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/

Bangladesh

161,376,708

17 in 10,000 children autistic
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

10 parents

- Age (38Y-64Y) Avg: 49Y
- 3 Teachers
- 3 Doctors
- 3 Stay-at-home parents
- Residence and school in Dhaka (capital of Bangladesh)
- Has neurotypical kids (except one)
- Annual household income > 600K Taka (N=6)
- Education >= HS degree
- Education and school in Dhaka (capital of Bangladesh)
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.”

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.”

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

- 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.

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

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.
REFERENCES