

Practice of Individualized Education Plan among Teachers in Special Schools: A Study in Dhaka City

Mst. Shefat-E-Sultana¹ and Asim Das²

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Abstract

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) plays a crucial role in addressing the diverse needs of students with special needs and ensures quality education for them. This study aimed to explore how teachers in special schools across Dhaka city practice IEP and the challenges they face during the IEP development and implementation process. A multiple case study design was used to gather qualitative data through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis of the collected data highlighted the existing practices, key challenges, and areas for improvement in the practice of IEP. The study's findings are discussed across five major themes: teacher-student interaction, collaborative practice, external influence, societal and cultural context, and changes over time. Findings reveal that although teachers demonstrate a commitment to plan and conduct the education of the students based on their individual needs, the use of IEP was hindered by several factors such as insufficient resources, limited access to specialized training, a lack of a multidisciplinary team, and workload pressures. This study highlights a substantial gap between policy expectations and classroom reality in practicing the IEP and provides empirical evidence from an underexplored context in Bangladesh. The study suggests enhancing cooperation among school authorities, policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders to address existing challenges and improve IEP practice for students with special needs in Dhaka city and beyond.

Keywords: IEP, Students with special needs, IEP practice, Special school, Challenges in IEP practice

Corresponding Author: Mst. Shefat-E-Sultana (shefat.piser@gmail.com)

1. Introduction

Special education requires the development and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with special needs (SSN). An IEPs includes individualized plan for each learner and serves as a specially designed roadmap to execute the plan (Sahin, 2012). It is a written document containing the decisions made by multidisciplinary teams concerning the students' individual educational needs and additional required support services (Tran et al., 2018). It functions as a practical guide for teaching the students as well as a formal record that holds the school accountable for providing the necessary support and services. The concept of IEP originated from the

¹ Lecturer, Department of Continuing Education and Professional Development, Proyash Institute of Special Education and Research (PISER), affiliated with Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), Dhaka-1206, Bangladesh.  <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8016-0230>.

² Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka, Dhaka- 1000, Bangladesh,  <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0569-115X>.

1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) and was later reauthorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) renamed in 2004. Based on this, numerous initiatives have been taken worldwide to ensure the use of IEP for effective teaching of SSN. Scholars often describe the IEP as central to special education, and highlights it as fundamental and essential to effective teaching for SSN. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2012) defines special education as:

Education designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an educational program. Reasons may include (but are not limited to) disadvantages in physical, behavioral, intellectual, emotional and social capacities. (p.83)

Although the term ‘students with special needs’ includes a broader range of conditions, this current study focuses specifically on students with disabilities. Bangladesh has shown strong commitment to securing the rights of individuals with disabilities by acknowledging the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Salamanca Declaration (1994), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006). In this regard, Bangladesh has enacted several national policies and regulations regarding the education of students with disabilities, including the latest policy titled the Integrated Special Education Policy (2019). According to this policy, every student receiving or eligible for special education should have an IEP. Proper development and application of these plans are vital for ensuring the educational outcomes and addressing the unique challenges these students face. In this process, the special education teachers (SET) are held responsible for using the IEP to facilitate learning for SSN. Teachers are the primary and most influential stakeholders engaged in the practice of IEP. Therefore, IEP practice is notably shaped by the teachers’ relevant traits and qualifications (Mosbiran et al., 2021).

Many international studies show a mixed of IEP practice among the teachers. A study in Kuwait shows that teachers demonstrate a strong understanding and use of IEP (Al-Shammari & Hornby, 2019), whereas in Turkey, another study shows that the use of IEP is not as satisfactory as mandated by the country’s special education laws. Turkish teachers face numerous challenges in developing IEP, adapting their teaching practices, and assessing student achievement, largely due to lack of knowledge (Sahin, 2012). Carter and Hughes (2006) found that teachers’ insufficient understanding of IEP hindered their ability to effectively implement the students’ IEPs effectively which suggests that professional development and training are essential for the teachers in this regard. Therefore, authorities should provide practical pre-service and in-service training programs and resources to help teachers practice IEP more effectively (Hidayah et al., 2026; Kozikoğlu & Albayrak, 2022; Rakap et al., 2024; Sahin, 2012).

