	primary	5	115	none
R	Nuwala Eliya/ Central	R-1	Province	1AB	46	1089	all
		R-2	Province	1C	47	1091	all
		R-3	Province	primary	9	174	none

*ID refers to students with intellectual disabilities

Findings
situation in each education zone and inclusive education strategies

P Zone

P zone is one of six education zones in Kurunegala District. According to the local ADESE, P zone is an agricultural zone and is relatively poor compared to other zones in the same district. The language used in all three selected schools in this zone is Sinhalese.

The interviews during the school visits in P zone, revealed that while teachers in school P-1 (a national school) felt that students with disabilities were excluded, the interviewed teachers in the other two schools, P-2 and P-3 (provincial schools) did not feel this way. The regional culture of Sinhalese Buddhism was observed in schools P-2 and P-3 among the teachers because of Buddhist moral education, such as the "Maw Sevana."

The interviews with the ADESE of P zone revealed that he had set up a system to promote inclusive education a few years prior to our visit. The process had two phases: Phase 1, involved monitoring of students with disabilities who had just been enrolled and assessing their progress, and Phase 2, involved training preschool teachers and related teacher. In the schools with special units P-1 and P-2, the special unit teachers were also called the "resource teachers."

Q zone

Q zone is one of three education zones in Kalutara District. The area under Q zone is part of the outer suburb of Colombo and occupies the seashore area of central Kalutara District. It is known as a place with many Catholic residents. Though the majority of residents speaks Sinhalese, the area is diverse in terms of cultural backgrounds. The residents emcompass both upper and lower economic classes. Many people in this area commute to central Colombo for work or study, by bus or train, which takes an hour or more.

The responses to the interviews at the schools indicated a low quality of education overall. School with the highest education quality and facilities, Q-1 (a national school), appeared to be a negative setting for students with disabilities. Although the school was equipped with the 'best' facilities in the island, the special unit generally lagged behind those of other schools and was separated from the school system. The schools with a lower quality of education found to be positive settings for students with disabilities. In schools Q-2 and Q-3 (provincial schools), the students with disabilities were observed learning in regular classrooms, with special assistance.

The interview with the ADESE revealed that he had implemented inclusive education policies in accordance with the provincial department of education but had not planned or conducted additional projects.

R Zone

R zone is one of five education zones in Nuwara Eliya District, which is located in the mountainous area of central Sri Lanka. R zone falls within the tea estate sector. Most residents in this region are Tamils. They are mostly engaged in the tea plantation industry and their socio-economic status is extremely low. The tea estate sector has been historically disadvantaged educationally and remains disadvantaged with regards to infrastructure at the secondary education level (UNICEF, 2013). There is no national school in this zone. The medium of language in all of the three selected schools in this zone is Tamil.

This education zone faces significant difficulties, including teacher shortages. In all the schools, many students have parents

who work away from home in both domestic settings and foreign settings, and/or students who live in extreme poverty.

The ADESE of the R zone promotes inclusive education through 'coordinator' system. Under this system, a 'coordinator' is appointed by the principal and this 'coordinator' takes the role of the manager of special needs education in the school and ensures that students with special needs attend certain events that are held for these students, such as sports events, in the district. If there is a special unit in the school, the special unit teacher usually takes the role of the 'coordinator.' If there is no special unit in the school, a class teacher is appointed and gets training on special needs education (provided by the zone's education office).

Good practices in inclusive education in Sri Lanka

Ⅰ. School P-2 (1C school with a special unit)

School P-2 is located in the centre of a rural town, on the main road. All of the staff, except the principal, were female.

In school P-2, the principal's strong leadership and awareness of the importance of inclusive education had led to a situation in which, no child was rejected. A special unit had been set up, with a teacher and classroom, but, no students had been registered in the special unit. Instead, the students with disabilities, were registered in the regular classrooms and spent almost all class hours with the special unit teacher. Thus, the school had an approach that was very different from the traditional system in which students with disabilities are taught in a special unit and have a very limited chance of being moved to regular classrooms.

The principal came to know of the concept of inclusive education through the ADESE of the zone and through the principal awareness programme in the province.

Therefore, the principal was of the view that students with disabilities should not be excluded from mainstream school education. He remarked that he never had refused admission to any student with disabilities. He noted that because of his strong connection with the local community and the students' parents, he was able to do what he thought was best, such as accepting students with special needs.

According to the teachers, there was at least one student with special needs in every class in the school. The principal accepted each teacher's discretion in managing the students with special needs. Teachers reported implementing certain strategies to adapt classes to the requirements of students with special needs, such as simplifying the tasks, giving more attention to students with special needs and conducting after school supplementary lessons for those students.

In this school, because of the presence of a school monk, teachers had an alternative means of managing issues in their classrooms, including problems with students with disabilities. One teacher remarked that she sought suggestions from the school monk, the vice principal of the school, on how to deal with students with special needs.

The response to the interviews with the principal and teachers revealed that the principal had encouraged teachers to adopt the role of a 'mother' as well as a teacher. There was a school climate to actively help students from poor family or with special needs and teachers said they often collected donations for these underprivileged students. Furthermore, the responses to the interviews with the teachers indicated that the school had positive atmosphere in which teachers helped each other whenever they were in need.

Ⅱ.School Q-2 (1C schod without a special unit)

School Q-2 is located in a residential area a few kilometres from the coast. At the time of the school visit, the school had seven students with physical disabilities.

The researchers observed close collaboration between the school personnel and the people in the local community. The principal of school Q-2, a Catholic, had been assigned to the school around 10 years prior. Shortly after his assignment, he had begun accepting students with physical disabilities, in accordance with a suggestion from a Catholic Father in the community. These children had been in a home for children with physical disabilities nearby that was run by a Catholic charity organization. They had not been accepted by any of the neighbourhood schools and, prior to attending school Q-2, had been forced to attend a private school outside the area.

All four of the teachers, who were interviewed had a student with physical disabilities in their classrooms. The teachers all reported that non-disabled students in the classrooms were willing to support the students with disabilities e.g. by helping the students to move to the library, feeding them at recess and calling the home for the children with physical disabilities for them.

Three out of the four teachers interviewed felt that it was better for students with physical disabilities to learn in regular classrooms with their non-disabled peers. One teacher remarked that they had a class once per week for students who were slow in reading and writing and reported that the school collected donations from the community to cover school trips and exhibition for students from poor families and for students with physical disabilities.

Ⅲ.School Q-3 (primary school without a special unit)

School Q-3 is located far from the main road in a suburban area. With the national decline in the number of children in Sri Lanka and as a result of greater parental interest and enthusiasm regarding education in recent years, the number of students in 'unpopular' schools have declined. Since school Q-3 is an 'unpopular' school in suburban area, the number of students in each classroom is small. When the present principal took on the role, she made major reforms in school management, and the school's popularity increased.

However, in terms of students with special needs, the study findings indicated that the small class sizes were beneficial for them. One of the interviewed teachers reported that she was able to manage the student with special needs in her classroom because the class size was very small, with only 11 students. Another teacher said that she conducted early morning supplementary lessons for students with special needs. Three out of four teachers interviewed felt that it was better for students with disabilities to learn in regular classrooms.

The school conducted assessments of Grade 1 students annually and identified students with special needs. At the time of the researchers' visit, the school had two students with hearing and speech disorders and seven slow learners.

The present principal is a teacher with 20 years of experience as a special education teacher. Accordingly, teachers at the school are able to get guidance from the principal regarding the requirements of children with special needs.

