



Breaking the Silence through the Lens of a Speech-Impaired Student's Family in a Char Area

Md. Ahasun Habib*

Abstract

This study focuses on the intricate dynamics surrounding the educational odyssey of speech-impaired student namely Bristy Akther in the Char area of Gaibandha district. The title encapsulates the vivid journey on unraveling the multifaceted challenges faced by speech-impaired students, highlighting their distinctive struggles within the broader context of socio-economic adversities.

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between communication impediments and socio-economic constraints, covering the barriers that hinder the educational advancement of speech-impaired students in this specific geographic setting. By examining the lived experiences of Bristy Akther and her family, the research sheds light on the pervasive impact of poverty, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate support systems stands before the educational aspirations of speech-impaired students in Char areas.

The overarching theme emphasizes the imperative to break through these barriers, fostering an inclusive educational environment that accommodates the unique needs of speech-impaired students. Through qualitative exploration and in-depth interviews, the research seeks to identify tangible solutions and recommendations to improve the educational landscape for speech-impaired students in similar socio-economic contexts.

In conclusion, "Breaking the Silence" endeavors to contribute to the discourse on inclusive education, advocating for targeted interventions that address the intersectionality of socio-economic disparities and communication challenges faced by speech-impaired students in Char areas of Gaibandha district.

Keywords: *Breaking the silence, comprehensive analysis, socio-economic barriers, educational challenges, speech-impaired students, char areas*

1. Introduction:

In the heart of Gaibandha District lies a silent struggle, one that transcends the boundaries of conventional educational discourse—the challenges faced by speech-impaired students in the Char areas. This research, titled "Breaking the Silence: A Holistic Investigation into the Socio-Economic Barriers and Educational Challenges Faced by Speech-Impaired Students in Char Areas of Gaibandha District," embarks on a journey into the intricate dynamics that shape the educational experiences of individuals grappling with speech impediments, as exemplified by the poignant narrative of Bristy Akther.

The title itself encapsulates the essence of the research, signifying a commitment to unraveling the multifaceted challenges unique to speech-impaired students. In the expansive landscape of socio-economic adversities, these students navigate a terrain marked by poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and a dearth of support systems that collectively hinder their educational advancement.

This study seeks to elucidate the interplay between communication impediments and socio-economic constraints, offering a comprehensive analysis of the barriers that impede the educational aspirations of speech-impaired students in the specific geographic setting of Char areas in Gaibandha District. Through a careful

* PhD Researcher, Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), Email: dahaub@gmail.com

examination of the lived experiences of Bristy Akther and her family, the research sheds light on the pervasive impact of these challenges, unveiling the poignant intersectionality of poverty and communication barriers.

The overarching theme of the research underscores the imperative to break through these barriers, advocating for an inclusive educational environment that accommodates the unique needs of speech-impaired students. Employing qualitative exploration and in-depth interviews, the study endeavors to identify tangible solutions and provide recommendations aimed at enhancing the educational landscape for speech-impaired students in similar socio-economic contexts.

In summary, "Breaking the Silence" aspires to contribute significantly to the discourse on inclusive education. By addressing the intersectionality of socio-economic disparities and communication challenges faced by speech-impaired students in the Char areas of Gaibandha District, the research advocates for targeted interventions that pave the way toward a more equitable and accessible educational future.

2. Problem Statement:

The Ali-Khatun family grapples with the harsh reality of poverty, enduring a perpetual scarcity of resources. Mr. Ali, lacking formal education, relies solely on farming to sustain his family, leaving them vulnerable to the throes of economic instability. Their daughter, Bristy Akther, a 15-year-old speech-impaired student studying in class 4 at Sanyasir Char Govt. Primary School, faces the dual challenges of limited educational access and financial constraints. The transportation system from their home to the school is inadequate, hindering Bristy's regular attendance. Despite her perseverance and a meager monthly stipend of Tk. 150 from the school, the family's financial struggles impede her educational progress. The absence of special initiatives for students like Bristy, especially those with disabilities, exacerbates the situation, leaving her education lagging and future uncertain.

3. Objective of Research:

This research aims to bring into surface the multifaceted challenges faced by the Ali-Khatun family, with a focus on the educational barriers encountered by their daughter, Bristy Akther. In doing so this study attempts to explore socio-economic background of her family, educational infrastructure, and the specific needs of Bristy as a speech-impaired student. The study also aims to identify specific areas for targeted intervention for the physically challenges student like Bristy which are curcial for promoting inclusive education and breaking the cycle of poverty.

