

Blended Model for Promoting Educational, Vocational and Social Inclusion of Students with Neuro-Developmental Disabilities: A Case Study of Proyash Institute of Special Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Shahriar Pranto¹ and Md. Waliullah²

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Abstract

This study explored how the Proyash Institute of Special Education supports the promotion of educational, vocational and social inclusion for students with neuro-developmental disabilities (NDDs) in Bangladesh. Where the qualitative case study approach was used to explore the views and experiences of stakeholders within its real-life institutional context. Data were collected from parents, students, teachers, school leaders and education experts through focus group discussions, semi-structured and key-informant interviews, classroom and school facility observations. The findings highlight that the blended model of Proyash combines academic, therapeutic, and community-based interventions that significantly contribute to the inclusion of students with neuro-developmental disabilities (NDDs). In particular, play-based learning, tailored instructional strategies, and accessible learning materials have enhanced students' confidence and motivation to participate in learning and other activities. Parental views showed the positive improvements in their children's intellectual, social, physical, emotional and communication development. The study also revealed that Proyash actively supported transitions to the mainstream of school and employment through sports and community engagement programmes. Institutional infrastructure and support services like speech, occupational, and physiotherapy services were found to be so well-equipped and effective that they indicated the institution's contribution to holistic development.

Keywords: Blended model, Students with neuro-developmental disabilities, Educational inclusion, Vocational inclusion, Social inclusion

Corresponding Author: Shahriar Pranto (shahriarpranto9902@gmail.com)

1. Introduction

Bangladesh has a population of approximately 169.8 million, a report by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2023). The literacy rate has risen to 74.66%, a significant increase from 51.77% in 2011. According to the National Survey on Persons with Disabilities (NSPD) 2021 by BBS, 7% of the population experiences functional difficulties in areas such as vision, hearing, mobility, communication, learning, and

¹ Senior Lecturer, Proyash Institute of Special Education and Research (PISER), affiliated with Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), Dhaka-1206, Bangladesh,  <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8085-9360>.

² Research and Documentation Officer, Institute for Teacher Competency and Excellence, Bangladesh,  <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0828-9843>.

behaviour control. Among them only 65% of children with disabilities aged 5-17 are enrolled in primary school while enrolment drops to 35% at the secondary level. It indicates that overall, 60% of children with disabilities in this age group are not enrolled in any formal education. A study by the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD, 2023), indicates that only 1.57% of students with disabilities complete education beyond the 12th grade. Additionally, 41% of these children lack access to any educational facilities, with rural areas being particularly underserved. Study explored that only one-third of working-age individuals with disabilities are employed, with women facing higher unemployment rates than men. While 90% of registered persons with disabilities receive government allowances, approximately 65% remain unregistered and thus do not receive these benefits (UNICEF, 2023).

Neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDD) are one of the most vulnerable groups, as they receive little assistance from public service agencies (Ahsan et al., 2021). The public services are insufficient, especially health, education, and social safety nets, low employment, and natural disasters. It is estimated that 10-15% of persons with disabilities (World Report on Disability 2011, WHO and World Bank) of the total population live in developing countries, so it is assumed that over 16 million people are living with a disability in Bangladesh. 7.1% of children (0-9 years) are living with Neuro-Developmental Disability (NDD) in Bangladesh (Survey of Autism and Neuro-Developmental Disorder (NDD), August, 2013; MoHSW). A combination of poverty, lack of facilities, and lack of awareness of mass people: the persons with neuro-developmental disability excluded from social and educational rights and protection and health care services.

1.1 Neuro-developmental Disabilities

Neuro-developmental disorders are disabilities in the functioning of the brain that affect a child's behaviour, memory or ability to learn e.g. mental retardation, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning deficits and autism (WHO). According to the NDD act-2013 of Bangladesh, there are four types: (a) Autism or autism spectrum disorder; (b) Down syndrome; (c) Intellectual disability; (d) Cerebral palsy. According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)'s Article 24, persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live; reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided. SDG 4, 4.5 targets explicitly includes students with disabilities stating, "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations".

1.2 Global and Regional Practice of Inclusion Model

Considering to further contextualise the relevance of this study, inclusion practices from different regional settings are considered:

- ***Japan's Resource Room Model:*** The "Resource Room Model" has been adopted by

Japan for inclusive education that is aiming to mainstream students with mild disabilities but receive specialized support in resource rooms for a few hours weekly. This model continues the child's participation in the general education system while addressing individualized needs through targeted instruction (UNESCO, 2020). It relies heavily on trained special education teachers, peer engagement, and individualized educational plans (IEPs).