Ⅳ.School R-1 (1AB school with a special unit)

School R-1 is located in a major town in the tea plantation area. Though this is a 1AB school that is supposed to offer science subjects, the school lacked teachers so had stopped science in the year the researchers

visited. Furthermore, the school has fewer resources and facilities than typical 1AB provincial schools.

According to the principal, almost all students were from families in which the caregivers worked on tea estates. At least 10 per cent of students had parents who worked away from home (not in the local area).

The principal had attended a one-day workshop on special/inclusive education for school administrators held in the zone, so as aware of the needs of students who had difficulties in reading and writing. For those students, the school was conducted evening classes. The school also had a special unit which catered to the needs of 14 students.

At the time of the school visit, three students had been moved from the special unit to regular classrooms. The special unit teacher provides suggestions regarding how to manage students with special need. According to the special unit teacher, the principal was concerned about the progress of students in the special unit and he sought support from the local NGOs at times.

Teachers in the school tend to be from the local community, and responses to the interviews indicated that teachers in the school are familiar with the deprived conditions of the students. All four of the interviewed teachers felt that it was better for students with special needs to learn in the regular classrooms rather than in a separate setting.

Ⅴ. School R-3 (primary school without a special unit)

School R-3 is located deep inside the hills of the tea estates. Access to the school is via a lane designed for use by pedestrians only. The school building was built with the aid from the Swedish Government. The school consists of several small buildings: a row of classrooms, a principal's office and a building with one classroom. The school did not have a library or a computer room at the time of the visit. The classrooms were separated by thin panels, so it is very easy for teachers to hear what is happening in the next classroom.

According to the principal, almost all students at the school are from families that work in the tea estates. In around 60 per cent of the families, the parents were not living with their children because they work in other areas. Around 30 per cent of students live with their grandparents.

The principal was aware of the needs of students with special needs. The principal and one of the teachers of school R-3 had been 'coordinators' in other schools. The principal of school R-3 was therefore familiar with students with special needs and he suspected that around the half the students of the school had special needs.

The interviewed teachers felt that it was better for students with special needs to learn together in smaller classes. On the advice of the principal, the teachers gave particular support to students in grades 4 and 5 in order to help them to be well prepared for the national Grade 5 exam. The teachers noted, however, that they faced difficulties in cooperating with caregivers.

Factors contributing to good practices in inclusive education in Sri Lanka

Analysis of the findings of the study indicate that there are seven factors that contribute to good practices in inclusive education in Sri Lanka. These are: the local culture or community type, the type of schools, the class size, the role of the teachers, the role of the special unit, the leadership style of the principal and the approach taken by the ADESE.

Ⅰ. Local culture or community type

The researchers found that local cultural values that emphasized accepting students

with special needs tended to lead to schools begin more inclusive. In school Q-2, for examples, the tight Catholic community played a significant role in enabling the school to accept students with special needs. Similarly, the regional culture of education of school 1C meant that the idea of students with special needs learning together with other students in regular classrooms was easily accepted.

Ⅱ.Type of schools (national vs provincial)

The national schools tend to lag behind provincial schools in terms of inclusive education because the national schools focus on high academic achievement of selected, high performing students, and these schools therefore only tend to accept students with special needs in a separate setting: the special unit. This was observed in the schools visited for the study. Three 1AB schools were examined in this study, and one of them, school R-1 (provincial school), had fewer resources than the others schools P-1 and Q-1 (national schools), and therefore faced issues such as a lack of teachers and inadequate facilities but, nevertheless, it outperformed the other two national schools with regard to implementation of inclusive education. The special units in school P-1 and school Q-1 were relatively segregated and the special unit teachers' range of work was limited to that unit. Therefore, linkage with regular classroom teachers was not observed. In the case of school R-1, however, no such difference was observed in the way of accepting students with disabilities, especially with regard to the positioning of the special unit. Furthermore, in schools R-1 and R-2, the special unit teachers appeared to be collaborate more with regular classroom teachers.

Ⅲ.Class size

Several teachers noted that because of the number of students in their classroom was so small, it was easier for the school to cope with students with special needs. Thus, it is suggested that small class sizes provide better school climates for the inclusion of students with special needs.

Ⅳ.Role of teachers

The study findings indicated that schools in which teachers serve as caregivers and 'mothers' to students tend to be more inclusive than other schools. For example, schools P-2 and P-3 and three schools in the R education zone in the tea plantation area, it is common to deal with students who face the long time absence of caregivers as well as extremely poor family background.

Ⅴ.Role of the special unit

When schools had separate special units, there is often little exchange between regular classroom teachers and special unit teachers. This was observed in schools P-1 and R-1, for example. Furthermore, when special unit teachers remain in their units, separated from others, this limits the inclusiveness of the school. The schools that were more inclusive were those in which special units are not separated from the mainstream and those in which special needs teachers did not simply teach students in the special units, but rather, facilitated learning of students with special needs in regular classrooms, in close cooperation with other teachers.

Ⅵ.Leadership style of the principal

The leadership style of the principal also contributed to the extent to which each school was inclusive. In school P-2, for example, the principal gave the teachers discretion to the students with disabilities in ways they found suitable, and thus teachers could explore different methods. The principal of school P-2 also set a school policy of automatically including students with special needs in regular classes. The

leadership style of the principal was supported through strong cooperation with the local ADESE.

In the case of school Q-3, the principal had experience in special education and was therefore able to advise teachers on how to assist students with special needs, leading to better inclusion of such students. Similarly, in school R-3, the principal had experienced the 'coordinator' and the school conducted 'every day inclusive education' because he felt that half of the students in the school had special needs. This suggested that in 'extremely difficult' schools, the right style of leadership by the principal will enable the principals and teachers to work together cooperatively to tackle the difficulties.

Ⅶ.Approach taken by the ADESE

When the ADESE assigns teachers the responsibility of managing students with disabilities, the schools in which those teachers work tend to be more inclusive. For example, in zones P and R, the ADESEs created a new division of duties for managing students with disabilities. The teachers who are assigned these duties are called 'resource teachers' in P zone and 'coordinators' in R zone. In contrast, in Q education zone, the ADESE did not assign teachers particular duties related to promoting inclusive education.

Conclusion

The study observed good practices in inclusive education in three education zones: a rural Sinhalese village area, suburban coastal area, and Tamil tea plantation area. Analysis of the study findings revealed seven factors that contribute to inclusive education in Sri Lankan context: the local culture or community type, the type of schools, the class size, the role of the teachers, the role of the special unit, the leadership style of the principal and the approach taken by the ADESE.

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7.   Education for Children with Disabilities in Maldives: Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education

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Introduction

This chapter reveals the findings of a study of the current state of education for children with disabilities in the Republic of Maldives. The researchers conducted a survey (using a questionnaire) in the capital – Male and on Fuvahmulah Atoll in 2012 and interviewed teachers on Baa Atoll and Addu Atoll in 2013 and 2014 respectively. The field survey was conducted with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education of Maldives and the UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific.

This chapter begins with an overview of society and education in Maldives. Then it goes on to present the results of the field survey and the provisional conclusions of the study regarding the challenges facing inclusive education in the Maldives.

Country Background

Maldives is an island nation consisting of 1,192 coral islands that are clustered into 26 atolls and are spread across 823 kilometres from north to south, and 130 kilometres from west to east. In 2014, the nation, located in the Indian Ocean, had a population of around 400,000.

