

## Parental Involvement: The Present Scenario in Special School

Tania Rubya\*

**Abstract:** *This study aimed at exploring the present scenario of special school depends on the parental involvement in school activities of their children with special needs. In this study, parents and special educators was selected from Proyash School at Dhaka District. The total sample size was 25 whereby questionnaires, interviews and archival data were used to collect data from the respondents. The findings from the interpretation of the data derived that most of the parents of Proyash schools were not constructively involved in their children's school academic activities such as accompany in homework, students' attendance, self-motivated in school activities, communicating with teachers and other school staffs including in-charge of the specific school though the teachers of the school provided educational meetings where they explain the advantage of parental involvement. Grounded on the findings of the study, it can be suggests and recommends that the school authority provided parents training and seminar or conferences to explain the importance of parental involvement for the Childs' wellbeing and raise awareness about the need of becoming involved in school academic activities and education policy makers have to establish and develop specific policy to be more success in education of the child with special needs.*

**Keywords:** *Parental Involvement, Special School, Parents Training, Parents Awareness, Education Policy.*

### 1. Introduction

According to Hill et al, 2004, generally parents are traditionally involved with the academic function of school activity for a long time but could not give proper involvement in the process of decision making by the school authority because of lack opportunities in the involvement of school administration. But in present situation, it is to be explored that effective involvement of parents in school activities and the development strategies of the child with special needs play an important role in successful of special education of the child with special needs (Hayness et al, 1989).

Knowledge, insights and perception of parents have to build and strengthen the educational and developmental process of special education which provide by the special school is most important for the wellbeing of the child with special needs. Due to this consequence, this study tries to deliberate the positive effect of parental involvement in the special education of special schools in order to define the scope and level of their participation and overall role in the daily works of special school.

---

\* Senior Lecturer, Department of Continuing Education & Professional Development, Proyash Institute of Special Education & Research (PISER)

### **1.1 Literature Review**

Parental involvement is a most important part in the role of special education of special school. It is a unification form of commitment and dynamic involvement on the schools' activities and related matter which is specially related to the education of the child with special needs. Many communities based organization like Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) are formed in order to help parents to guide their children according to teachers' advice which improve the academic quality of child and get success. But though the forming of these type of organization, there is a lack of combination with parents and teachers' opinion. Limited or lack of parental involvement has considered part of the shortcomings of the children's education for at least 40 years (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Parental involvement has a positive effect on the child with special needs. Here the teachers and administrators take the lead and demonstrate what to do and interact with parents to know them how to work and give knowledge and ideas. According to Domina, 2005; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jaynes, 2005; Fan & Williams, 2010, different phases of parental participation such as involvement in the academic session, performance like co-curricular activities or sports have a fruitful and positive effects on the performance of students or consequences. From the parents' involvement, parents can learn the knowledge and techniques under the teacher's supervision and become more confident when they teach their children with special needs at home. The teacher or authority may have developed training manual for the knowledge of training different skills like-speech, motor, cognitive, socialization and language and basic daily living activities such as-feeding, toileting, dressing, and household as well as community living activities. Such involvements and initiatives benefit students with special needs as well as teachers, the school, parents themselves, the community and over all the country.

In the school, any parents have to involve in 06 types of activities such as parenting or nurturing, collaborating with teachers and school, volunteering, school administration or decision making, children's learning at home or work in partnership with the community. According to Huang & Mason, 2008, Family Education Programs are the most important method of participating parents in the activities of school. It is the effective method which get more success though some parents practices or used to be involved by Family Education Program (FEP), Parents Teachers Organization (PTO), Parents Teachers Association (PTA), parents meeting, conference, zoom meeting, email or over phone.

### **1.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Parental involvement in school activities play an important role can be the applied form of Social Exchange Theory (SET). Parents may become involved in their child academic activities because improve behavior and attitudes towards learning, academic success and maximize the perceived benefits and minimize the barriers towards acquiring knowledge. This collaboration between parents and teachers are significant in social exchange theory. According to Mahmood (2013), Social Exchange Theory (SET) helps to explain parental

involvement in school activities as a rational way and by understanding this dynamic, educators and administration of school or policymakers can create environments that leading better educational outcomes for students.