- **UDL and Co-teaching in the USA:** The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and co-teaching models are globally prominent inclusion model that adopted by the United States. UDL promotes multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement to accommodate diverse learning needs. Co-teaching involves special education and general education teachers collaboratively planning and delivering instruction in the same classroom setting. These models, mandated under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), are supported by strong federal funding and policy enforcement (Wehman et al., 2018; CAST, 2018; Friend & Cook, 2017).
- **Whole-School Inclusion Approach- Australia / New Zealand:** Australia and New Zealand follow a whole-school approach grounded in inclusive values, where leadership, curriculum, pedagogy, and community participation are aligned to ensure access for all learners. In New Zealand, the “Success for All” policy ensures all schools are accountable for enrolling and supporting students with disabilities. Schools receive additional funding and professional development resources through the Ministry of Education to implement inclusive practices (Mitchell, 2010).
- **BRAC's Community-Based Inclusion- Bangladesh:** The world largest Non-Government Organization (NGO) BRAC has established community-based inclusive education through its non-formal education programs. BRAC schools integrate children with mild to moderate disabilities using low-cost teaching materials, trained community teachers, and flexible schooling schedules. The main focus of the BRAC is access to primary education and do not combine integrated therapeutic services, or vocational, or social engagement components. Its strength lies in grassroots mobilization and scalability, particularly in rural areas (Mallick, 2016; BRAC, 2019).

Taken together, these examples indicate that various combination of community involvement, mainstream participation, specialised support and individualised support can be organised. This study explored how several elements and support services can be organised by Proyash in a single institutional setting.

1.3 Why the Proyash Blended Model is Unique in Bangladesh

The blended model of Proyash Institute of Special Education is diverse and innovative within the national context of Bangladesh for the following reasons:

- **Multidimensional Integration:** Unlike models that do not combine educational provision with the range of support services, Proyash introduces a blended model that integrates academic learning, therapeutic services, vocational activities, and community engagement for social inclusion within a single ecosystem.

- ***Institutional Scale and Specialisation:*** The six specialised schools (school of autism, school of intellectually disabled, school of down syndrome, school of cerebral palsy, school of hearing impairment and school of visual impairment), operated by Proyash tailored to specific disabilities, with well-trained professionals, advanced therapeutic tools, and structured learning environments, rare in the Bangladesh education landscape.
- ***Transition Pathways:*** The model also incorporated targeted pathways to mainstreaming education and employment, evidenced by student transitions from specialised schools to regular schools and formal jobs, that are absent in other public or NGO-led institutions in Bangladesh.
- ***Leadership and Governance:*** Under the management of Bangladesh Army, Proyash has strong infrastructural and institutional settings and discipline, enabling it to maintain high standards of safety, curriculum adaptation, and stakeholder accountability.
- ***Cultural Adaptation:*** While grounded in global best practices, the Proyash model is a whole-school approach and contextually responsive to Bangladeshi social values, parental expectations, and systemic limitations, making it both scalable and culturally sustainable.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study are-

- a. To explore the role of the Proyash Institute of Special Education in the promotion of the educational, vocational and social inclusion of students with neuro-developmental disabilities.
- b. To assess the effectiveness of institutional capabilities to support the holistic development of students with neuro-developmental disabilities.
- c. To analyse stakeholders' perception of the progress and prospects of students with neuro-developmental disabilities.

1.5 Study Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is structured based on three interrelated components that provide a comprehensive lens for analysing the role of Proyash Institute of Special Education in promoting inclusion for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDD):

- a. ***Legal and Policy Framework:*** The legal and policy framework incorporates both international and national legislative instruments related to the rights of persons with disabilities including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act (2013), and other relevant national education and social policies. These legal references form the normative basis for inclusive practices.