The major industries are fisheries and tourism, and in 2015, GDP per capita was 7,635 United States dollars (USD) (World Bank, 2015).

The nation has a diverse array of ethnicities and cultures because of its colonial history and migration. The Maldives gained independence from Britain in 1965 and became a member of united nation.

From 1978 onwards, the Maldives were ruled by a single political party. However, after the Indian ocean earthquake and tsunami disaster in 2004, the constitution was amended, and a multi-party system was legislated, along with fundamental human rights in 2008.

According to the constitution, the national religion is Islam, and non-Muslims cannot become citizens of the Maldives (Azza et al, 2008). Therefore, all citizens in the Maldives are Muslims.

The status of disabled people

In the Maldives, the general view is that people with disabilities are the responsibility of their guardians and the community. This contrasts strongly with the view in nearby countries, such as Nepal and India, where belief in *karma* is prevalent. According to this belief, being born with disability is a result of actions by the child in a past life, a very different view from that in the Maldives.

The Government of the Maldives provides a monthly stipend of about 2,000 Rufiyaa to every household housing someone with a disability. This stipend and the fact that guardians of children with disabilities are encouraged to access healthcare services have contributed to widespread diagnosis of disabilities and the provision of appropriate care and support for them.

Education in the Maldives

Education in the Maldives traditionally took the form of *maktab (general schools)*

and *madrasa (religious schools)*. The origins of modern education can be traced back to the establishment of a secondary school called 'Majeediyya School' in the capital, Male, in 1927 and 'Aminiyya School' (girls' school) which was established in 1944. These two schools laid the foundation for the development of secondary education in the Maldives.

After the Maldives became a republic in the 1970s, schools became more common in the capital and started opening in the rural areas also. While, until schools could be opened in rural areas, children who wanted to pursue their education usually went to Male or to other South Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), etc. (Ministry of External Affairs, 1949, pp. 41-58). Those seeking higher education tended to go to England, the Middle East, India, etc. For instance, many of the senior education administrators have studied overseas.

In 1978, under the policy of Universal Primary Education for All, the government supported the spread of education to atolls outside Male. In addition to unifying the national curriculum for the first seven years of primary education, the government established an 'atoll education centre' and an 'atoll school' on each atoll. With support from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the government then established schools on every atoll (Japan International Cooperation Agency – JICA, 1980). This was the first instance in which Japan funded the foundation of schools through international aid. Following the establishment of schools on each atoll, the number of students increased from around 15,000 in 1978 to around 100,000 in 2005 (Morishita, 2012).

As of 2011, primary education was seven years; lower secondary education was three years; and upper secondary education two years. The same year, almost all children were enrolled in primary education and the literacy rate was 98.8 per cent (Ministry of Education, 2011). Expansion of educational opportunities was made possible with support from taxation income received through the tourism sector. Despite the increase of access to education in rural areas, disparities remained between Male Island and other islands.

Male is the most populous island in the country with a population of approximately 100,000. With 50,000 people per square kilometre, it has the highest population density in the world. As of 2013, the island had 25 schools and most schools offered multiple levels of education. The schools provided education for around 25,000 children and employed 1,457 teachers. About 10,000 of the students were from other atolls and lived with extended family members in Male (Ministry of Education 2011, p. 56).

No matter what size, secondary schools are required to have a separate teacher for each subject which makes it difficult to staff secondary schools. As a result, in the more remote islands, 32 per cent of the teachers are foreigners (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 39). Field observations indicate that most of the foreign teachers are from India, Bangladesh and Nepal including a lot of non-Muslims.

The other inhabitant islands of the Maldives have an average population of approximately 1,000. On these islands, schools tend to be small. About 70 per cent of the country's schools have an enrolment of less than 300 (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 28).

For primary education, the curriculum is set by the state, and except for 'Maldivian' and 'Islamic' classes, all classes are taught in English. Since 2002, the curriculum of the lower secondary education has been derived from the Cambridge International Exam (level O). The exam from London University (Edexcel International Test) was used from 1967 to 2001 (Bray and Adam, 2001). Higher

secondary education follows level A of the Edexcel test, which was introduced in 1982. The Educational Development Center (EDC) independently produces textbooks (EDC, 2012).

In July 2012, a national curriculum was proposed that would combine primary and secondary education. In 2013, a policy was developed for all schools in the country to offer grades 1 through 10, thus combining primary education and lower secondary education. The oldest school in Male already offered both primary and secondary education, and schools on islands with a population of about 500 people have traditionally offered all of the first ten grades.

In accordance with the 2013 policy, every island offers 10 grades with a level O test. the first five are called 'primary school' and the remaining grades are known as 'middle school'. At the end of Grade 10, students must take the Cambridge International test level O; thus, there are many international teachers for this grade. With the new system, schools will have a 5-5-2 system. As of 2017, the government was in the process of forming syllabi for every subject.

Findings of the study

Ⅰ.The reality for children with disabilities in the Maldives

One peculiarity of the situation in the Maldives is that there are very few factors inhibiting inclusive education. Because the Maldives consists of small islands and communities are intrinsically small. So, each island inevitably forms an inclusive society. In some other countries, there are issues of marginalization of children with disabilities. While in the case of Maldives, luckily, this is not true; yet, the geographical nature of atolls has created few physical obstacles preventing children with disabilities from accessing school. Furthermore, the distances

from schools to the communities are short, and problems such as bullying are identified immediately by the guardians and the community. Therefore, it could be said that the Maldives has a favourable environment for children with disabilities. On the other side for adults with disabilities the situation is not so positive. Opportunities for the employment of adults with disabilities are limited. A related issue is that because of intermarriage between people on these small islands, there is a high rate of disability in the population compared to other countries (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017).

In the Maldives, a policy to establish classes that target children with disabilities (special needs education classes) led to the provision of special needs education. However, before this policy was launched, the government had initiated an 'inclusive education policy'. Thus, the country has both policies at the same time. According to the policy of the Ministry of Education, in the future every school should provide inclusive education, but as a practical 'Plan B', considering each school's financial situation, there should be at least one SEN class on every atoll. In addition, as much as possible, severely disabled children from nearby areas should be taught in a SEN class. In fact, the Maldives seems to favour integrated education, with a focus on special education. As a result, SEN classes are conducted on islands where SEN classes are possible, and if that is not possible the choice is inclusive education. Considering the geography of Maldives, this seems a very pragmatic decision.

When comparing special education needs (SEN) classes with inclusive education, a large percentage of the study respondents expressed strong opinions that the rights of disabled children are better protected if those children attend separate SEN classes. For example, 41 per cent of the respondents

agreed with the statement: 'In principle, children with disabilities should be taught in SEN classes, but if they are capable of participating in normal education, they should do so'. On the other hand, some respondents had positive attitudes towards inclusive education since it can contribute to create the society without discrimination and improve education for both children with and without disabilities. Within this study, 26 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement: 'In principle, they should participate in normal education, but in cases in which they are incapable, they should be taught in SEN classes.

However, among teaching staff the predominant view was that when SEN children reached a level in SEN class at which they could move to normal education, they should do so. This depends, of course, on what the child's disability is and how easily the child can adapt to regular classes, and whether there are enough teaching staff. A commonly held opinion among respondents was that if the child is ready to attend normal classes, the decision regarding whether they should attend normal classes or not should be left to the child.

The study findings indicate that there is difference in understanding of the concept of inclusive education among the respondents. Many understand the inclusive delivery model as simply an alternative to SEN classes if SEN classes cannot be provided, claiming that inclusive education can sometimes be insufficient. Although the concept sounds promising, it is important to look carefully its accomplishments.