4. Methods:

Interviews were conducted with Bristy's parents, Mr. Hashem Ali and Ms. Halima Khatun, to glean qualitative insights into their experiences, challenges, and aspirations related to Bristy's education (Yin, R.K. 2018). Exploring their day-to-day struggles, strives with financial constraints. Existing educational resources, education quality, support systems, and the impact of Bristy's speech impediment on her education has provided valuable qualitative data.

Relevant documents, including school records, financial statements, and educational policies, were analyzed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the institutional and policy-level inputs shaping Bristy's educational odyssey (Sena, B. 2023). Exploration of existing support programs, stipend structures, and policies related to inclusive education has also been gathered as qualitative data.

The stipend program providing financial support to Bristy was reviewed to assess its impact, coverage, and effectiveness in addressing financial barriers to education.

A community map was meticulously crafted to identify available resources, community organizations, and support networks within the Char area. This mapping initiative offers valuable insights into existing community-level initiatives that bolster education and address financial challenges.

Bristy's school attendance records were subjected to analysis to discern attendance patterns and identify factors influencing irregular attendance. This analysis shed light on the impact of transportation challenges and financial constraints on her ability to attend school regularly.

Combining these methods has provided a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of Bristy Akther's journey to education, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative aspects covering various perspectives of the family, school, and community.

5. Bristy Akther's Journey to Education:

Meet Bristy Akther, a 15-year-old speech-impaired student studying in class 4 at Sanyasir Char Govt. Primary School. Bristy's story unfolds in the humble setting of Magrighat village in Erendabari union, Fulchhari Upazila, Gaibandha district. Her father, Mr. Hashem Ali, at 35, and mother, Ms. Halima Khatun, at 31, navigate life's challenges with resilience and determination.

The Ali family's source of livelihood is rooted in agriculture, with Mr. Hashem Ali tending to the fields, his only formal qualification being the ability to sign his name. Their monthly income of Tk. 6,000 is stretched thin, barely covering the essentials. Living in a tin shed house with intermittent access to electricity, the family of six grapples with perpetual poverty, embodying the local adage, 'after meat comes mustard.'

Bristy's family faces a six-month food shortage each year, yet amidst these hardships, they hold on to their dreams. Two sons and two daughters bring both joy and responsibility to the household. Despite the challenges, there are two mobile sets, shedding light on their determination to adapt to the changing world.

Mrs. Halima Khatun, a VGD cardholder member, provides a vivid picture into their struggles. She acknowledges the scarcity of resources, revealing that their daughter's education is often compromised due to family poverty and household obligations. Despite these obstacles, Bristy has found a place for learning in Sanyasir Char Govt. Primary School.

Bristy's speech impairment adds an extra layer of complexity to her educational journey. The inadequate transportation system from home to school, hindering her regular attendance in school. However, the school recognizes her unique challenges and provides a monthly stipend of Tk. 150 to support her education.

Halima Khatun shares the harsh reality of their financial situation, relying on daily agricultural work to make ends meet. With no land to call their own and facing the difficulties of marrying off a daughter without a dowry, the family strives for survival. Bristy's special quality lies in her contribution to household chores, a testament to her resilience.

Despite the lack of a conducive study environment at home, Bristy's parents are determined to secure a brighter future for their daughter. Social mobilization meetings conducted by the school's teachers played a pivotal role in getting Bristy enrolled. Halima Khatun, aware of the challenges her daughter faces, advocates for special initiatives, such as extra classes and support for disabled students.

In the face of adversity, Bristy's story is one of hope. Her family, though burdened by financial constraints, remains committed to her education. As Halima Khatun suggests, a monthly stipend of Tk. 500 for each student in the Char area could be a transformative step, ensuring regular attendance and easing the burden on families like the Alis. Bristy's journey exemplifies the resilience that can emerge even in the most challenging circumstances, fueled by the hope for a better tomorrow.

6. Key findings of the study:

1. Bristy Akther's family, headed by her father Mr. Hashem Ali, faces severe financial challenges. With a monthly income of Tk. 6,000 and a reliance on agriculture, the family struggles to meet basic needs, experiencing food shortages for about six months each year.