- b. **Dimensions of Inclusion:** The three following core domains are crucial for holistic development of students with NDD:
- **Educational Inclusion:** Ensuring access and active participation to learning opportunities through tailored instruction and curriculum adaptations.
 - **Vocational Inclusion:** Engaging skills-based activities and providing training to mainstream of employment support long-term independence.
 - **Social Inclusion:** Ensuring social acceptance through increasing community engagement.
- c. **Blended Model of Support:** The blended model of supports are integrated approach combining special education therapeutic services, skill-based training and social engagement. It serves as an operational model demonstrating how multidisciplinary interventions can be synchronised to address the complex needs of students with NDD.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Bangladesh approved the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in November 2007. As per the commitments, Bangladesh has undertaken reviews of several laws and policies, including the Children Policy (2011), the Children Act (2013), and the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act (2013). Furthermore, the Constitution of Bangladesh strongly addresses the fundamental rights of all citizens including persons with disability. The Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act (2013) replaced the previous Disability Welfare Act (2001), aiming to strengthen disability rights in all aspects in the society. The Education Policy (2010) includes provisions for children with disabilities. Although disability inclusion is a priority for education-related ministries, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, there are coordination gaps to work combine that result in the education of students with disabilities being administratively detached from mainstream education authorities (Ahsan et al., 2021).

Concern has been raised by UNICEF (2023) that more than half of children with disabilities in Bangladesh are beyond formal education. It emphasised the need for early identification and an inclusive ecosystem to support these children's development. Despite all the initiatives, challenges still exist to ensure equity and inclusion of children with neuro-developmental disabilities and other disabilities.

The study identifies that only 0.57% of enrolled students have disabilities, despite persons with disabilities constituting 6.94% of the total population (Rahman et al., 2019).

Proyash Institute of Special Education develops a model that applies a blended and holistic approach that organises several support services toward inclusion, incorporating the diverse needs of children with neuro-developmental disabilities through a

combination of special education, healthcare, vocational activities, and community engagement. The commitment of the institute is to mainstream children with neuro-developmental disabilities as valued citizens. Proyash operates six specialised schools catering to students with autism, intellectual disability, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, and visual impairment, offering tailored education and therapy for children aged 6 to 14 years. Additionally, the institute promotes awareness, conducts research, and provides professional training for educators, reinforcing its vision of equity and inclusion in education and society for persons with disabilities.

2. Methodology

This study followed a qualitative case study approach. This approach was chosen to enable an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon within its real-life institutional and cultural context (Yin, 2018). It also enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the research objectives through both in-depth narratives and broader patterns (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Data were collected through multiple qualitative methods across two distinct phases. In phase one, data were collected from key stakeholders (see table-1). A total of three FGDs were conducted with parents, comprising 8-10 participants each. Along with that, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two students and two parents to gain more individualised perspectives. Two classroom observations and an institutional observation were carried out using structured observation checklists to reveal physical facilities, learning environments, and therapeutic settings. In phase two, data were collected through key informant interviews with two teachers, one school leader and an expert consultation with an academic specialising in inclusive education. Phase two was designed to validate findings derived from phase one.

Table 1

Summary of Data Collection Methods

Phase	Method	Participants	Sample Size
Phase 1	FGDs	Parents	3 groups (8-10 each)
	Semi-structured Interviews	Parents and Students	4
	Classroom Observation	Classrooms	2
	Centre Observation	School Campus	1
Phase 2	Key-informant Interviews	Teachers and School Leader	3
	Expert Consultation	Inclusive Education Expert	1

3. Data Analysis

A thematic data analysis method was used to scrutinise qualitative data, following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Themes were developed based on both

the research objectives and emergent patterns in the data. Observation data and field notes were analysed in parallel to support triangulation. Microsoft Excel was used for organizing thematic matrices and coding references to ensure traceability and transparency.

4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Proyash Institute of Special Education, Dhaka Cantonment. Informed consent was secured from all participants. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained through data anonymisation and secure storage.

5. Findings and Analysis

This section presented an analysis of the findings derived from qualitative data. The primary aim of this study was to evaluate the initiatives undertaken by Proyash Institute of Special Education, Dhaka, in promoting the social and educational inclusion of children with neuro-developmental disabilities. A number of themes and sub-themes (see table 2) were used to present the results of the analysis.

Table 2

Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-theme
Initiatives for students' development	- Initiatives for educational inclusion
	- Initiatives for vocational inclusion
	- Initiatives for social inclusion
	- Parental perception about child's overall inclusion
	- Academic capacity (curriculum, teaching material, assessment)
Institutional capabilities and implication	- Physical facilities (therapeutic services)
	- Remarkable achievement
	- Parental perception about institutional capabilities (institutional capacity, teaching-learning support, support for social inclusion)
	- Perception about the quality of facilitators
Stakeholders' perception	- Perception of the child's future
	- Perception of inclusive readiness

Theme 1: Initiatives for Students' Development

It was revealed from analysed data that Proyash, Dhaka, has taken initiatives to enhance the children's situation in three areas: educational, vocational, and social. Health measures were also incorporated into all of these areas to support them.