Some critics have noted that a majority of the SETs never used IEPs in teaching SSN (Emanuelsson & Persson, 1997). For example, a study in Sweden revealed that IEP was often used as an administrative tool rather than to support the educational needs of the SSN (Andreasson et al., 2013). In numerous schools, teachers were observed to develop IEPs for SSN, however, a visible inconsistency existed in both utilization of these plans

and the perceptions of their efficacy (Rose et al., 2012). Another investigation found that a significant majority of teachers did not engage in the development of IEP. Instead, they followed the curriculum without implementing essential modifications, and relied on repetition technique, homework assignments, and occasional use of reinforcement (Kargin et al., 2005, as cited in Sahin, 2012). Another important point concerned including individualized records in the IEP. These individual records serve as fundamental tools for subjective instruction based on the students' individual family background, personal interests, and recreational preferences. Still, some teachers were identified as lacking the ability to properly incorporate these records (Al-Shammari & Hornby, 2019).

Professional development programs affect on teachers' comprehension of IEP components, such as current levels, annual and post-secondary goals, and courses of study. After receiving the professional development programs, teachers become more competent at describing the IEP components and aligning their teaching with specified goals (Flannery & Hellemn, 2015). In Ireland, McCarthy (2006) found that a significant percentage of teachers were involved in the IEP process, while the rest were reluctant to participate in the process due to perceived lack of knowledge in this area. SSN are entitled to education and services as outlined in their IEP, which are prepared by multi-disciplinary teams. Collaboration among IEP team members is also crucial for successful development and implementation of IEP (Mitchell et al., 2010). IEP provides opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, associated services staffs, and students to collaborate in order to enhance educational outcomes for SSN. Consequently, collaboration is vital among the teachers, family members, and other team members of IEP to facilitate effective development and implementation of IEP (Kozikoğlu & Albayrak, 2022). Moreover, it is crucial for members of the IEP team to possess advanced communication skills, as each team member contributes valuable information that can significantly enhance the planning and execution of IEP (Kozikoğlu & Albayrak, 2022). However, Isaksson et al. (2007) revealed that a significant number of the IEP were developed without parental participation, with many parents unaware of the existence of IEP. Furthermore, Almoghyrah (2021) revealed that teachers face substantial challenges, whether at the individual or team level and acknowledged the need for IEP practice in collaboration with the associated stakeholders. Despite global recognition of IEP, research conducted worldwide indicates that teachers often diverge from prescribed IEP practices.

In recent years, there has been growing concern regarding the effectiveness of IEP in meeting the educational needs of SSN, particularly in the context of special schools. Although the Integrated Special Education Policy (2019) of Bangladesh mandates the use of IEP, clear guidelines regarding the use of IEPs and roles of the IEP team members are lacking. Additionally, teachers without specialized knowledge or qualifications are entering the special education field which is limiting the SSN's learning opportunities. Given this context, it is important to explore the teaching practices of SET in Bangladesh's special schools. While international research has looked into IEP development and implementation in inclusive and special schools, there is a clear gap in

studies focused specifically on IEP practice in Bangladesh. Since this area has not yet been studied enough, it is important to examine how teachers in Bangladesh use IEP and what challenges they face. The aim of this study is to improve understanding of IEPs practice in Bangladeshi school setting. It explores teachers' experiences to discuss the challenges and support systems that influence their practice of IEP. Additionally, the study contributes a Bangladeshi viewpoint to the global discussion on educational strategies for special and inclusive education.