2. Bristy is a speech-impaired student, and her communication challenges add complexity to her educational journey. Sometimes unable to articulate clearly and with diminished hearing capacity, her condition affects her ability to fully engage in the learning process.
3. The family's economic struggles directly impact Bristy's education. The lack of a reliable transportation system from home to school hinders her regular attendance. Despite these challenges, the quality of education services in the area is perceived as fairly good by Bristy's mother, Ms. Halima Khatun.
4. Sanyasir Char Govt. Primary School provides Bristy with a monthly stipend of Tk. 150 to support her education. This financial assistance, though limited, demonstrates the school's commitment to inclusivity and indicator of recognizing the unique challenges faced by students like Bristy.
5. Despite the odds, Bristy's parents are determined to secure her education. Halima Khatun and Mr. Hashem Ali, both engaged in daily agricultural work, express a strong desire for better opportunities for their daughter, emphasizing the importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty.
6. Bristy's story highlights the absence of specific initiatives for students facing challenges like hers. There is no provision for extra classes, separate teaching for weaker students, or dedicated support for disabled students, reflecting a gap in the education system.
7. The efforts of the school's teachers in conducting social mobilization meetings played a crucial role in getting Bristy enrolled. Despite the family's financial constraints, these meetings acted as a catalyst for overcoming obstacles and securing Bristy's place in formal education.
8. Halima Khatun advocates for the provision of a monthly special stipend of Tk. 500 for each student in the Char area. This proposed initiative aims to ensure regular attendance and alleviate the financial burden on families facing similar economic challenges.

Bristy Akther's journey to education underscores the intersectionality of financial constraints, special needs, and the crucial role of parental determination and community support in overcoming barriers to education. The findings suggest opportunities for targeted interventions and policy considerations to address the unique challenges faced by students like Bristy in pursuit of quality education.

7. Recommendations:

1. Given the dire financial circumstances of Mr. Hashem Ali and Ms. Halima Khatun, it is recommended that targeted financial assistance be provided to alleviate their economic hardships. Initiatives such as income-generating opportunities, vocational training, or microfinance support could empower the family to enhance their income and break the cycle of poverty.
2. Considering Bristy Akther's speech impairment and the lack of provisions for special initiatives in her school, it is recommended to introduce tailored education programs. This includes specialized teaching methods, extra classes, and resources dedicated to addressing the unique needs of students with speech impairments, ensuring they receive adequate educational support.
3. Acknowledging the challenges Bristy faces in commuting to school due to an inadequate transportation system, efforts should be made to improve the accessibility and reliability of transportation services. This may involve establishing safe and convenient transport options, especially for students with disabilities, to enhance regular school attendance.
4. Recognizing Halima Khatun's struggle with land ownership and financial instability, it is recommended to explore avenues for providing her with support to regain or acquire land. This support could enable her to generate additional income and enhance the family's overall economic stability.
5. Advocate for the implementation of inclusive educational policies, including the provision of extra classes, separate teaching for weaker students, and specialized classes for students with disabilities. This will ensure that students like Bristy receive the tailored attention and resources necessary for their academic progress.
6. Support Halima Khatun's suggestion of providing a monthly special stipend of Tk. 500.00 to each student in the Char area. This financial assistance can act as an incentive for regular school attendance, alleviate economic burdens on families, and contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty in the community.

7. Implementation of community engagement programs to raise awareness about the importance of education, especially for students with disabilities. Emphasize the long-term benefits of education and dispel any misconceptions that may hinder children, like Bristy, from attending school regularly.
8. Establish social support networks to assist families facing financial hardships. Collaborate with local community organizations, NGOs, and government agencies to create a safety net for families like the Ali-Khatuns, ensuring they have access to essential resources and support services.

Implementing these recommendations can contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for students like Bristy Akther, ensuring that they have equal opportunities to pursue and succeed in their education despite facing financial and disability-related challenges.

8. Conclusion

In light of the intricate challenges faced by the Ali-Khatun family, particularly their speech-impaired daughter Bristy Akther, several key conclusions emerge. Despite residing in an area with reportedly good educational services, the family's socio-economic circumstances significantly impede Bristy's educational journey. The family's poverty, exacerbated by a lack of land and meager income, contributes to food shortages for nearly half the year, reinforcing the village saying 'after meat comes mustard.'

Bristy's speech impairment, compounded by unfriendly transportation system and household chores, hinders her regular attendance at Sanyasir Char Govt. Primary School. Despite receiving a modest stipend, the financial struggles faced by the family, including the inability to afford care for Bristy's disability, have led to her educational lag.

The absence of special initiatives for backward students, such as extra classes or separate teaching for weaker and disabled students, underscores the systemic challenges in the educational framework. Halima Khatun's acknowledgment of the family's constant pursuit of work, coupled with the absence of a conducive study environment at home, further accentuates the formidable obstacles faced by Bristy.

In conclusion, the case of Bristy Akther and the Ali-Khatun family highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions, inclusive policies, and financial support to break the cycle of poverty and provide equal educational opportunities for speech-impaired students in marginalized communities like Char areas of Gaibandha districts.

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