- **Initiatives for Educational Inclusion:** From the analysis of the findings, it was shown that parents would have viewed their children as a burden before they came to this institution. Parents felt very elated and hopeful after visiting Proyash, Dhaka, and observing some changes and progress in their child. Like all other children, the child began to dream about their future. According to the parents-students interview, some of the children aspired to become teachers, while others wanted to work as beauticians, singers, doctors, etc.

One student shared that,

I like to wear beautiful dresses. I can wear dresses alone; I can wear shoes alone. I like to do makeup. I want to be a beautician in the future.

The findings also indicated that the school was preparing them for educational inclusion so that they could enrol in the inclusive school. The findings indicated that 316 students were admitted to mainstream schools in the last 15 years till 2025, meant an average of 21 students per year. Teachers applied different kinds of Teaching methods and techniques. They used play-based learning strategies and sensory items. The majority of the services were offered in accordance with the kind and severity of the children's disabilities. The well-trained teachers made every effort to improve the children's circumstances. The teachers and care givers opined, after receiving the services, the majority of the students' situations improved. The school authority provided necessary support to students who made very good progress in getting admission in mainstream educational institutions.

- **Initiatives for Vocational Inclusion:** Vocational inclusion is one of the prime goals of Proyash. Analysed data revealed that there were two types of vocational opportunities available for students: skill-based training (for students from 10 to 18 years), job placement and rehabilitation (for students aged above 18 years). As the teacher reported, students were taught to make various types of craft items, hand-stitched designs of various fabrics, dyed various types of gift items, etc. Many students who had progressed in the educational inclusion continue their involvement in vocational school.

Findings revealed that initiatives were taken to sell the products made by the students at fairs organised by different social and other local administrations under the management of the school authorities, and the profits from the sold products were shared with the students. In addition, the students' products were exhibited in the school's arts centre and also sold from there. Along with this, the designs made by the students are used in various internal events of the school. A teacher shared that,

In the vocational schools, mutual interaction is created among the students,

and technical skills are acquired. Along with this, their source of income is created. In this way, they are able to create a positive status in their family and society.

- **Initiatives for Social Inclusion:** It was revealed from the findings that Proyash, Dhaka, provided a range of services to help the children become socially acceptable. According to the teachers, they often organised sports events every year and occasionally took their students to compete across other cantonment schools. The students were also excited to play the games as well. Several students participated in the Special Olympics in India and many other countries, Asia Pacific Games and won many awards. Students also participated in international ICT competitions and represented Bangladesh in China, Vietnam, South Korea and Dubai and won overall 17 awards. The community surrounding the schools was given the opportunity to learn about the progress of the students with NDD even through these kinds of sports events. Additionally, the teachers stated that they regularly maintain follow-up with parents to see how students are interacting with others outside of the educational institution and what challenges they are facing.

Along with that, according to the interviewees, the institution offered medicine and therapy services for the students. Following admission to the facility, the students would be diagnosed by the authority, who would then recommend therapy based on the child's needs. The therapist would carry on the service with the teacher's assistance. The students would be taken or referred to the school for medical services as well. It was reported that 49% of the students were able to perform their everyday tasks independently after receiving the assistance.

- **Parental Perception about Child's Overall Inclusion:** It was found significant how parents perceived their child's educational and social inclusion. After getting admitted to the school, most of the parents were happy, and they noticed the progress in their children in so many areas. Unavailability of baseline data, it was not possible to compare the current status of progress with the earlier state. Parents opined positively on their child's current progress. According to FGDs, 54% of children's current conditions were in a fairly satisfactory position, while 40% were satisfactory. On the other side, only 6% of students' current condition were unsatisfactory. The children's self-reliance, health, and acceptability (of their family, siblings, community, etc.) all improved after they were enrolled in Proyash, Dhaka. The aforementioned graph, which was primarily remarked on by the parents, demonstrated that the acceptability of NDD children within their family, siblings, and community (43%) has increased. Additionally, the children's increased health (26%) and self-reliance (43%) were noted. The findings shown that 71% of parents thought their child's intellectual development had improved, 66% thought the social development had improved, 66% thought the emotional progress had improved, 57% opined about the physical improvement, and 70% of parents reported progress on the linguistic and communication side. As perceived by the parents, moderate-level challenges existed in all mentioned.