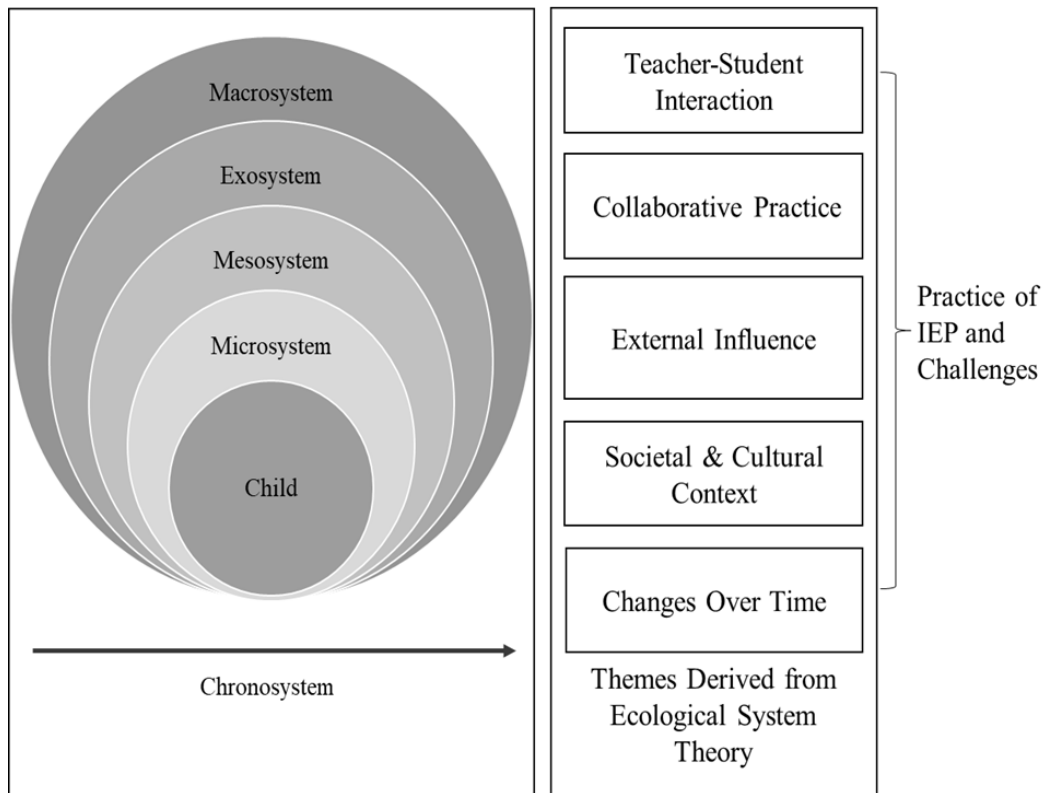
1.1 Research Questions

The study's purpose was addressed through the following questions-

- a) How do teachers practice IEP for students with special needs at special schools?
- b) What challenges do teachers encounter in practicing IEP at special schools in the context of Bangladesh?

1.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study followed Ecological System Theory (EST) by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). Ecological system theory explores the ecological dimensions of human growth and development placing significant emphasis on the complex interactions among individual relationships, social and cultural elements, and environmental factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It promotes an ecological viewpoint that encourages people to think about the environment they live in. Although it started with a focus on human development, EST has been used to look at various social issues. In special education, EST can help understand how teachers' experiences with IEP practices change over time. The first layer, the microsystem, focuses on the direct interactions between teachers and students. The mesosystem emphasizes teamwork within the IEP team. Funding and resources are discussed under the exosystem as external factors, and these factors influence how teachers implement the IEP. The macrosystem involves the bigger social and cultural setting, such as legal and curriculum frameworks. Lastly, the chronosystem examines changes over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), like shifts in educational trends, societal expectations, and improvements in pedagogical approaches that affect IEP practices. This study derives five major themes from the systems: teacher-student interaction, collaborative practice, external influence, societal and cultural context, and changes over time. Thus, EST helps to provide a comprehensive framework for exploring IEP practices in special schools. Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework of the study.

Figure 1*Theoretical Framework of this Study*

2. Methodology

The study followed a qualitative research approach within the interpretive paradigm. A multiple case study design was used to explore the practice of IEP among teachers in special schools. This design was considered most suitable as evidence suggested that multiple cases produce more reliable and generalizable findings than a single case (Yin, 2018). It allowed the researchers to record diverse perspectives within each school context and identify both shared and unique patterns of IEP practice across cases.

2.1 Participants

As this study utilized multiple case study design, each school was treated as an individual case, and data were gathered from three categories of participants within each case: teachers, principals, and parents. Three special schools were chosen as the three cases following Yin's (2018) recommendation because this number was sufficient for in-depth comparison of practices and avoided the risk of weaker analysis resulting from using too many cases. The study used convenience sampling to choose the schools as this technique allowed the researchers to collect data from those schools which could be reached within the time and were interested in taking part. Then purposive sampling was employed to

select the study participants. It was useful in gathering information rich data by targeting the participants who had direct experience with IEP practice. In total, the study involved 12 participants. As the aim was to explore the practice of IEP in depth within the cases, this sample size was considered reasonable for this purpose. Table-1 shows the demographic overview of the research participants.

