

Understanding the Education of Children with Autism in Bangladesh: Parents' Perspective

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Autism in Bangladesh

- Parents' view
- Social awareness
- Academic materials
- Specialized schools
- Intervention with ICT



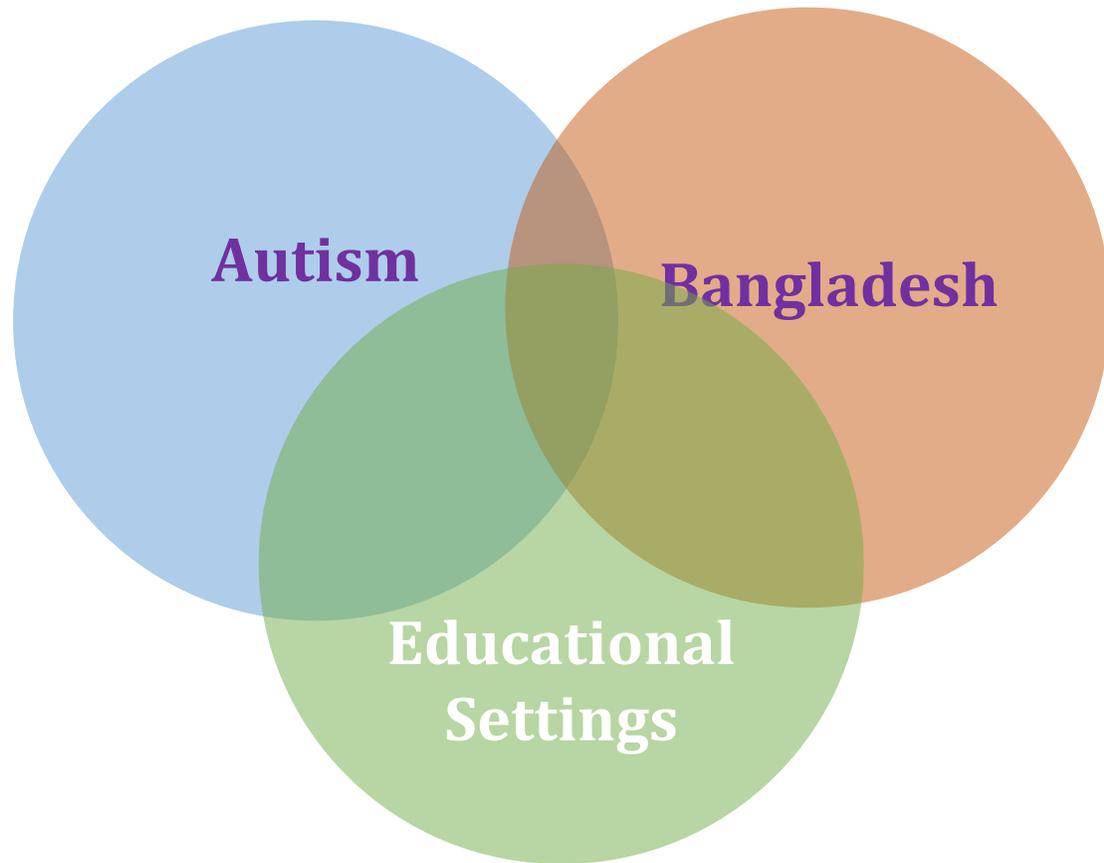
<http://www.autism-swacbd.org/>



17 in 10,000 children autistic

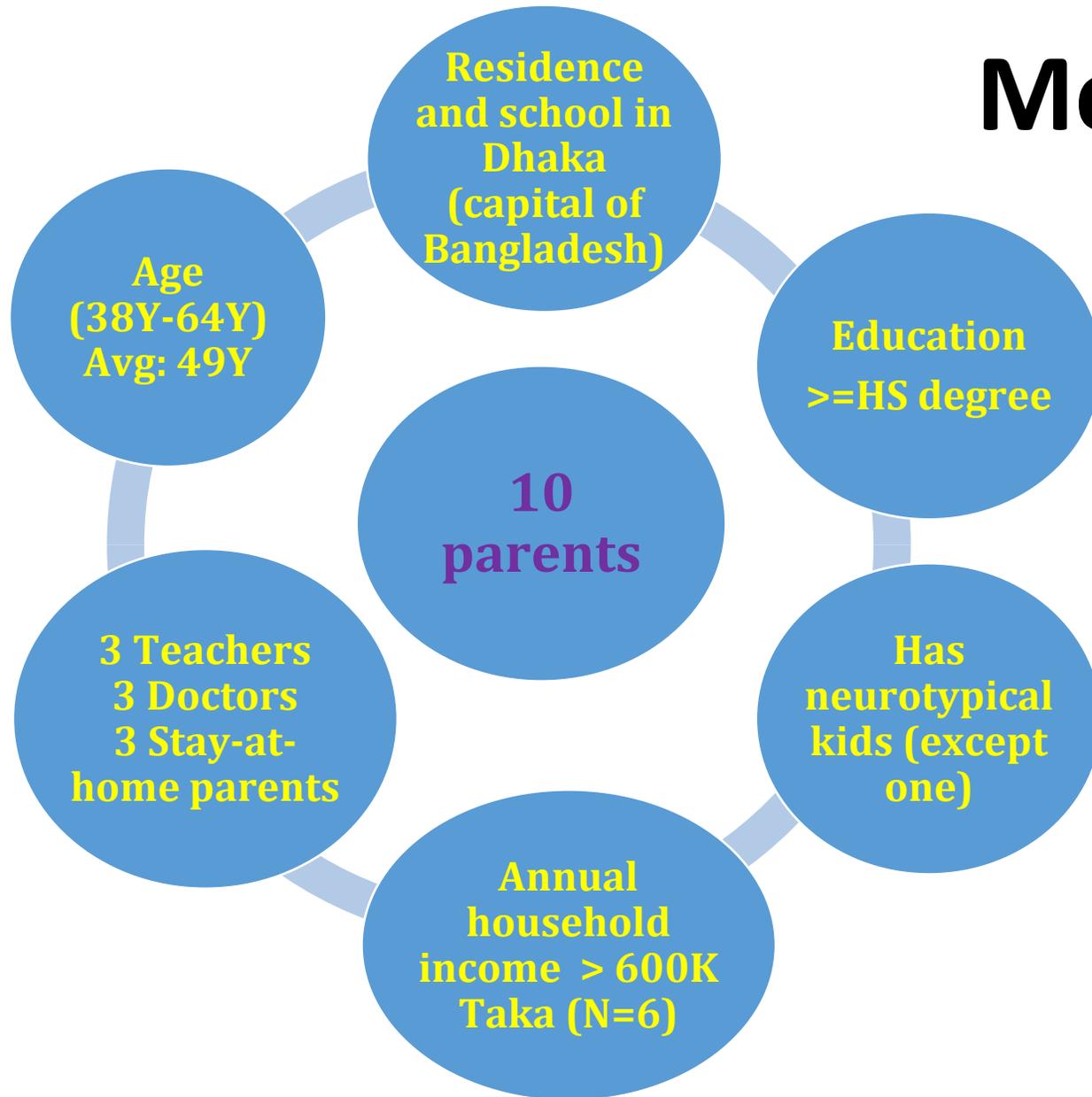
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Research Objectives