Theme 2: Institutional Capabilities and Implication

This theme revealed the overall effectiveness of institutional capabilities in supporting the holistic development of children with neuro-developmental disabilities. Institutional capabilities included academic capacity (curriculum, teaching material, assessment, and infrastructural facilities (available services and therapeutic services)) and how parents evaluated institutional capabilities (institutional capacity, teaching-learning support, and child's safety).

- **Academic Capacity:** The findings indicated that Proyash, Dhaka, was operated under the leadership of the Bangladesh Army. The school campus was run in a building house with enough classrooms, sensory garden and play areas. There are a sufficient number of teachers, therapists, psychologists, class assistants/carers, and support staff (see table 3) in school for academic activities, development of occupational skills, behaviour modification, and academic improvement. It was found from the classroom observation that the sitting arrangements of the students were inclusive with a proper learning environment.

Table 3

Number of students, teachers, caregivers, and other manpower

Sl.	Particular	Number
1.	Students	828
2.	Teachers	186
3.	Speech and language therapist	9
4.	Occupational therapist	8
5.	Physiotherapist	10
6.	Psychologist	6
7.	Class assistant/Caregiver	81
8.	Other Personnel (Psychologist, Neurologist, Dietician)	10
9.	Service Support Personnel (IT, Office Assistant, Peon, Guard, Cleaner, Gardener and others)	60

- **Curriculum:** Proyash aimed to help children keep pace with the existing social system and create an inclusive society. It was revealed from the qualitative data that the institute was following the NCTB pre-primary and primary curriculum. Following that, the school also designed its own curriculum considering the needs of students. The school curriculum covered content related to physical condition, socialization, behaviour, academic condition, daily living activity, intellectual condition, and communication.

- **Teaching Material:** The teaching materials used to be beneficial for the children. During the observation of the centres and classrooms, it was found that the following materials were used in school, academic: textbooks, notebooks, pens, pencils, charts, flashcards, multisensory materials, etc; play lab: Football, handball, tennis ball, different types of toys, skipping rope, different types of swings, slippers, etc. Teachers actively utilised these materials to instruct the students.
- **Assessment:** Class observation data findings indicated that doctors and therapists are always available. The therapist and teachers developed a personalised service plan for the child. The assessment form covered various areas, including physical condition, socialisation, behaviour, daily living activities, intellectual ability, academic progress, and communication skills. Findings indicated that the attendance and active participation of students in the classes are very good. The interaction between teachers and students are very good, and the teachers are well trained and sincere. The usefulness of the learning materials used by the teachers are recorded very well. Besides, the role of the caregivers in teaching-learning, assessment and other necessary aspects also found to be very satisfactory.
- **Physical Facilities:** The centre observation data provided more detailed information about physical facilities in the school. A first aid box was available in every class for safety purposes, the toilet was clean and stocked with sufficient supplies, a water purifier was in place for safe drinking water, and classes were conducted with proper seating arrangements of chairs and tables.
- **Therapeutic Services:** The therapy materials used in the school appeared appropriate and beneficial for the children. During the observation, various materials for therapy services were identified categorically, such as

physiotherapy: swimming, dance and music therapy; parallel bar; walker; wheelchair; crutch; standing frame; peasant bed; capsule ball; physio ball; sensory ball; sensory messenger; bouncer; trump poli; aesthetic bicycle; balance track; revolving light; etc.

Occupational therapy: sensory materials and devices, toilet chart, food chart, finger puzzle, sensory mat, wall climber, sensory pillow; **Speech therapy:** alphabet puzzle, communication board, bubble set, animal puzzle, long tunnel, and so on. Students received therapy based on their individual needs, with teachers and caregivers delivering the services under the supervision of the authority. The data indicated that parents and other stakeholders were satisfied with the therapy services.

- **Remarkable Achievement:** The findings revealed that the Proyash School achieved remarkable milestones in the field of inclusive development in Bangladesh. The institution successfully integrated students with neuro-developmental disabilities into mainstream education and employment. The findings indicated that 316 students were admitted to mainstream schools in the last 15 years, which meant an average of 21 students per year. Also, 34 students secured jobs in various organisations, including banks, restaurants, garments, textile labs and educational institutions. Students had also achieved in international competitions, earning 54 gold, 22 silver,

and 12 bronze medals in the Special Olympics/Asia Pacific Games (2010-2025); earning 17 awards in international ICT competitions.