Table 1

Profile of Participants across Schools

Cases	Participants	Participants' Characteristics			
		Pseudonym/ Code	Age	Gender	Educational Qualification
School X	Teacher	Rita	40	Female	MSEd
		Minar	32	Male	BSEd
	Principal	Principal of X School	45	Male	BSEd, MSEd
	Parent	Parent of X School	41	Female	BA
School Y	Teacher	Sana	45	Female	BSEd, MEd
		Rahat	37	Male	BSEd, MEd
	Principal	Principal of Y School	42	Female	BSEd
	Parent	Parent of Y School	35	Female	BA
School Z	Teacher	Salman	25	Male	BSEd, MEd
		Manha	34	Female	BSEd
	Principal	Principal of Z School	35	Female	BSEd, MSEd
	Parent	Parent of Z School	39	Female	BSc, MSc

2.2 Research Instrument and Procedure

In-depth interviews were conducted in person with all twelve participants to ensure direct interaction. However, only the teachers were involved in the focus group discussion. The data collection instruments utilized in this study included semi-structured interview schedules, and an FGD guideline. To generate a favorable atmosphere, the researchers began the process by obtaining consent and a good rapport with the building participants during the initial stage. Participants were reminded of the study's objectives, and assurance was given that pseudonyms would be used to safeguard their personal information in the documentation.

2.3 Data Analysis

The gathered data were analyzed using thematic analysis as it enables the systematic explanation of patterns and themes across multiple cases. In this study, a deductive thematic analysis was applied based upon predetermined themes drawn from the theoretical framework of the study. Throughout the whole process, the researchers were careful to ensure trustworthiness and methodological rigor. Peer debriefing, member checking, and triangulation of data sources and data collection methods were used to validate the trustworthiness of the study. These measures strengthened the credibility interpretation of the findings.

2.4 Ethical Consideration

The study followed the amendments to the declaration of Helsinki of the (1964) throughout the research. This study didn't include any ethical approval due to the absence of ethics committee of the relevant institute. However, to maintain research integrity and ethics, the researchers followed protocols such as Helsinki declaration and General Data protection Regulation. The participants provided written informed consent to participate in this study and their permission to record the data. The information related to participants' identity has been completely anonymized.

3. Findings

Data obtained from in-depth interviews and FGD were analyzed based on predetermined themes extracted from the Ecological System Theory. These themes are Teacher-student interaction; collaborative practice; external influence; societal and cultural context; and changes over time.

3.1 Teacher-Student Interaction

Teachers across the schools reported awareness being aware of importance of making individualized plans for SSN. One prominent aspect highlighted by the teachers was the detailed evaluation of child's unique traits to inform the development of individualized goals. They also shared reviewing the observation and assessment reports to comprehensively evaluate child's present developmental status. Some of the teachers also mentioned about conducting an initial academic assessment before determining the IEP goals. Principals and parents also shared similar statements in this regard. Data also revealed concerns regarding formulating pragmatic goals. Sana narrated:

When developing the IEP, I make sure to set realistic and achievable goals. It's crucial not to overwhelm the child with too many targets beyond their ability. If a child can recognize letters but struggles to write them, the goal may be to write two letters within six months. On the other hand, for a child who struggles with holding a pen or pencil, the goal would be to learn proper grip within six months.

Similar statement was also shared by the parents and principals. One parent of Y school stated that the goals are set in manageable numbers to ensure attainability within the specified timeframe. The principals shared teachers determine the most appropriate goals based on the severity of the disability of the child to ensure that the goals are neither too challenging nor too easy.

The participants also described adjusting their instructional approaches to accommodate the specific needs, unique abilities, and interests of SSN. They conveyed the use of a range of strategies, including prompting, task analysis, shaping, chaining, sensory stimulation, categorization, and so on. For example, Rita mentioned that she makes sure that tasks vary for each child during their vocational class to align them with their specific IEP goals. She added that not all students are taught same skills; instead, she adapts the activities to fit each child's needs and strengths.

Still, data revealed some challenges inherent in addressing the heterogeneous learning needs of students within a single classroom setting. All the teachers shared similar statements about this struggle. Minar from the X School shared:

I struggle to balance the needs of students with varying learning styles and preferences. Some of them learn well when I use visual cues or hands-on activities, but some struggle with these approaches. Much of my time is wasted in trying to adjust my teaching style for different learning needs.