Another theory relevant with this area is Theory of Behavior (Boonk, L., Gijsselaers, H. J. M., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S.) relates to parental involvement in school activities by explaining how parental actions shape educational outcomes through learned behavior. When parents actively involved in school activities, attending school events, praising, helping in homework of child, this positive reinforcement shape their child behavior because from seeing their child behavior, parents can use consistent rules and rewards at home to support good habits like study and attendance. In the same way, children also learn the positive behavior or attitudes towards teacher by observing their parents' attitudes and actions. Wanders' et al. (2020) also relates this Behavior Theory with the child behavior or attitudes towards teachers and overall school and explaining the effect of parental involvement on child's learning and behavior through reinforcement, modeling and consistent routines.

This study presented this two theory or features that help parents to motivating themselves or by the school authority to form a dynamic relationship with special educators and parents to get positive outcome and success of the child with special needs.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are:

- a. To examine the present scenario of parental involvement in the activities of children with special needs.
- b. To investigate the ways and benefits of parental engagement in the activities of their children with special needs.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employed by mixed method research approach where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were involved to generate the data. To examine the benefits of parental involvement in the activities of children with special needs, the researcher adopted quantitative approach in this study. As the study aimed to highlight the ways and methods of parents' involvement, the qualitative approaches was used for taken information from the population.

### **2.1 Participants**

The target population for this study was parents of the children with special needs and the special educator who participated in this study from Proyash School. The teachers were from five different schools from Proyash who gave data by Questionnaire through Email which the researcher got from school website. The parents' participants were from also different schools from Proyash and 20 respondents gave data through questionnaire.

## 2.2 Research Design and Instruments

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of parental involvement in school activities and to aware society especially parents by providing motivation to parents that they are willing to engage in their child's academic activities and help teacher to give practical strategies to encourage the involvement of parents. Generally, parents of the child with special needs are more frustrated about their fate and future. So exploring the positivity of parental involvement may help to increase their motivation and engagement which is most important of the child's life span in special field.

In order to find out the effectiveness of parental involvement and strategies in the field of special education of special school, a descriptive study was designed with the parents of the children with special needs in Proyash School, Dhaka which provided some qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher got quantitative data from close ended questionnaire and archival data. Qualitative data was analyzed by some open ended questionnaire which got from parents and special educators of Proyash School.

Instrument of this study were developed by questionnaire with both open and close ended questions based on three parts-

- **Part 1** was included demographic data of the populations which included their age, sex, profession, educational qualification, occupation, service, experiences etc.
- **Part 2** was parents involvement related questionnaire
- **Part 3** was outcome or academic activities of the children with special needs related questionnaire

## 3. Data Collection Procedure

Purposive sampling techniques is a non-probability sampling where population selected by the characteristics of population which is the basic requirement of the specific study. And random sampling is generally used for enlisting population on the basis of their eligibility and availability. In this study, both random and purposive sampling techniques were used to get sample from Proyash school. Because of parents and teachers who were meet the inclusion criteria of this study from the selected school during the study period. Also, Proyash School involved in this study was randomly and purposively selected basing on Dhaka Divisions. Participants should be confident that their information and responses would remain confidential. In this study, close ended questionnaires was used to understand teachers and parents points of view towards a specific matter about effectiveness of parental involvement and the result or outcome from it in a structured way whereas from the open ended questionnaires allowed participants to express their thoughts freely about this matter.

Different types of questionnaire have been provided for the parents and special educators. The purpose of the responses or feedback from the special educators is to explore the participation level and engagement of various session and overall the teachers' expectations from the parents of the child with special needs. The questionnaires for

special educators contained of seven questions which was related about teachers' expectations from parents, the involvement and collaboration and overall communication that they provide through the school authorities.

To get parents responses and information about special educators and their school activities and the expectations from teachers, another questionnaire for parents which contained 13 questions. From the set of questions, the researcher finds out the relationship between teachers and parents, communication level, teachers expectation from parents and the provided activities where parents may involve with their child in the school.

Another tool was archival data which was collected from special educators of Proyash School. From the archival data, the researcher got the list of parents who involved in school activities, communicated with teachers by email and over phone. For this research, documents were collected as secondary data to get information about policy, academic activities criteria, meeting minutes of parents meeting and record of their presence on different occasions arrange by school. Because, this types of information help the research to reveal the fact of responses and records, reports of academic activities and policies are most important sources for document review or analysis (Goetz & Lecompton, 1994).