In addition to that, Proyash was honoured with the ‘Autism Uttoron Shommanona’ in 2018 for its outstanding contributions to autism education. These achievements highlighted Proyash’s commitment to empowering children with neuro-developmental disabilities through education, skill development, and social integration.

- **Parental Perception about Institutional Capabilities**

Institutional capacity. Findings indicated that the parents enrolled their children in this school with high expectations. They had full confidence in the school’s ability to play an effective role in the overall development of their children. FGDs data showed that all parents (100%) enrolled their children in the Proyash School primarily for access to education, health or therapy services and social development. As well as a large number of parents sent their children for technical/vocational services (87%). The parental expectations for access to education services (94%), health or therapy services (93%), and social development services (100%) were largely met. However, 80% of parents reported that their children’s needs for technical and vocational services were adequately fulfilled.

Teaching-learning support. There were similarities in the data analysed from parent opinions, teacher interviews, and class observations regarding teaching-learning support. Most of the parents opined that, children were learning through play-based and sensory materials besides the face-to-face learning. Parents also commented that the teachers were well-trained and experienced. They monitored the children’s progress through regular assessments and communicated it to the parents.

Support for social inclusion. This sub-theme highlighted the extent of services children received in the school for social inclusion and health. Parents expressed positive views on the services offered to support social inclusion. According to their feedback, daily life skills (94%), occupational therapy (77%), toilet training (57%), communication skills (80%), and social and emotional development (77%) were provided at the school. Children were given careful attention at the school and received appropriate support for health-related needs. The findings revealed that services such as physiotherapy (95%) and medication (50%) were provided to ensure healthcare. If necessary, children were sent to Proyash Medical Centre or Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka.

Theme 3: Stakeholders’ Perception

- ***Perception about the Quality of Facilitators:*** The analysed data obtained from sources such as parent surveys, parent-student interviews, teacher interviews, and class observations indicated that the skills, experience, pedagogical knowledge, and technical knowledge were highly satisfactory. The data showed that 93% of parents rated the quality and behaviour of teachers and carers as very good. In contrast, only 9% of parents were dissatisfied with their service and behaviour. The children at the school were also pleased with their teachers, reporting that they enjoyed playing, dancing, and learning poems during their time at the school. One parent responded,

Teachers treated children like brothers-sisters and children. Carers were cooperative with children and treated them as friends.

- **Perception of the Child's Future:** This sub-theme highlighted what future dreams parents of students had for their children. This not only improved their children's overall development but also helped them to dream about the future. After admission at school, parents reported experiencing reduced anxiety, spending less time caring for their child, and achieving financial improvements. The findings indicated that 63% of parents felt their anxiety had decreased, 23% stated they were spending less time looking after their child, and 31% reported interaction improvement. The findings revealed various parental expectations for their children, all of which were made possible due to the support provided by Proyash. Parents envisioned different futures for their children, with many hoping they would be accepted as equal members of the society. The majority of the parents hoped their children would become self-reliant and lead a normal life, while a few wished for them to secure jobs. Other aspirations included pursuing further education, becoming entrepreneurs and beauticians and having a happy married life.
- **Perception of Inclusive Readiness:** This sub-theme explored parents' perceptions of their children's future prospects. Findings made it clear that the overall development of children has increased after coming to Proyash. It was previously mentioned that 59% of students had increased their self-reliance, while 63% of parents decreased their anxiety. After receiving services at the school and observing their children's progress, parents began to consider their children's inclusion in educational, social, or vocational settings. However, none of the parents believed their children were fully prepared for inclusion. Fewer than 40% felt their children were ready for inclusion in education, while less than 30% thought their children were prepared for vocational inclusion. Parental perception varied regarding their children's readiness for inclusion. The findings showed that 60% of parents believed their children were well-prepared for educational inclusion that meant they were fairly ready to transition into mainstream schools. On the other hand, 35% of parents felt their children were moderately ready; that indicated that they need some assistance support to transition into mainstream schools. In contrast, 5% of parents commented their children would require either more time before entering a regular school, or they would never be able to attend a mainstream school. Considering the social inclusion readiness, 40% of parents believed that their children were well prepared for social inclusion, and 45% said they were reasonably prepared. On the other hand, 15% reported their children were not ready at all. Considering the vocational inclusion readiness, 80% of parents remarked that their children's needs for technical and vocational services were adequately fulfilled.