Most teachers mentioned that they face a heavy workload daily. For example, Rita said:

I am in charge of preparing all the progress reports for 25 students myself based on observation. It is very tough because I am also responsible for some official duties. To be honest, I do not have the required time or energy to complete the IEP documentation.

In contrast, Salman from Z School did not describe it as a challenge because he gets adequate help from his team members. It was also evident from the interview of the principal of that school. She said that there are strong support systems to tackle this issue.

In addition, another problem shared by the teachers was the high expectations held by the parents of SSN. As a result, the teachers feel pressured and get stressed in trying to meet the goals written in the children's IEP and show good progress. The unrealistic expectations of parents make the teachers feel overwhelmed and exhausted. Sometimes this issue affects the teachers' ability to implement the IEP and provide necessary assistance for the child. Another constraint in IEP implementation mentioned by the research participants was student absenteeism. Most teachers pointed out that many students stay absent from school for long periods. Rita said, "There are several incidents where children are absent for many days. Consequently, the targets set for these children in their IEP cannot be met."

3.2 Collaborative Practice

The findings from the study put a strong emphasis on collaborative interaction between special education teachers and associated stakeholders in the planning process. Teachers reported prioritizing collaborative partnerships with the parents and other individuals familiar with the child's needs, strengths, and home environment. This collaboration not only improved the planning process but also helped everyone feel invested in the plan. Salman from Z school stated:

After developing the IEP draft, I inform the parents about the goals I have set and ask for their opinions. They can request to remove any goal from the IEP if they feel it's not necessary. Then I finalize the IEP and provide a hard copy. We have weekly meetings

with parents, every Saturday. During the meeting, we counsel them and ask if they have any inquiries.

Teachers make efforts to engage parents, such as sharing success stories during parents' days, to encourage greater involvement and support. Still, minimum parental cooperation remains a significant challenge because many parents are unresponsive or unwilling to participate in the IEP process. Minar shared his experience saying:

Some parents are motivated to cooperate, while others are not due to their child's slow progress. They do not feel the urge to put effort into their child's schooling. Many times, it is seen that the directions we give are not followed at home by the parents or other family members.

However, the interview data show that most of the parents are satisfied with the current level of involvement from the school which reflects the frequent communication and collaboration practices already in place.

The participants also provided statements regarding collaboration with multidisciplinary team members. However, the collaboration practices varied among teachers across the three schools. Teachers of X and Y schools highlighted that due to the absence of in-house therapists and psychologists, they rely on the assessment reports prepared by external therapists and psychologist. As a result, the students need to go outside for therapy and other related services. In contrast, teachers from Z school shared their comprehensive multi-disciplinary collaboration, as their school has in-house therapists, nutritionists and psychologists. Thus, the disclose data a lack of a multi-disciplinary team affecting the IEP practice within the first two schools. The principals of the schools affirmed the teachers' statements. Parents also expressed similar concerns and expressed the need for designated therapists and psychologists within schools to benefit both children and teachers. Furthermore, data analysis indicates that all the teachers seek advice and guidance from their colleagues in the IEP process which allows them to share experiences, exchange effective strategies, and find solutions to complex issues.

3.3 External Influence

Most teachers highlighted the vital role of external influences, particularly the support from NGOs and the Rotary Club, in facilitating the successful implementation of IEP. In this context, the principal of X School said, "The assistance from external organizations has been instrumental in providing additional financial resources and teaching materials." A major barrier expressed by the participants to effective IEP implementation was funding limitation. It restricts teachers' capacity to provide the required resources and support to meet the various forms of learning needs of the students. Parents and principals of the study shared comparable thoughts. Sana from Y School expressed her frustration about this topic saying:

Funding crisis does not let us set appropriate objectives for the students. For example, if we had a psychologist at our school, we could tackle autism and ADHD students' hyperactivity issues by including specific IEP goal on hyperactivity management for such students.

In contrast, the study found different views on external support in the privately run Z

School. The principal of that school stated that the school has enough internal resources. It helps the teachers to implement IEP without needing support from outside organizations.

