Research article

The Lived-Experiences of a Child with Reading Difficulty (Dyslexia) in both Pull-out and Mainstream Classes: A Case Study at Drukgyel Lower Secondary School, Paro

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A B S T R A C T

This study attempts to explore whether a child with reading difficulty can improve in the areas of academic achievement when placed in a pull-out classroom with other reading and learning difficulty (LD) peers. The study looks at how a child with reading difficulty is being supported by teachers in pull-out and in the mainstream class. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach with a single case study design and data were collected using interview, observations, and document analysis. The form of the interview used was semi-structured to obtain in-depth data in the qualitative study. Six participants were involved in the data collection process as a part of the study. Transcribed data were analyzed manually and colour-coded based on the thematic approach. Seven major areas of concern emerged from the data analysis which were; the pull-out class, the academic performances, the assistive devices, the parental support at home, the mainstream education system's inability to support the child, the deficit views held, and the advocacy for the family. The findings reveal that the child benefits academically in pull-out class, however, the child is found to be acquiring more social and communication skills in the mainstream class. Similarly, teachers in mainstream classes lack specialized instruction and strategies to support children with reading difficulties. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations are made for teachers, school, and the Ministry of Education for future consideration and improvement.

Keywords: Pull-out, Reading difficulty, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia, Dysgraphia, Pull-out, Accommodation

Introduction

"Inclusive Education" is a relatively new endeavour in our education system. The Special Education Needs (SEN) Programme under Ministry of Education is progressively gearing towards 100% enrolment of children with disabilities and providing quality inclusive education.
(**Standards for Inclusive Education, MoE, 2017, p. 4**)

It is imperative that there should be a study on the academic and social impact of a child with reading difficulty as a result of the pull-out program because such findings would not only benefit teachers in providing the right kind of support services and interventions in the school but also help parents to provide support at home. Currently, there are some controversies on child's interaction and learning between general class and in the pull-out class. Many teachers and parents believe that the

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child with reading difficulty benefits more from pull-out class than in mainstream class and others believe vice versa for many reasons. Till now, teachers themselves are not convinced which program; pull-out or mainstream class would work best for the child with reading difficulty. Although there are few researches being conducted by (**Barton, 2016**: **Comerford, 1995**: **Fernandez, 2016**: **Jones, 2009**) in USA and by few in other parts of the world but none of the study has specifically recommended to take mainstream or pull-out for child's academic achievement. Moreover, such kind of studies in the past had not been conducted in Bhutan, so it is vital that we conduct studies in these areas to provide evidences for teachers and relevant stakeholders to provide relevant educational support services for children with reading difficulties. Therefore, this study intends to examine a child with reading difficulty in pull-out class in the Bhutanese context. The primary aim of the study is to explore, whether the child with reading difficulty actually learns better in the pull-out class or in the mainstream class. Based on the key issues raised in the research problem and gaps identified related to providing the right kind of support services for the child with reading difficulty, the following over-arching research questions and sub-questions were developed and asked.

Context of the study

The research site chosen for this study was Drukgyel Lower Secondary School, one of the inclusive schools in Western Bhutan. It was established in 1962. It is located in a semi-urban area, 13 Kilometers North of Paro town. At the time of my study, the school had a total of 42 teachers including the Principal, Vice-principal, and 791 students with classes from pre-primary to eight. There are 15 Special Educational Needs (SEN) teachers with 30 SEN students in the school. The school was identified as a SEN school in the year 2012, as one of the inclusive pilot schools for the country. Data was collected from various sources including; a child with reading difficulty, English pull-out teacher, former English pull-out teacher, mainstream English teacher, guardian, and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) of the school. The main participant in the study was a child with reading difficulty, who is studying in grade seven. This school was chosen based on the availability of the case and also looking at the proximity of the school from the Paro College of Education. Currently, the school caters to the needs of students with various types of disabilities ranging from mild and moderate to severe.

Significance of the study

This research is focused on examining the learning experiences of a child with reading difficulty attending both pull-out class and mainstream classes. Its main concern was not only to identify the kinds of instructional strategies used in teaching the child with reading difficulty and which strategies work better for the child but also to find out the kind of curriculum accommodations and modifications made for the child by the teachers. The study also explored, if there were any barriers to a child's learning due to the knowledge and skill of teachers, parent or guardian's educational level, socio-economic status of the family, and their support at home. The knowledge generated from the study will be useful to policymakers, school administrators, teachers, parents, and members of the community in understanding and supporting the children with reading difficulties and other special needs in the school. The findings from this study will also contribute significantly to educational discourse concerning the need for a specialized program like pull-out for children with other learning difficulties in Bhutan. Further, findings from this study will serve as a foundation for future researchers to take more in-depth studies because they may like to explore deeper into some areas from this study.