The researcher also noticed existing records related to parental involvement with school activities such as parents' meeting minutes, volunteer activities of parents for their children and academic result of the students to relate its significance and the feedback report from the parents to get the guidelines in order to determine the extent of parental involvement.

#### **4. Results and Analysis**

In this study, data from close ended questions were analyzed through SPSS Software version 16. This analysis was conducted according to the objectives and conceptual framework of the study. The researcher analyzed the data collected from the questionnaire (both from open and close ended) and the information from archival data.

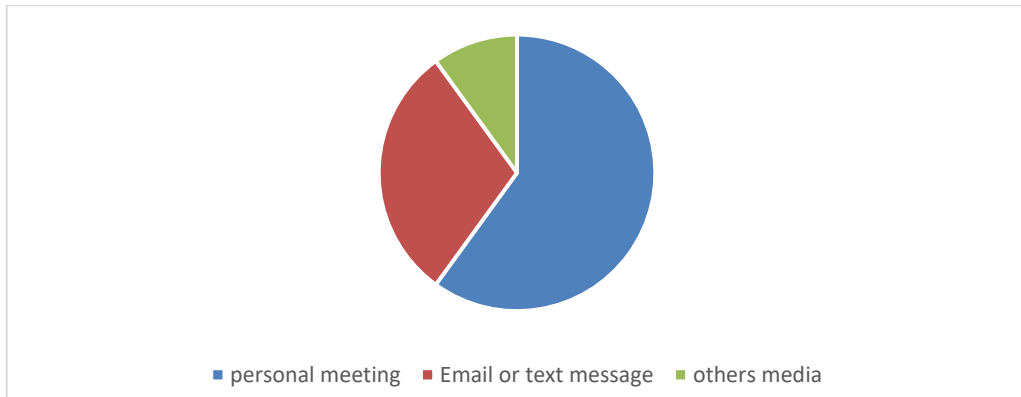
The total possible scores range from 0-20, total score is converted into 100% and divided into three levels.

- Score from 0-33.33% indicates parents' participation is Low Level.
- Score from 33.34-66.66% indicates parents' participation in Moderate Level.
- Score from 66.67%-100% indicates parents' participation is High Level.

#### **4.1 Factors Resulting from Parents**

##### **4.1.1 Personal Meeting and the Pattern of Communication**

Question about the type of meeting that parents preferred, maximum that means 60% of parents' preferred personal meeting with teachers against group meeting and 30% parents responded that they prefer email or text messages. Rest 10% parents preferred in others option to contact with teachers.



**Figure 1:** Pattern of Communication

#### **4.1.2 Feedback from Teachers**

60% parents responded that they get opinion or feedback from special educators when parents participated as volunteers for their child in academic session, therapy or outdoor activities such as games, even in co-curricular activities. Here 60% responded answered YES.

#### **4.1.3 The Benefits of Parental Involvement Explained by School**

Maximum respondents that the result of this question, 80% respondent answered YES and agreed that teachers always explained the benefits of parental involvement.

#### **4.1.4 Parental Involvement in Taking Decision in School**

70% respondents answered that sometimes they attend in school for taking decision in school activities to guide or discuss with teacher about the wellbeing of their children with special needs. Only 30% were always involved in making decision.

### **4.2 Factors Resulting from Teachers**

#### **4.2.1 The Benefits of Parental Involvement Explained by School**

From the teachers' respondents, 60% teachers answered that school arrange a number of parents training (even for caregiver) and meetings for parents and described the benefits and positivity of parental contribution to the success of their child and to achieve the IEP (Individualized Education Plan) goal of the children with special needs. The rest 40% responded replied that they didn't give feedback about this matter.