Ⅱ.Education for children with disabilities in an inclusive society

The researchers addressed the question of whether inclusive education is a means to realize an inclusive society, or an inclusive society is a means to realize inclusive education. Usually, there are some limitations and problems before one can call a society 'inclusive', but many atolls in the Maldives already have quite inclusive societies. The researchers examined how inclusive education holds up in such context. The researchers visited four schools on four islands (Baa Atoll and Addu Atoll) and those schools had a classroom teacher system. Those schools also had action plans on inclusive education and the schools were aware of the needs of children with disabilities.

On islands with small populations, the inclusive nature of society contributes to making schools more inclusive. However, this is only the case until near the end of primary education. After the fifth grade the schools have more international teachers and classes are in English, as students are preparing for the Cambridge International Exam. Accordingly, at this stage the schools are very different from the rest of the island, with a multicultural, multilingual, multi-ethnic context, which is the most difficult environment for disabled children to function in. Thus, at this stage schools that have the option of sending disabled children to SEN classes do so.

On Baa Atoll, the researchers observed that both the disabled children and the teachers were from the same island and lived in the same inclusive society. Class sizes were small, with a mere 20 students per class, making personal and attentive care and support possible. However, one student with heavy autism was not able to continue his education beyond the fifth grade as he could not keep up with students in higher grades. This student was, therefore, forced to stay in the highest grade of primary level, where daily care by the classroom teacher was possible.

Addu Atoll has an unusual situation, even by Maldives' standards. This atoll is the southernmost of all the atolls in the Maldives and housed a British base during the

protectorate era. It features many bridges between the islands, making travel easy. The population of the atoll is 20,000, making it the second-largest concentration of population in the Maldives. Each of the islands making up Addu Atoll has one school, and there is a SEN class on the most populated island, Hithadhoo. At the time of the researchers' visit, both local teachers and Indian teachers specialized in special needs education were employed there. Because the islands are connected, and transportation is easy, disabled children on Addu Atoll, unlike children on other atolls, can choose between SEN classes and inclusive education. The researchers sought to identify which option the disabled children and guardians chose.

The researchers have met several children on Addu Atoll. One child, a male (Child A) began his education at a school with no SEN class in 2012. He was subsequently diagnosed with ADHD. The child was also violent towards fellow students and was difficult to manage. The researchers felt that the abuse of illegal drugs by the child's mother and his parents' subsequent divorce must have played a large part in the child's behaviour. The child was not permitted to continue his education at the school and the school's headmaster convinced Child A's father to send him to the Sharafdin school's SEN class, since that school accepts children with disabilities (usually minor visual and learning disabilities). Child A consequently enrolled in Sharafdin school and travelled to school every day by motorcycle. The researchers observed that Child A participated in the third-year students' physical education class (soccer) and created artworks in art class, just like the other students. Thus, while SEN classes are often viewed as inhibiting inclusive education, the example of Child A indicates that SEN classes can also function as a foothold for children to move into inclusive education.

Ⅲ.Prospects and challenges

The researchers' observations of classes following an 'inclusive' model of delivery indicated that 'inclusive education' is conducted in a way particular to the Maldives. Although it is described as 'inclusive' it is not fully inclusive, as disabled children do not participate in all classes with non-disabled children. Furthermore, in some cases children with special needs have classes in the same place as other children but get different forms of education. For instance, the researchers have observed a girl with a hearing impairment who sometimes learned the same things in a class with the other children, and sometimes learned different things on her own, depending on the class. The researchers never saw her join groups with other children when they were doing group work.

The researchers found that special education is in a transition period in the Maldives, and one could characterize the situation as 'the introduction of inclusive education'. Many forms of education have a hint of inclusive education, and these are conducted simultaneously. Furthermore, there are differing views on what constitutes 'inclusive education'. For example, while some respondents described individual education programmes (IEPs) as a future form of inclusive education, others felt that it was merely personal guidance and decreased a child's sense of competition and their motivation to learn. A special school in Male, was introducing IEPs, specialized learning programmes developed for each child each semester with the input of the guardians and teachers, but it was noted that IEPs are only possible in special schools that have sufficient number of teachers and facilities as IEPs require a lot of work, resources and time. Indeed, the main inhibiting factors to inclusive education are a lack of funds, a lack of facilities, lack of trained teachers and a lack of experience.

Conclusion

While the researchers were unable to find an answer to the question of whether society would become more inclusive if inclusive education produces good results, they observed that the Maldives already has an inclusive society, and that in the very intimate society of Maldives, inclusive education tends to be implemented at the primary level. At the secondary level, however, even though society supports inclusion, delivering services through inclusive models is much more difficult due to inhibiting factors such as a lack of trained teachers.

The researchers also found that there are concrete efforts underway in the Maldives, both in terms of policy and practice, to support children with special needs to gain access to education. Currently, such support takes the form of SEN classes but there are moves towards delivering services through an inclusive model. There is, however, some debate regarding which model, special needs education or inclusive education, better meets the local needs. The predominant view at the time of the study was that SEN classes are better, while inclusive education is seen as a 'Plan B'.

Despite practical limitations, such as limited resources, the researchers found that education for disabled children is a priority in the Maldives. Unlike some other developing countries, where inclusive education exists in name only and where education is often merely designed to cram as much knowledge as possible into each student, the Maldives is attempting to implement a locally-appropriate form of inclusive education that suits the context, and it could therefore serve as a model for other countries.

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8. Inclusive Education in Bangladesh:

Current Status, Scope and Implications for Learning Improvement

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Introduction

Education is a basic human right that should be extended to all children, youth and adults regardless of their abilities and disabilities. This right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). It is also addressed in the World Declaration for Education for All (1990), the UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000).

Upholding the right to education is at the very heart of UNESCO's mission, which is also affirmed and recognized by its Member States. Such education must also be of high quality. Thus, UNESCO emphasizes not merely the right to education, but also the right to quality education.

One of the greatest challenges facing marginalized individuals in societies throughout the world is exclusion from participation in economic, social, political and cultural life (UNESCO, 2005). To ensure that no children are marginalized, education policies and practices must be inclusive of all learners, encourage the full participation of all and promote diversity as a resource rather than as an obstacle.

The majority of children with disabilities in developing countries are out of school, and many of those enrolled are not learning. Removing the barriers to accessing education and the barriers to learning for people with disabilities are prerequisites for the realization of the Education for All goals. In this context, 'inclusive education' evolved as a movement that challenged exclusionary policies and practices. It can be regarded as part of the wider struggle to uphold human rights and end discrimination. In particular, it seeks to ensure that social justice in education prevails (UNESCO, 2005). It is widely believed that inclusive education for all will pave the way to peace and prosperity for society at large, and contribute to sustainable development.

Context

The prevalence of disability is high in Bangladesh, for reasons relating to extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness and, above all, lack of medical care and services. Although disability is a major social and economic phenomenon in Bangladesh, there is very little reliable data on this issue given the absence of a comprehensive national survey on persons with disabilities.

At independence, Bangladesh committed to the right of basic education for all children. Accordingly, the constitution affirms the following: 'The state shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of establishing a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law'. This acknowledgement that primary education is a responsibility of the state and recognition of the fundamental rights of the people to education ushered in a new era and since then

Bangladesh has undertaken many initiatives towards upholding the right to education and ensuring that the education system in line with the nation's development objectives.

