Doctoral Dissertation

Components of Professional Development Empowering Bangladeshi Government Primary School Teachers to Promote Inclusive Education

（Summary）

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The existing National Education Policy 2010 in Bangladesh endorsed the acceptance by government primary schools (GPSs) of children with special needs who have mild to moderate levels of disability. Even though GPSs have started to accept children with special needs in their classrooms, GPS teachers have not received any common training to teach them in regular classrooms. Even though some GPS teachers have received in-service training from both government and non-government organizations and prerequisite training (the Diploma in Primary Education) in the last 10 years, most teachers have not received any training in inclusive education. In this situation, teachers face many challenges when involving students with special needs in their classes. As Bangladesh is a developing country, most of the challenges are related to resources.

Furthermore, GPS teachers require suitable in-service training to successfully implement inclusive education with the limited resources. However, a recent study (Siddik & Kawai, 2018) has found no significant statistical differences in attitudes and efficacy between GPS teachers who have received training on inclusive education and those who have not. This finding indicates that teacher training for inclusive education is not working in line with expectations. This means that either the training content or the training process is not matching GPS teachers' training needs. In this circumstance, identifying GPS teachers' training needs is extremely important to empower them to promote inclusive education.

The current study aims to identify the training needs of GPS teachers for inclusive education and proposes a suitable training model to improve teachers' skills and efficacy. Moreover, the current study also finds the gap between the existing training and teachers' training needs for inclusive education.

An exploratory sequential mixed methods design was followed in the current study (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Given, 2008). In the first phase, qualitative data were collected about GPS teachers' challenges and the resources needed for inclusive education from GPS teachers using six focus group discussions (FGDs) in six different schools in the Dhaka district. These qualitative data and the literature review were used to develop an instrument (questionnaire) with psychometric properties (validity and reliability) to measure teachers' training needs for inclusive education. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part sought demographic information related to the respondent's educational and professional background. In contrast, the second part comprised 37 questions with answers rated on a Likert scale.

In the second phase, 327 completed questionnaires were collected from GPS teachers and GPS teacher trainers (Primary Teachers Training Institute [PTI] instructors, Upazila [sub-district] Resource Center [URC] instructors, and education officers). Of the 327 completed questionnaires, 245 passed the reliability test and were selected for further analysis. After exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), 14 items were reduced, with 23 items selected for the five factors identified as GPS teachers' training needs for inclusive education. Moreover, a structural equation model was created to find the relationships between these factors to develop GPS teachers' training needs for inclusive education.

From the EFA, in total, seven factors were explored. Among them, one factor did not indicate reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient value. Therefore, that factor was eliminated. Three items were reduced for double loading (item 27 was loaded in Factors 2 and 3; item 25 was loaded in Factors 1 and 2; item 32 was loaded in Factors 2 and 4). In total, 31 items were selected for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). One factor, however, had only two items; therefore, it was eliminated. The CFA started with 29 items,

with 23 items eventually selected, in five factors with a good model fit (χ^2/df = 2.214; CFI = 0.917; TLI = 0.905; NFI = 0.860; IFI = 0.918; GFI = 0.859; NNFI = 0.905; RMSEA =

0.070; SRMR = 0.073). The five factors were teachers' efficacy toward inclusive education, evaluation for inclusive education, knowledge about children with special needs, attitudes toward inclusive education, and knowledge about inclusive education.

Further *t*-test analysis found no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of all factors between teachers and teacher trainers, except for knowledge about inclusive education. Although most of the training was related to professional knowledge, teacher trainers received some in-service training on inclusive education. Thus, their score was higher than that for GPS teachers.

After conducting CFA, structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to develop a model. The SEM model found that teachers' knowledge about inclusive education influenced teachers' efficacy toward inclusive education. Moreover, evaluation and expertise also impacted teachers' effectiveness toward inclusive education. The hypothesis that teachers' attitudes influenced teachers' efficacy was not accepted because it was not proven due to the high p-value. Furthermore, the model found a strong relationship between inclusive education and attitude toward inclusive education. Likewise, attitudes toward, and knowledge about, children with special needs influenced each other.

The current study has some limitations. Although 15 different types of institutions for primary education are found in Bangladesh, the current study focused on only GPSs, thus covering only four types of institutions. Primary data were collected from teachers and teacher trainers using an online survey; therefore, the sample selection

was not focused. In addition, the current study analyzed only government training manuals, not those from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in education. Furthermore, the current study was not focused on teachers' demographic factors, and the structural equation model did not include any independent factors from their demographic backgrounds. Therefore, further studies could focus on additional teacher training provided by all organizations other than those under the Ministry of Education (MoE). Moreover, the training needs identified in the current study for GPS teachers could be further investigated in relation to the influence of the training on teachers.