A majority of the teachers expressed concern that they do not have professional development opportunities to improve their skills in IEP development and implementation. From X School, Rita said with frustration that there is not enough specialized training or workshop on IEP practice. She pointed out little support from external organizations for professional growth, such as Neuro developmental disorder Protection Trust, which offered basic online training on special education but not directly relevant to IEP practice. Other than that, Bachelor of Special Education program was their main source for professional development. In contrast, teachers from Z school reported having additional opportunities to receive relevant training. The principal of that school highlighted the proactive approach taken to improve IEP practices among the teachers. She shared, “I provide extensive training opportunities for my school teachers. This includes sending them to various training sessions and conducting training myself to keep them informed about the latest trends and practices.”

3.4 Societal and Cultural Context

The practice of IEP seemed to be influenced by different societal and cultural factors. This study revealed that teachers at Z School have a distinct advantage in practicing the IEP because they have their own curriculum designed for the SSN. The curriculum provides them with a clear plan that the teachers are supposed to follow. Unlike teachers from Z School, teachers from X and Y school highlighted that they follow NCTB curriculum guidelines to some extent in developing and implementing IEP. However, they shared concerns regarding the necessity for a specialized curriculum that addresses the unique needs of SSN and ensure effective IEP implementation. All the research participants talked about the absence of a national special education curriculum and its influence on the development and implementation of IEP. This study identified this gap as a major reason for the challenges teachers face in implementing the IEP. Without a standardized outline, teachers struggle to match their teaching methods and materials with the diverse needs of their students. However, Z School is an exception to this issue. It has its own established curriculum for younger students and adapted curriculum for older students.

Additionally, although teachers from all three schools emphasized that their practice of IEP is driven by their dedication to special education rather than being influenced by specific laws or policies, it was obvious that the absence of clear policy directives serves as a prominent challenge to some extent in practicing IEP at special schools. Sana from Y School stated similar comment, “While having a policy in place would provide clarity and consistency, our work has not been affected by its absence. We have adapted to operating without a formal policy by following established practices within our school.” All three principals affirmed the teachers’ dedication to IEP practice and emphasized the need for a specific policy on IEP for clarity and consistency in IEP practice nationwide. The principal of X school acknowledged the adverse impact of inadequate policy guidelines on IEP practice and stated, “The absence of comprehensive policy guidelines

on IEP practice creates confusion and ambiguity among teachers. It makes it harder for them to fulfill the diverse needs of special need children successfully.” The principal of Y School also mentioned that effective implementation of existing policies, such as the Integrated Special Education Policy 2019, is still pending. Therefore, all the participants reported the need for clearer legal guidelines on IEP practices.

3.5 Changes over Time

Most of the participants explained the way historical events, revised educational policies, and societal attitudes towards special education have significantly shaped IEP implementation. Teachers from all three schools discussed how historical events like the enactment of important legislation including the IDEA in the United States, the UNCRPD at an international level, and the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act in Bangladesh influenced the services provided for the students with disabilities. In line with this, participants in the study noted the dynamic and adaptive nature of IEP practice over time as special education evolves. They highlighted how changing educational approaches, improved teaching techniques, and policy shifts influence IEP practice to better support the SSN. Moreover, they mentioned being adaptive in adjusting to shifts in education by adopting emerging teaching approaches to ensure that IEP remains relevant and effective. In this regard, Rahat from Y school mentioned:

We make changes to the IEP format when needed to ensure its relevance. Last year, we developed a new format of the IEP because there was not any domain to add goals on behavior management. We have added this section out of the students’ need.

Additionally, the study showed that majority of teachers struggle to keep up with rapid technological updates. As a result, it becomes harder to effectively use these technologies for IEP practice. They noted that technology integration needs ongoing training, sufficient resources, and other support. However, according to the teachers at school Z, they had access to the necessary support and resources needed in their efforts to integrate technology into IEP. This indicates that the presence of right support and resources can greatly lessen any difficulty associated with technology integration.

4. Discussion

The current study identified teachers’ positive perception regarding IEP practice; however, several multifaceted factors hindered the effective implementation. For instance, structured protocols and collaborative efforts were less practiced despite teachers’ understanding of the significance of IEP implementation. This finding is in line with previous research (Bhroin et al., 2016) stating the crucial role of teacher and parents and their collaboration with proper understanding for efficient IEP practices. Moreover, teachers encountered various challenges such as excessive parental expectation, students’ low attendance, workloads, lack of resources, and limited scope of professional development scopes. This finding echoed previous research (Kozikoğlu & Albayrak, 2022; Garcia & Weiss, 2018) revealing the fact that these challenges limit the overall scope of IEP implementation in school setting. The present study also identified external support as an important element for addressing resource inadequacies in the school

setting. Aligning with this, Al-Kahtani (2015) signified that the resource utilization and availability positively impact in IEP planning as well as practice. However, this study indicated teachers develop IEP to fulfill the administrative demands where classroom practice guided by IEP is mostly absent. As a result, teachers' effort on IEP development due to administrative requirement seemed as a paper-work rather than practice (Andreasson et al., 2013).