The constitution states that 'no citizen shall, on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, be subject to any liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to any place of public entertainment, resort or admission to any educational institution'. Accordingly, in 1995 the government approved a national policy for the disabled that 'mainstreamed disability into the country's development agenda' and in 1996 the government created an action plan to implement this policy.

The parliament adopted its first comprehensive disability legislation, the Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act in April of 2001. If a person is incapacitated and unable to lead a normal life, either partially or fully, as a result of a disability or impairment, whether the cause of the disability were congenital or a result of accident or disease, maltreatment or other reasons, the act identifies that person as having a disability. The legislation defines persons with disabilities as those with physical, visual, hearing or speech impairments, mental disabilities (cognitive disability or mental retardation) or mental illnesses, characterized as 'loss or damage, partially or wholly, of mental balance'. Persons with multiple disabilities (more than one type of impairment) are also covered under the act.

On 7 May 2002, the office of the prime minister promulgated the National Action Plan for People with Disabilities. The action plan stipulated what needed to be done to realize the goals of the Disability Welfare Act. It had five sections: education, health, employment, accessibility and transportation. The plan included various recommendations, including raising awareness about disability; conducting surveys and registration at birth to identify disabilities; providing special schooling and logistical support; teaching children 'alongside general students'; setting up programmes for the inclusion in education of students with severe handicapped and for those with multiple handicaps; and improving communication and mobility for disabled people. A major constraint to implementation of the Action Plan, however, was funding. Therefore, as of 2017, the action plan had not been implemented.

Two governmental organizations work to promote better dialogue between the government and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that support the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs): the National Foundation for the Development of the Disabled (NFDD) and the National Coordination Committee on Disability (NCC). The NFDD provides guidance and support to government agencies and NGOs regarding disability issues. The NCC, which was launched in 1993 under the chairpersonship of the Minister of Social Welfare, has 52 members, including PWDs, government agencies, NGOs and self-help organizations. The NCC provides a forum for open dialogue between the stakeholders to promote mutual understanding and cooperation and to identify and discuss issues that impede cooperation, and works in close cooperation with the National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD), which is the umbrella organization of such NGOs in Bangladesh.

Education for students with disabilities in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has one of the largest primary education systems in the world, with 16.4 million primary school age children (6 to 10 years) enrolled in 2012 and 365,925 primary school teachers in 82,218 schools.

One of the challenges in Bangladesh is how to ensure education is provided, as a

right, to marginalized learners that have not been able to access mainstream learning institutions because of disabilities. In some cases, access is not possible because students with special needs require modifications within the education system in order to enable them to fully participate and benefit from education.

Quality has been a particular issue in primary education in Bangladesh. While the gross enrolment ratio in primary education reached 97 per cent in 2002 and the net enrolment rate (NER) was estimated at 86 per cent, improvements are needed with regard to aspects such as retention, completion and plurality of learning. This is particularly relevant for students with special needs. While many students with special needs are now able to access education, they cannot always fully participate in learning activities.

The country has two types of education for students with disabilities:

- Special and integrated education (special schools, segregated system). Integrated education is only provided to students with visual impairments.

- Inclusive education (mainstream schools, all the time in ordinary classes)

Figure 1. Types of education for students with disabilities

'Inclusive education', in which students with special needs are given equal opportunity to learn with their peers in mainstream classrooms and an environment where they
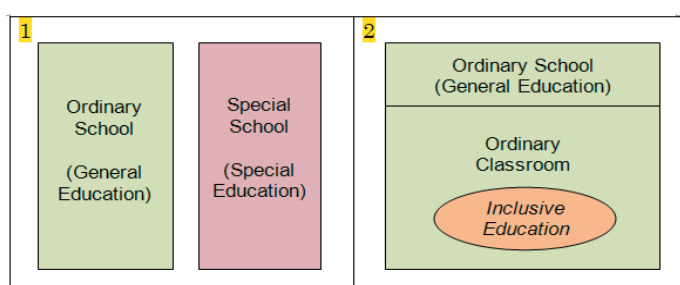
can freely interact with one another, has become the preferred approach worldwide. However, this concept of merging of special education and mainstream education into a unified system has divided many educators. While the seed of inclusive education had been sown and seen fruit in many countries, it has yet to fully sprout in Bangladesh.

The Child Education and Literacy Survey (CELS) of 2012 found that of the children aged between 3 and 14 who were enrolled in schools, 118,575 had disabilities. It was estimated that 59.4 per cent of children with disabilities were enrolled. As of 2014, 82,708 students with disabilities were enrolled in mainstream primary schools (Directorate of Primary Education, 2014).

Enrolment status for inclusion in pre-primary

In 2013, pre-primary classes had been introduced in 81,798 schools, and 29,62,038 learners were enrolled, including 12,57,872 in GPS, 5,70,078 in RNGPS and 53,618 in NNPS.
A total of 5,398 girls and 6,749 boys with disabilities were enrolled in pre-primary in 2013.

Table 1. Types of disability of pre-primary children, by sex

Type of disability	Boys	Girls
Eyesight impairment	2472	1915
Hearing impairment	617	577
Intellectual/mental impairment	392	303
Speech impairment	1604	1244
Physical impairment	1223	993
Autistic	196	163
Others	245	203
Total	**6749**	**5398**

Source: Directorate of Primary Education, 2014

## Enrolment status for inclusion in primary schools

In GPS and NNPS, the number of students with different disabilities has increased as part of inclusive education initiatives.

Table 2. Number of enrolled children with disabilities in GPS and NNPS, 2013

Type of disability	GPS			NNPS			GPS & NNPS		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Physical	11,806	8,864	20,670	4,421	3,359	7,780	16,227	12,223	28,450
Visual	4,782	3,961	8,743	1,481	1,230	2,711	6,263	5,191	11,454
Hearing	1,368	1,295	2,663	643	598	1,241	2,011	1,893	3,904
Speaking	7,532	5,909	13,441	3,092	2,443	5,535	10,624	8,352	18,976
Mental	7,544	6,399	13,943	1,778	1,594	3,372	9,322	7,993	17,315
Other	608	513	1,121	209	174	383	817	687	1,504
Autistics	424	374	798	170	137	307	594	511	1,105
Total	**34,064**	**27,315**	**61,379**	**11,794**	**9,535**	**21,329**	**45,858**	**36,850**	**82,708**

Source : Directorate of Primary Education, 2014

Figure 2. Number of enrolled children with disabilities in GPS & NNPS, 2005, 2010-2013
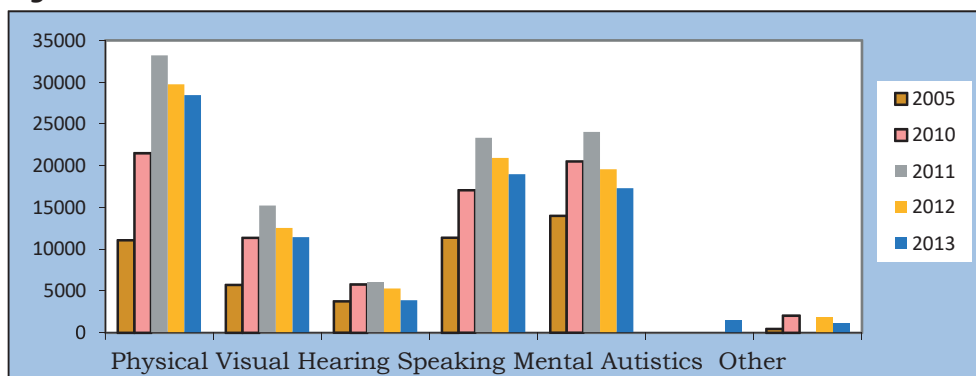
Source: Directorate of Primary Education, 2014

Support for inclusive education

Ⅰ.Innovations in teacher education for inclusive education

Some initiatives that have been taken to promote inclusive teacher education include:

- The DPEd programme, which includes teaching-learning strategies for inclusive education, hasreplaced the C-in-Ed, which did not have any content on inclusive education.
- The UNESCO Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education programme was adapted to the Bangladesh context and its three advocacy guides (policy, curriculum and teaching-learning methods) are being incorporated into the primary teacher training programme.
- The government launched the Teaching

  Quality Improvement (TQI-II) project and the Secondary Education Sector Investment Programme (SESIP), which focus on inclusive education for learning improvement.