6. Discussions

The discussion part of this study is organised findings with global trends in equity and inclusion in education and disability inclusion which underlines how national practices and blended models is aligned with global standards and frameworks. This study aimed

to explore the role of the Proyash Institute of Special Education in the promotion of educational, vocational and social inclusion of students with neuro-developmental disabilities (NDDs) in Bangladesh through a blended model. The findings indicate that Proyash applies a holistic, blended approach integrating therapeutic support, individualised teaching-learning, and vocational training. It reflects a comprehensive commitment to the inclusion of students with neuro-developmental disabilities in Bangladesh.

Educational Inclusion. Regarding objective 1, it was revealed from data interpretation that the Proyash Institute of Special Education plays an effective role in promoting educational inclusion of students with NDD that results in ensuring the transition into mainstream school. Parents were having more positive attitudes towards Proyash, seeing their children's progression. The school's efforts in academic instruction, play-based and joyful learning, and useful learning materials have contributed significantly to enhance students' self-confidence and ensure educational inclusion. The study also explored that using a variety of teaching techniques, such as differentiated instruction and sensory-based learning, was especially advantageous. These results are in line with earlier studies (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Sharma et al., 2020), which emphasise how crucial adaptive teaching strategies are to creating inclusive learning environments. The fact that over 316 students from Proyash were admitted to mainstream schools over the past decade reflects its success in preparing students for integration. Though the average of 21 students per year also signals that systemic barrier remain. Globally, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) established inclusive education as the norm, urging schools to accommodate all children regardless of disability and other barriers. The emphasis on adapting curricula and instruction in the study resonates with this standard, especially in considering Article 24 of the UNCPRD, which highlights the right to inclusive, quality education (United Nations, 2006). However, the need for specialised teacher training, as seen in Proyash, also echoes challenges faced worldwide, especially in low- and middle-income countries (Peters, 2003; Forlin, 2010).

Social Inclusion and Community Engagement. Proyash has implemented inclusive community engagement programmes and sports activities to promote social inclusion. In order to further their social development, a number of students have taken part in national and international competitions, such as the Special Olympics, ICT competitions. In keeping with the social model of disability, which sees inclusion as a continuous process, teachers also make follow-up visits to evaluate students' interactions outside of the classroom (Oliver, 1990). The increased acceptability of children with NDDs in family and community contexts, as observed in the study, aligns with global evidence showing that inclusive programmes enhance societal perceptions of disability (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Vocational Training and Transition to Adulthood. The evidence suggest that the age based dual-track model of vocational training offered by Proyash demonstrates a strong commitment to prepare students for self-determining life. This approach aligns with global recommendations that emphasise life skills and employability for youth with disabilities (World Bank, 2018). In addition, the students' handmade products exhibited

in the school's arts centre and used in various internal events of the school are playing an effective role in their lives as a source of income. As global trends, programmes that combine vocational education with real-world application, such as supported employment models in the U.S. or vocational rehabilitation programmes in Nordic countries, have proven effective in increasing employment among students and people with disabilities (Wehman et al., 2018). Bangladesh's policy landscape, however, still lacks an integrated framework that ensures a continuum from education to employment for persons with NDDs (UNICEF, 2023), highlighting the need for systemic replication of the Proyash model.

Institutional Capabilities and Stakeholder Perceptions. The study highlights the institution's structured approach to special education, including its curriculum, teaching materials, and therapeutic services. The integration of government-approved curriculum alongside tailor-made content ensures that students receive a comprehensive education. In general, parents and stakeholders generally expressed satisfaction with the institutional capabilities and implications. Physical infrastructure and therapeutic services were found to be well-organized, with facilities such as physiotherapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy available. The key findings that revealed parental perceptions of their children's progress were very positive. The findings indicated that 71% of parents mentioned their child's intellectual development had improved, while 66% reported enhancements in social and emotional skills. These findings align with research by Florian and Spratt (2013), which underscores the importance of specialised education in fostering developmental progress in children with disabilities. In addition to that, Proyash accomplished extraordinary achievements in the field of equity and inclusion in education in Bangladesh. The institution successfully integrated 316 students into mainstream education and secured 34 students in employment. The students of Proyash achieved many awards (88) in international competitions, including 49 gold, 22 silver, and 12 bronze medals in the Special Olympics. These achievements highlighted Proyash's commitment and dedication to empowering children with neuro-developmental disabilities through education and social and vocational inclusion.

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