

Chapter 7

Exploring the Transformational Head Teachers' Diversity Practices in Primary Schools of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the diversity practices of head teachers as transformational leaders in Bangladeshi primary schools. A qualitative method was adopted, and eight government primary school head teachers from eight divisions in Bangladesh were chosen for in-depth interviews in order to gather deeper viewpoints and understand the realities of diversity practices. After that, a primary school teacher was chosen for an interview, and a FGD (composed of six students) was held with pupils of each eight schools to further clarify the head teachers' viewpoint. Data were gathered from a number of sources, thoroughly transcribed, coded, and then thematically analyzed. Major themes emerged from the analysis which has crucial influences on transformational head teachers' diversity practices are policy and strategies, culturally responsive teaching, professional development, communication, school climate, learning environment, and monitoring and evaluation. Challenges have also been identified and discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

In education, diversity has received a lot of attention as societies become more culturally diverse. Students can learn from other students who have significantly diversified life experiences from their own; a diverse student body fosters a richer learning environment. It improves students' capacity for intercultural cognizance, sympathy, and coexistence with people from diverse backgrounds (Wells et al., 2016). Diversity practice on campus helps students become more tolerant, develop their leadership potential, and better prepare them to take part in civic life today (Gilfoyle et al., 2003). Additionally, diversity practices provide a positive learning environment in schools and foster positive interpersonal ties among all stakeholders (Adams & Velard, 2021). In 1948, the UN proclaimed that each person has the right to be educated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which marked the beginning of inclusive education and diversity policies in schools (United Nations, 2007). The World Declaration on Education for All, which was published in 1990, the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action, which was published in 1994, the Dakar Framework for Action, which was published in 2000, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was published in 2008, are some of the major guiding documents that the international community has seen published in relation to inclusive education and diversity practices in schools. The main benefit of all these policies is that they treat all children equally in society and at school by attending to and meeting their varied needs (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013). Most recently, the Incheon Declaration's Education 2030 Framework for Action places a strong emphasis on the necessity of addressing all forms of marginalization and exclusion and focusing on diversity practices. With a focus on those who have historically been denied access to educational opportunities, such as children from the poorest households, members of linguistic and racial minorities, indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities, it emphasizes actions that enable educational systems to serve all learners (Ainscow & Messiou, 2018).

In order to prevent discrimination in schools due to gender, disability, culture, ethnicity, religion, or any other distinction, both developed and developing nations are working to address the difficulties of inclusive education and diversity practices (UNESCO, 1994). Diversity practices are well-established and institutionalized in developed nations, and they are backed by extensive legislation, resources, and teacher preparation. They place a strong emphasis on family involvement, inclusive education for students with a variety of needs, and multicultural curricula (Brussino, 2021). On the other hand, a lack of resources and understanding, however, makes it difficult for developing and underdeveloped nations to apply diverse practices. They may still be creating inclusive practices, but they are improving in terms of cultural sensitivity, support services, and integration (Forlin, 2013). As a developing nation,

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