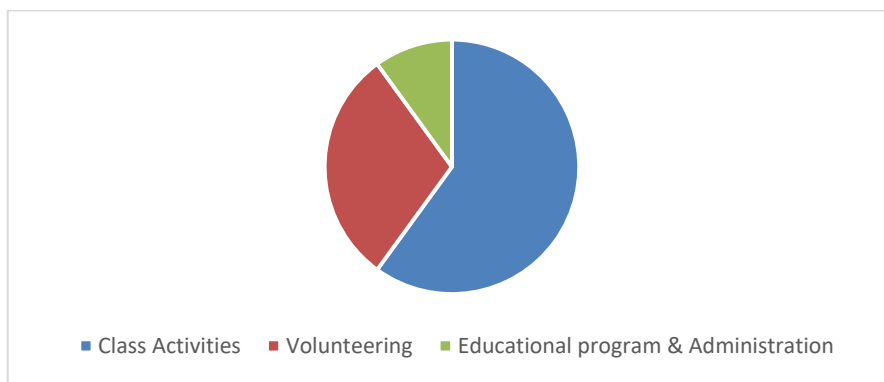
#### **4.2.2 Activities Provided to Parents**

In the case of volunteer opportunities in school activities, parents who were participated in this research responded that if they get the opportunities to volunteering in the school activities, they always provided their best effort where 80% responded that they only provided volunteering in academic session of class and the activities that out of class. The rest 20% parents responded that they only involved in Family Educational Programs

(FEP), Family Communication Activities (FCA) or any other occasional program and try to involve and provide opinion in school administration and decision making by the authorities.

#### 4.2.3 Activities Preferred by Parents

On the ground about the preferred activities by parents, around 60% parents responded that activities in the class and out of class are most effective for the children with special needs. Among them, 30% answered that they preferred both volunteering and communication activities. At the least 10% responded preferred the involvement in family educational programs and school administration.



**Figure 2:** Activities preferred by parents

#### 4.3 Archival Data

From archival data about 60% parents were involved either through volunteering or contact over phone or by email. Other 40% parents were not actively involved with the teachers because of time limitation and work schedule or engagement with other children or lack of knowledge and awareness.

#### 5. Discussions

The findings from this study draw a clear and in depth picture or scenario because of parental involvement in special classroom. From the result of this study, it is to be revealed that special educators and school authority always try to make sure to arrange a number of parents meeting and received a guide with guideline to help their children in academic school activities. The parents also mentioned that special educators also try to arrange personal meeting and explain the benefits of parental involvement and collaboration and overall interaction in child's success. These findings are in alignment with previous study of Musendo, D. J., Scherer, N., et al. (2023). A systematic review demonstrates that interventions aimed at enhancing communications between home and school are consistently associated with improved academic performance of the children with disabilities. The findings of this study were also provide encourage and motivate to parents in the field of academic session in class and the outdoor activities.

On the other hand, this research may help special educators and school administration to achieve a guideline about the different types of school activities where parents can be involved and provide opinion about academic and school administration to make the teaching learning process more effective. The parents responded also mentioned that they want or expect time to time feedback from teachers as well as school authorities about their participation quality after their activities. These outcomes are strongly parallel with the study of Musendo, D. J., Scherer, N., et al. (2023). Their findings aligned closely with the structured meetings, guidance sessions and personalized interactions from special educators' boost motivation, engagement and participation in both academic and extracurricular domains.

Because of busy work schedule or full time jobs responsibilities, most of the parents could not provide their active involvement that prevents participating some academic activities of their child with special needs. For these reason, the parents most of the time communicated weekly or sometimes monthly basis. But maximum parents preferred to contact with teacher of the child through E-mail and text message. The result is aligned to the discussion of Fernández Cerero, J., Montenegro Rueda, M., & López Meneses, E. (2024). The research findings revealed that parents especially those with full time employment prefer email or text based communication and the literature stresses that flexible and accessible communication channels help to overcome participation barriers.

About 50% parents provided response that teachers have to be more communicative with parents and should provide more and more information about their children activities and they also prefer activities both inside and outside. From the studies of Fernández Cerero, J., Montenegro Rueda, M., & López Meneses, E. (2024), focused on students with ASD, parents noted that effective and frequent information exchange enhances their involvement and their children's development.

Maximum special educators responded that around every month, officially or unofficially they communicated with parents even in home visit, they explain the positive impact of parental involvement in students' activities. They also mentioned that they provide a number of educational meetings and expound the benefits the parents' connection with school.