Ⅱ.Budget allocation for project that support inclusive education

Table 3 lists some of the programmes, projects and activities that were given budgetary support by the Government of Bangladesh between 2011 and 2014.

Table 3. Projects/programmes supporting inclusive education

Sl.	Programme/project	Budget (100,000 taka)		
		2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1	Primary education stipend program	90,000	94,900	85,250
2	School feeding programme (GoB/WFP)	23,950	43,000	46,300
3	Inclusive Education Activities	--	10,1	25,2
4	EC supported school feeding programme	6,750	2,650	5,250
5	ROSC project	6,916	9,401	14,800
6	Establishment of new primary school in school less areas	7,955	19,000	20,000
7	Primary education development project IDB	-	1,280	8,600
8	Basic Education for hard to reach urban working children	3,000	2,200	2,545

Source: Directorate of Primary Education, 2015a

Ⅲ.Scope for improvement

Despite many achievements with regard to inclusive education in Bangladesh, further efforts are needed in order for all children to receive the benefits of quality education. Key issues include the following:

- Disabled students are seen as welfare-recipients rather than as children who have a right to education. While education for non-disabled students is controlled by the Ministry of Education, education for students with disabilities is directed by Ministry of Social Welfare.

- There is an absence of reliable and consistent data on the number and education status of students with disabilities. This makes it difficult for educators and policy-makers to understand the true nature of the problem and identify solutions. The lack of a proper screening and identification system to assess disabilities sometimes leads to misconceptions.

- One of the major challenges is how to provide education for students with diverse

needs in mainstream schools. The curriculum lacks the required flexibility to cater to the needs of students with disabilities, and the teaching-learning process does not address the individual learning needs of students. Furthermore, there are limited developmentally-appropriate teaching-learning materials for students with and without disabilities.

- Many education staff, including those in teacher training institutions and schools, lack awareness of the benefits of inclusive education, which is an obstacle to the effective implementation of inclusion programmes.
- Teachers lack training and experience in teaching and managing students with disabilities.
- Efforts regarding inclusive education have generally focused on schools in urban areas, but a large number of schools are located in rural and remote areas. Thousands of students remain out of school. Most are from ethnic minority groups and/or extremely poor families, and/or live in remote areas (*haor, char* and coastal). Moreover, there are high dropout rates among these groups, despite the government succeeding in reducing the dropout rate (BRAC, 2014).
- The quality of school building is another barrier for inclusion of students with disabilities. Schools are not always easy to enter and use for students with physical disabilities.

Recommendations

To improve inclusive education in Bangladesh, it is necessary to:

- Move education provisions for students with disabilities from the Ministry of Social Welfare to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. This would not only streamline the provision of education, but would emphasize that students with disabilities are entitled to education

services as a right, rather than being objects of charity or welfare.
- Carry out a comprehensive survey to identify the scale and nature of the disabilities and to identify the needs of students with disabilities.
- Develop mechanisms for early identification and assessment of students with disabilities.
- Raise awareness, systematically at all levels, of the issues faced by students with disabilities with regard to access to education and learning needs. Ensure all staff in the education system learn about the positive aspects of inclusion.
- Ensure all teachers, educators and personnel at all levels of education sector receive adequate training in terms of conceptual knowledge of special educational needs and inclusive education as they are the primary movers for changes within the schools. This type of short training programme could be conducted by universities. Research, collaboration with universities and engagement with experts on this aspect of education is important.
- Provide training on inclusive education in both pre- and in-service training for teachers and head teachers.
- Train classroom teachers in the use of the curriculum with regard to meeting the learning needs of students with disabilities. Furthermore, introduce a child-friendly and flexible system.
- Ensure in-service teachers receive training on inclusion that is oriented to classroom practice and learn appropriate teaching methods. Provide relevant materials and incorporate these into the training manuals.
- Expand training so that all teachers, not only head teachers in primary schools, are given the opportunity to be trained as inclusive education experts.
- Ensure that professionals in inclusive education provide support for the revision of curricula and textbooks at both primary

and secondary levels. Give the NCTB, as an apex agency, the lead responsibility to ensure that all material is aligned with inclusive teaching-learning approaches.

- Provide resources related to disabilities and inclusion to teaching staff and introduce supplementary reading materials reflecting disability issues for the students in mainstream schools.

- Establish evaluation and feedback processes for assessing the performance of all learners, including students with disabilities. The evaluation needs to go beyond examining academic achievements, especially for students with disabilities. Improved approaches and practices of examination and evaluation should be introduced.

- Develop an inter-agency coordination structure to ensure coordination between the ministries, departments, NGOs and others that respond to the special needs of the disabled.

- Improve accessibility for disabled students to schools by making necessary modifications to the physical structure of schools.

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9. The Impact of Inclusive Education in Asia and Africa: Focusing on the Right to Education for Children with Disabilities in Cambodia

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Introduction

This paper examines the notion of inclusion based on diversity, and whether all groups with special education needs are identified as specified in the Salamanca Statement of 1994. It also examines the feasibility of implementing inclusive education settings in Cambodia. The study involved conducting a comparative policy review of 77 Education for All Assessment Reports and National Plans of Action from 60 countries in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, as well as qualitative field research in Cambodia, comprising semi-structured interviews with actors involved in the supply and demand sides of special needs education. This study has resulted in new insights into the challenges regarding upholding the right to education for children with special education needs. The study found that at both the international policy and national local levels, identification of special education needs is strictly limited. Moreover, the relevance of implementing inclusive educational settings for all groups with special education needs faces numerous constraints, requiring new observations and judgments both at the academic and practical levels.

Background

Until the 1960s, children with special needs were excluded from the Cambodian educational system (Balescut and Eklindh, 2006). Initial efforts in the 1960s and 1970s, including programmes, new institutions and specialist educators, functioned outside of the mainstream education system (Ainscow, 2007). In the late 1960s and 1970s, dissatisfaction with special education led to a new approach, namely 'integrated education', a system of education for children with disabilities that was physically located within mainstream schools, but in specialized classrooms or in shared classrooms just for a few hours.

Improved understanding of persons with disabilities led to demand for fundamental changes to education settings for the disabled (Ahuja, Ainscow and Jangira, 1995 and Booth, 2005). The Salamanca Statement gave impetus to the notion of inclusion, suggesting radical changes to the form of integration and accepting a diverse range of special needs not only limited to disabilities (Figure 1). Furthermore, it explored innovative ways of reforming the school environment to accommodate the needs of all children and youth (UNESCO, 1994).