Another key issue identified was the varied forms of collaboration among the IEP team members. Although collaboration is regarded as a central part of the IEP process, in many cases, teachers reported working on their own, with little or no support from a multidisciplinary team. For instance, teachers discussed conducting speech therapy sessions in the class because no therapist was available at the school. There were also examples of majority of students receiving therapy from external centers due to this reason. Furthermore, most participants agreed that professional training on IEP development and implementation was limited, which often resulted in making the process difficult for all. Teachers also mentioned that insufficient support from parents made it difficult to plan the goals for the SSN. However, in contrast, Hridi et al. (2020) pointed that the parents raised concerns about being uninformed about their children's progress at school, and receiving infrequent and inadequate updates from teachers. One possible explanation could be that teachers often feel burdened with their workload, and therefore, may lack the time to manually track student progress and provide detailed reports to keep parents informed.

The findings of this study also identified significant challenges within the societal and cultural context: challenges in curriculum adaptation and inadequate policy guidelines on IEP practice. A curriculum specifically designed for the SSN helps the teacher to design and implement the IEP successfully (Al-Kahtani, 2015). The study found that the practice of curriculum adaptation varied across the sampled schools, and there is an urgent need for a standardized framework to guide curriculum adaptation in special schools. All participants identified the need of a specific policy guideline from national level to practice IEP meaningfully. The absence of a comprehensive guideline adversely impacts on the IEP planning and practice as it creates a blank space of accountability and integrity. The current study extracted the suggestion to recognize the multidimensional nature of IEP practice due to rapid shifts in special education setting that are caused by diverse educational approaches, technological integration and policy transitions. This finding is supported by the previous research that also acknowledged that several societal factors influence on IEP practice (Al-Kahtani, 2015; Sahin, 2012; McCarthy, 2006).

Despite various challenges, the concerning study found some positive practices in special school setting. For instance, adapting teaching method and offering a range of assessment strategies are identified in the special schools where teachers actively work in the individual needs of the students. This context shows the teachers' efficacy and professional practices within a limited resourceful setting. Therefore, structured support and scope of continuous professional development are needed to practice the IEP in schools.

5. Recommendations

The study recommends offering professional development programs for teachers focusing on IEP development and practice. In this context, evidence-based teaching-learning techniques should be incorporated in teachers' training to equip them with the latest knowledge and skills on IEP. The study also suggests meaningful collaboration between parents, teachers and other relevant professionals to ensure an impactful multi-disciplinary team which will plan, evaluate and practice the IEP. Moreover, the study recommends establishing a national guideline on IEP development and implementation in special school setting to enable a mechanism for evaluating and monitoring the overall process regarding IEP. The study finally suggests further research on understanding the challenges and scope of integration of the stakeholder in planning and implementing IEP in educational settings nationwide.

6. Conclusion

This study offered a detailed narrative on IEP practices across special school settings from teacher's perspectives. Teachers demonstrated their strong commitment and positive inclination towards IEP practice; nevertheless, there is a discrepancy was found between teachers' interest and practice. In this regard, this study revealed several challenges that hindered the actual practice. Moreover, teachers' resilience in their duties indicated a potential aspect of special school setting of Bangladesh extending that fact that scope of professional development and government patronage would significantly change the existing situation. Though the study found unique understanding and practical changes, the major limitation of this study was that it focused on a comparatively small number of participants. Besides, cases from rural school setting were not included due to the small-scale nature of the study. Therefore, further research on rural setting and all of the stakeholders relevant to IEP practice is needed to reflect the broad range of understanding and practices regarding IEP. Nevertheless, this study contributes unique insights on teachers' ground that reflects detailed school-based IEP implementation where both strengths and challenges are identified. These findings are valuable at the policy-making level for understanding the practical aspect of IEP practice in special schools and to plan a comprehensive guideline which can dictate the stakeholders to plan, collaborate and implement meaningful individual support through individualized education plan.

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