- **RQ1:** How do the parents in Bangladesh view the current educational system for the children with ASD?
- **RQ2:** How ICT can intervene in the context of Bangladesh to provide the best possible solution to existing concerns?

Methodology



- Semi Structured Interview
 - 46 minutes on average
 - 33 questions
 - Coding
 - Atlas.ti
 - 51 codes
 - High level themes

Major Findings

Review about Teaching Staff (RQ1)

- Appreciation vs. Criticism
- Empathy vs. Frustration

“I try to be satisfied with what I am getting from the school, but with inexperienced teachers, I cannot be.”

“Teachers put efforts; I understand that. However, it cannot meet my expectations.”

“Teachers are ill-paid with respect to their workload; hence they don't feel motivated enough to execute their responsibilities well.”



<https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/special/2018/04/02/autistic-special-needs-children-deserve-better>

Lack of Resources/Logistics/Assistance (RQ1)

- Training on Autism.
 - “Schools can serve better only when the teachers are [well] trained.”
 - “There are no formal training facilities for the parents.”
- Financial constraints.
 - “It demands a lot of money, time, patience, and logistic support to rear such a child; unfortunately, the schools here are not up for the challenge.”



<https://www.clickbd.com/bangladesh/1099046-autism-school-for-autistic-childrens-in-mohammadpur-dhaka.html>

Lack of Communication (RQ1 + RQ2)

- Discussing with teachers about kids' updates.
 - “In meetings, we are mostly the audience and hardly get any chance to speak up our concern. I wish I had more freedom to voice my complaints without being judged by authorities.”
 - “Sometimes I feel guilty that I cannot attend the meetings regularly.”
- Having technology as the bridge.
 - “Right now, since we don't have any such common platform, I am teaching my kid in a way at home and probably he is learning the same thing in a different way at school.”



<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/blink/cover/a-bridge-to-planet-autism/article23772834.ece>

Expectation vs. Reality?

Mixed feelings among parents about what and how their kids are learning at schools.

Collaboration among them and teachers can use a boost through ICT intervention.

Discussions

Lack of Coherence Leads to Developmental Regression



<http://www.autism-swacbd.org/>

- One-way communication sounds like an imposition on parents.
- Teachers are expected to execute more and more without a specific guideline on whose task is what.

Infrastructural Issues

- Lack of Availability of Training and Teaching Materials
- Lack of Confidence Due to Inadequate Qualifications



<https://amiebdedu.blogspot.com/2018/05/list-of-special-education-center-in.html>

Key Points

- Coexistence of Gratitude and Dissatisfaction.
- Tension regarding ability to rely on schools.
- Under the hood of parent-teacher blame game, hope is the key for parents.



<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/education-system-in-bangladesh.html>

ICT-based Design Implications

In Bangladesh

Mobile phone users: 152.5 million

Internet subscribers: 88.7 million

Our Suggestions

- Facility to record developmental process at schools as well as at homes.
 - Track and share
- Provision to transparently communicate between parents and teachers.
 - Incorporate parents' inputs for better flow of communication
- Community-based backing as a sustainable support system.
 - Close knit online social community

Things to Ponder

- Technology alone cannot fix the problem.
- Parent-Teacher misunderstanding leads to regression.
- Funding for schools.
- Training for teachers.
- Awareness in society.
- Platform/forum for parents.

Take-away Messages

- Current context of autism schools in Bangladesh
 - Parents are in dire need of relying on some expert teaching staff.
 - Social stigma reigns over the necessity of better lives for autistic kids.
- ICT can contribute in -
 - Building coherent education plans.
 - Connecting parents and teachers in a more inclusive manner.

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