Figure 1: Historical development stages toward inclusive schools
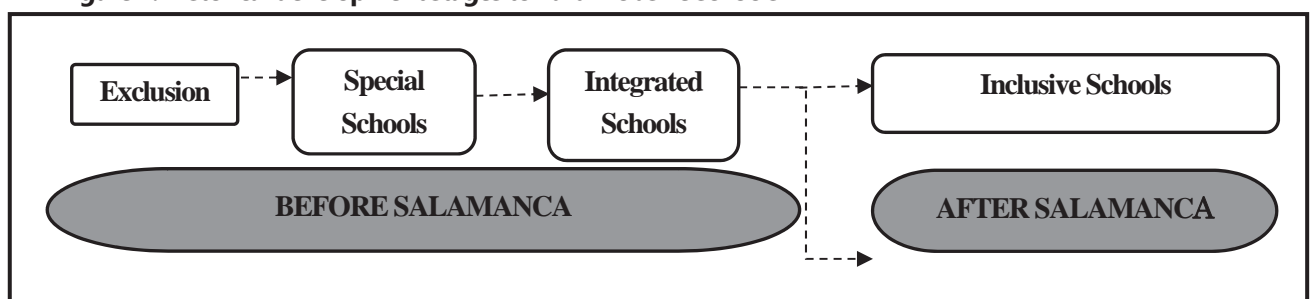
Issues relating to inclusive education

Many feel that the ultimate goal of inclusive education is to improve and enrich the quality of education in classrooms for all children, both those with and without special needs, and to enable them to learn from one another and eliminate discriminatory attitudes (UNESCO, 1994). However, the notion of inclusive education is understood differently by the various academic researchers and international organizations (Ainscow, 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2007; Booth, 2005; Lynch, 1994; McClain-Nhlapo, 2007; Peters, 2003; UNESCO, 2003, 2005; Wormnaes, 2004).

The feasibility of meeting all the special education needs of all children and youth remains a question of concern among the various stakeholders. In particular, given that developing countries already face constraints in providing compulsory education for those without special needs, many governments do not see inclusion of those with special needs as a primary concern. Thus, inclusive education is a sensitive issue in many developing countries where key efforts are led by donor agencies who seek to uphold the right to education for children with special needs, but where governments hold very little accountability.

Study objectives

This study had two parts: (i) comparison of the policies of 60 countries and (ii) examination of the practices in one country, Cambodia, and whether those practices reflected the country's policies.

Ⅰ. Comparison of policies

The first part examined policies relating to inclusion in 60 developing countries in two regions: Africa and the Asia-Pacific.

Of the 60 countries, 38 were from Africa and 22 were from the Asia-Pacific region.

The countries selected from Africa were as follows: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape erde, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar), Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The countries selected from the Asia-Pacific region were as follows: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and the Pacific Islands (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga Tuvalu and Vanuatu).

Ⅱ. Comparison of policy and practice

The second part of the study examined inclusive practices in Cambodia. In particular, the study sought to reveal whether what was stated at the international policy level is reflected in ongoing activities related to inclusive education in Cambodia and sought to identify gaps and the obstacles that prevent the implementation of inclusive policies and strategies. This part of the study relied on the responses to questionnaires of two groups of actors: those on the supply side of inclusive education (ie. school representatives, teachers, etc) and those on the demand side of inclusive education (ie. parents and students).

Method

The study examined 77 reports and plans, specifically Education for All (EFA) reports, particularly National Plans of Action and 2000 Assessment Reports, which had been written

based on specific standards as set forth in guidelines (UNESCO, 1998b, 2000b, 2001; Chang, 2003). The reports and plans were sourced from the UNESCO Education Plans and Policies website. While the reports were similar in terms of structure, they varied in the kinds of details included, probably due to the different authors involved in preparing the reports.

As shown in Table 1, of the 77 reports and plans studied, 48 were from Africa and 29 were from the Asia-Pacific region. Of the reports and plans from Africa, 16 were EFA National Plans of Action (NPAs). The three reports from Africa labelled as 'Other', were the Education Sector Development Programme from Ethiopia; the Annual Education Sector Operational Plan from Ghana and the Education Sector Support Programme from Kenya. The report from the Asia-Pacific region that was labelled as 'Other', was the Mid-Term Action Plan for Improving Education for All from Mongolia.

Table 1: Number of reports and plans, by language

Number of countries	Number of reports and plans	Number of EFA national plans of action	Number of 'Other' types of reports/plans	Number of reports/plans in English	Number of reports/plans in French
38 in Africa	48	16	3	21	27
22 in the Asia-Pacific	29	10	1	29	

Source: Based on data from EFA NPAs and 2000 Assessment Reports

The study identified 16 categories of special education needs, as listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Categories of Special Education Needs (SEN)

1. Disabled persons	9. Child soldiers
2. Gifted children	10. Poverty-stricken children
3. Street and working children	11. children and orphans affected by HIV and AIDS
4. Remote and nomadic populations	12. Orphans an d separated children
5. Linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities	13. Jailed children
6. Abused children	14. Illiterate youth
7. Refugees and Internally-displaced persons	15. Out-of-school children
8. Migrants	16. Other

Sources: UNESCO, 1996, 1998a., 1999a., 1999b., 2000a., 2003, 2004 and Bernard, 2000

The researcher conducted interviews in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, over a period of two weeks. The interviews were semi-structured, with qualitative, open-ended questions. Table 3 lists the types of interview participants and the number of each. The interviewees on the 'supply side' were those involved in providing education to students with special needs, including stakeholders at the international level, national government level (central, provincial, district and commune) and the local level including schools. The interviewees on the 'demand side' were with those who are involved in receiving education, including parents of children with/without disabilities, students with disabilities and students without disabilities. The researcher met with students with sight, hearing and intellectual disabilities, but conducted direct interviews only with students with sight-related disabilities.

Table 3: Interview participants

SUPPLY SIDE	DEMAND SIDE
International organizations: 1	Parents (w/o disabilities) with disabled children: 7
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Cambodia (MoEYS): 2	Parents (w/o disabilities) without disabled children: 7
Schools: 6	Students with disabilities: 7
School headmasters: 7	Students without disabilities: 7
School teachers: 7	
Total: 23 informants	**Total: 28 informants**

Key findings

As shown in Table 4, of the 77 reports and plans reviewed, 65 had reference to people categorized as 'disadvantaged groups', which included 'vulnerable groups', 'excluded groups' and 'marginalized groups'.

Table 4: Number of reports and plans referring to 'disadvantaged groups'

	✓	X	Total
# of reports/plans referring to disadvantaged groups	65	12	77

Sources: NPAs and 2000 Assessment Reports

Thus, 'disabled persons' were mentioned in more reports/plans than any other disadvantaged group. As shown in Table 5, very few reports and plans mentioned abused children or migrants, with only two or three reports mentioning these disadvantaged groups. Each of the 16 SEN groups was mentioned in at least two reports/ plans, however, indicating that the understanding of 'inclusive education' has expanded beyond ensuring access to education to persons with disabilities and that there is now recognition of the differing learning needs of various groups. This is in line with the Salamanca Statement, which sought to ensure each nation to 'recognize[s] and respond[s] to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 12)

Table 5: Number of reports and plans mentioning specific groups with special education needs

# of reports	# of countries	Disabled persons	Gifted children	Street/ working children	Remote/ nomadic populations	Minority groups: linguistic/ ethnic/ cultural/ religious	Abused children	Refugee/ IDPs	Migrants	Child soldiers	Poverty-stricken children	Children affected by HIV and AIDS	Orphans/ separated Children	Jailed children	Illiterate youth	Out-of-school children	Other
77	60	✓: 60 X: 17	✓: 5 X: 72	✓: 20 X: 57	✓: 37 X: 40	✓: 28 X: 49	✓: 2 X: 75	✓: 7 X: 70	✓: 3 X: 74	✓: 2 X: 75	✓: 22 X: 55	✓: 7 X: 70	✓: 13 X: 64	✓: 5 X: 72	✓: 26 X: 51	✓: 20 X: 57	✓: 3 X: 74

2000 Assessment: 41 | *Assessment: French: 25* | ✓: Reports/Plans identifying this group as 'Disadvantaged Groups'
NPA: 32 | *English: 52* | X: Reports/Plans not identifying this group as 'Disadvantaged Groups'
Others: 4

Source: EFA NPAs and 2000 Assessment Report

Ⅰ. Progress on inclusive educational strategies

The study found that countries can be divided into five categories in terms of their progress in creating an inclusive environment for children with disabilities.