Maximum teachers and parents wish to be present an open communication, trust, willingness to help with homework, application of their feedback and suggestions according to them. Some parents mentioned about limited communication and got limited information about curriculum, IEP or academic study plans without details. Sometimes they were not aware about parents' rules and participation criteria in school activities. These outcomes are echoed with the research of Balli, D. (2016). Dual focus of parental involvement in –school and out-of-school activities reflects this multidimensional model. Moreover, research in inclusive education underscores that involvement not only benefits children's learning outcome but also fosters parents resilience, satisfaction and capabilities.

One of the limitations of this study might not represent the exact picture of all special school in Bangladesh because in special education sector, PROYASH School stands in a top position and provide multi-dimensional services.

## 6. Conclusions

In this study, from the overall discussion, we have to conclude that teachers and parents, both have the same desire that the ultimate better development of the child with special needs but they identified different necessity for enhanced communication. Actually, Proyash is the renowned and versatile organization in special field specially Dhaka Proyash but this scenario is not the actual picture of Bangladesh even other Proyash of the country and this was the main limitation of my research. Again though the teachers of Proyash provided strong response about parental involvement but it also not the true scenario all over the Bangladesh even in Dhaka city. These same findings were shown in the research of social exchange theory in the context of parental involvement where Mahmud (2013) discussed the positive feedback rises with the parental involvement in academic session of the child. Additionally, teachers should be provided a number of feedback to the parents just after the participation of any session. But the success depends when a mutual understanding is grow up which benefits both the parents and teacher and overall the child with special needs. So, lastly, the outcome of the research concluded that both the teachers and parents need mutual understanding, collaboration in expectations, time to time communication, and the cooperation both each other. They should have the main and same goal for the betterment of child and set a best supportive services for the child with special needs.

## References

- Balli, D. (2016). Importance of parental involvement to meet the special needs of their children with disabilities in regular schools. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 5, 147.
- Boonk, L., Gijsselaers, H. J. M., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educational Research Review*, 24, 10–30.
- Domina, T. (2005). Leveling the home advantage: Assessing the effectiveness of parental involvement in elementary school. *Sociology of education*, 78(3), 233-249.
- Fan, W., & Williams, C. M. (2010). The effects of parental involvement on students' academic self-efficacy, engagement and intrinsic motivation. *Educational psychology*, 30(1), 53-74.
- Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational psychology review*, 13, 1-22.
- Fernández Cerero, J., Montenegro Rueda, M., & López Meneses, E. (2024). The Impact of Parental Involvement on the Educational Development of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Children*, 11(9), 1062. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children11091062>
- Haynes, N. M., Comer, J. P., & Hamilton-Lee, M. (1989). School climate enhancement through parental involvement. *Journal of School Psychology*, 27(1), 87-90.
- Hill, N. E., Castellino, D. R., Lansford, J. E., Nowlin, P., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., & Pettit, G. S. (2004). Parent academic involvement as related to school behavior, achievement, and aspirations: Demographic variations across adolescence. *Child development*, 75(5), 1491-1509.
- Hornby, G., & Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: An explanatory model. *Educational review*, 63(1), 37-52.

- Huang, G. H. C., & Mason, K. L. (2008). Motivations of parental involvement in children's learning: voices from urban African American families of preschoolers. *Multicultural Education, 15*(3), 20-27.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2005). The effects of parental involvement on the academic achievement of African American youth. *The Journal of Negro Education, 260*-274.
- Kocyigit, S. (2015). Family Involvement in Preschool Education: Rationale, Problems and Solutions for the Participants. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 15*(1), 141-157.
- Mahmood, S. (2013). First-year preschool and kindergarten teachers: Challenges of working with parents. *School community journal, 23*(2), 55-86.
- Musendo, D. J., Scherer, N., Jepkosgei, J., Maweu, L., Mupiwa, A., Hara, O., ... Patel, D. (2023). A Systematic Review of Interventions Promoting Parental Involvement in the Education of School-Aged Children with Disabilities. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education, 47*(2), 123–139.
- Wanders, F. H., Dijkstra, A. B., Maslowski, R., & Van der Veen, I. (2020). The effect of teacher-student and student-student relationships on the societal involvement of students. *Research Papers in Education, 35*(3), 266-286.