<Category A>
No education provision for people with disabilities

Nine countries identified 'disabled people' as one of their 'disadvantaged groups' but had no educational opportunities for such persons or clear strategies to provide access to education for this group.[18]

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[18] Those countries were Djibouti, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Seychelles, Tanzania

<Category B>
Education policies recognize only special education

The policies of some countries do not mention integrated education or inclusive education. For example, the national policy of Comoros recognizes the importance of special education but does not discuss either integrated or inclusive schooling. Likewise, the policy of the Democratic Republic of Congo recognizes the importance of developing special education schools and programmes but does not refer to integrated or inclusive schools. Similarly, the Congo has strategies to promote the development of special education, including, 'construction and rehabilitation of new classrooms … special schools… construction of special centers for the mentally handicapped and implementation of these centers in every region where there are special schools established' (Congo Republic

(Zanzibar), the Pacific Islands, Tanzania and Pakistan.

-Plan national d'action de EPT), but does not mention strategies for integrated or inclusive education.

<Category C>
Education provision is in the form of special education and policies are negative regarding inclusive education

In ten countries, inclusive education is not fully embraced. For example, in Bangladesh:

> The NPA recognized the need (for inclusive education) but felt that "normal primary schools" could not provide both "education and expensive arrangements required for treatment of the disability" and proposed that Ministry of Social Welfare should provide this service through the specialized institutions under normal Allocation of Business. (EFA NPA Ⅱ Bangladesh 2003-2015 7.13)

From the above statement, it can be inferred that in Bangladesh inclusive education is perceived as being difficult to implement and costly, and cannot deliver quality education for disabled students. Therefore, the government provides education services for the disabled through specialized social welfare institutions.

<Category D>
Education provision is in the form of special education but policies are positive regarding inclusive education

In contrast to category C, the national government policies of the ten countries in category D express relatively positive attitudes about integration and inclusion, and plans for such settings. In Cote d'Ivoire, for example, inclusive schools are considered

a positive approach to education for certain categories of disabled students (deaf, blind and deaf/blind students). Similarly, in Bhutan, as the EFA 2000 Assessment notes, 'educational programs and facilities [should be] developed to integrate, wherever possible, disabled children into the regular schools' (EFA 2000 Assessment Bhutan, p. 3.9). The words, 'wherever possible' suggest, however, that there are limitations on what the government can do, and that there are certain conditions to be fulfilled for inclusive education to be feasible in Bhutan.

<Category E>
Education provision is in the form of special education and there are inclusive policies, but no implementation strategies

Countries in this category have policies regarding integrated or inclusive education, but no clear vision or realistic strategies for implementation. For example, Cameroon's policy acknowledges the benefits of inclusive education, yet its strategy is ambiguous and lacking in detail. As the NPA notes, what is required is the 'creation and construction of necessary equipment in schools to adapt to the difficult situations of children' (EFA NPA Cameroon p.11).

Ⅱ. Comparative analysis of gaps between policy and practice

The researcher examined whether the various actors are in favour of adopting inclusive strategies or whether they see difficulties with inclusive education.

The 'supply side' actors were divided into two categories: Group A, consisting of international organizations and local governmental agencies, and Group B, consisting of headmasters and teachers. The interview responses indicate that actors in Group A tend to be more in favour of inclusive education than actors in Group B, with school headmasters and school teachers less in favour than government

ministry staff. Furthermore, while the actors in Group A see a need to develop and promote inclusive education in a positive way, interviews with the school headmasters indicate that they feel that inclusive education is not suitable in certain cases and it was not in their intention to develop and plan for such education settings. As for the teachers, many of them had special professional training in how to teach disabled children, but nevertheless experienced difficulties and constraints from time to time.

The 'demand side' actors were also divided into two categories: Group A, consisting of parents with disabled children and parents with non-disabled children, and Group B, consisting of students with disabilities and students without disabilities. The responses to the interviews indicate that the parents of children with disabilities are very positive about all means of providing educational opportunities for their children, regardless of whether it is in the form of special schools, integrated schools or inclusive schools. This finding was supported by the responses to the interview of school staff. For example, Mr. H from School C (RS) observed that when advocacy activities are conducted to raise public awareness among parents and the community about the rights of all children including children who are disabled, parents express that they are more than willing to send their children to integrated and inclusive schools.

In contrast, the responses to the interviews with the parents with non-disabled children indicate that the parents are cautious about mixing disabled and non-disabled children together, and they tend not to want the two groups of children to follow the same curriculum in schools. This may be a result of local cultural and religious beliefs.

Conclusion

The study found that the 60 countries all have awareness of the notion of inclusion based on diversity. At the same time, however, the majority of the 60 countries identified fewer than three categories of SEN (disadvantaged groups) and most prioritized the disabled. Thus, it appears that the countries examined in the study do not fully recognize the definition of 'inclusive education' as meeting the needs of all students with special education needs. In most countries the targeted 'disadvantaged groups' are selected based on their regional, geographical, social and cultural contexts, such that they prioritize access to education for certain groups with specific special education needs. This is likely to be because these countries do not have the resources to meet the education needs of all children with special education needs.

Analysis of the five types of strategies relating to the provision of education for those with disabilities that were identified by the study indicates that most of the countries examined in the study are implementing special needs education and few have begun to implement integrated or inclusive education. Thus, although many governments have expressed support for the sentiments expressed in the Salamanca Statement, which promotes the adoption of inclusive policies, few countries are acting accordingly. In fact, some countries seem to be going in the opposite direction, and have expressed that it may not be realistic or relevant for them to implement inclusive education given the resource constraints their countries face.

Interview responses by the supply and demand side actors indicate that some actors, particularly those at the 'grassroots' level, do not strongly support

the notion of 'inclusion based on diversity' and do not always feel that inclusive education settings for children with disabilities are relevant to their contexts. Actors with first hand experience in working with disabled children often feel that inclusive education settings are not the most suitable and appropriate way to meet the educational needs of all children with disabilities.

Furthermore, the study found that the implementation of inclusive education (targeting children with disabilities) in Cambodia would require significant reforms and modifications in the system of education, and for a developing country that is still recovering from a period of social turmoil this would require tremendous time and effort. To take the initiative and search for the most appropriate ways of implementing 'inclusive education' in Cambodia so as to uphold the right to education of children with disabilities, would require greater government commitment and strong leadership. At the same time, the supporting international donor agencies and non-governmental organizations must reach consensus on the definition of 'inclusion' to bridge the gap between policy intention and practice.

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