Theoretical proposition

A child with reading difficulty can achieve academically in a pull-out class rather than in a mainstream class if given appropriate interventions and accommodations in the classroom teaching. While some researchers and educationists support that a child benefits more in social interaction and communication skills in a mainstream class as there is more number of children as compared to the pull-out class. However, the educational provision made for a child in pull-out and mainstream classes have never been understood well in terms of their positive impacts on the child. Therefore this case study tried to look at the impact of pull-out and mainstream classes on a child in terms of his academic and social skills.

Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of the study is that the nature of the case study as a research design is not applicable for generalization. Since the study was conducted on a single case of a child, the findings of this study may not be relevant to other children with similar reading difficulties. Qualitative studies do not focus on generalization (**Yin, 2018**). Another limitation was since the case study requires an in-depth study and 42 days of field visits for data collection was limited in duration and that hampered in obtaining the reliable and valid data. Moreover, the researcher had to teach six hours a week after preparing lesson plans and teaching-learning materials (TLM) in the class, instead of focusing on the data collection. Other limitations could be the fear of stigmatization and discrimination by peers, neighbors, and the community, that the key informants like the child and his guardians were not comfortable to share openly with the researcher which might affect the reliability and substantiality of the data collected.

Literature Review

Learning difficulty (LD) is a condition that can cause an individual to experience problems while learning. According to Queensland Studies Authority (**2007, as cited in Barton, 2016, p. 13**), "learning difficulties refer to barriers that limit access to, participation in, and outcomes from the curriculum." The National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia, estimates 10 - 16% of the population as having learning difficulties. Wood (2008, p. 18) mentions that the common LDs are; dyslexia (reading difficulty) dysgraphia (writing difficulty) dyscalculia (difficulties in math) dyspraxia (poor physical coordination) and ADHD (Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder).He further adds that many teachers do not feel confident or competent to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties and they tend to blame students for problems in learning (**Barton, 2016; Fernandez, 2016; Wood, 2008**).

In Bhutan, SEN schools cater to the needs of children with LD in general. Schools do not have the capacity to diagnose or identify children with specific learning difficulties formally, however, informal identification is being made by the SEN teachers in order to provide needed interventions and support services based on some characteristics and learning behaviors of the children. This research will primarily focus on the kinds of instructional strategies and interventions given to the students with reading difficulty and other LDs in pull-out class although it will also highlight some drawbacks of mainstream class for the child with reading difficulty.

Pull-out class (program)

Although inclusion has become a popular concept today yet there are some challenges when it comes to the practices in reality. Inclusion has become the standard practice in the classroom in USA, but many students continue to be pulled out of the classroom for various services such as counseling, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and extra support (**Barton, 2016**). "While there are common beliefs and understanding for in-class support, often these children gain far more by being removed from the class for short specific teaching sessions" (**Hall, 2009, p. 36**). The pull-out program is referred to as a program where the special education teacher teaches students with learning difficulties in reading, writing, and /or math outside the general education classroom (**Jones, 2002 & Reifler, 2021**). "The intent of these "pullout" programs is to provide a setting where exceptional children teachers could work with students either in small groups or individually and thus provide them with an intensive, individualized program of study" (**Moody & Hughes, 2000, p. 305**). Since students will be either one-to-one with a teacher or in a small group, they would feel comfortable to clarify the doubt and learn from the teacher and friends. As shared by Hurt (2012) and Jones (2002), students with learning disabilities prefer pull-out programs due to the small class or group size. Further, Jones (2002) and Reifler (2021) enunciated, it is less embarrassing if they make mistakes in the resource room than in the classroom because of the less number of students.

Pull-out classes for students with LD are found to have immense positive impact on student's academic achievement. Jones (2002, p. 9) observes that:

> *On-task behaviors such as writing, reading aloud, playing academic games, reading silently, and answering academic questions were observed at a higher rate in the resource room while more off-task behaviors, such as calling out names, playing, looking around, and being in an inappropriate location were observed in the inclusive classroom.*

He adds that pull-out instruction affords the opportunity to individualize skills, work at the student's level, and teach in an area with fewer distractions than the mainstream classroom (Jones (2002). Even in Bhutan, pull-out is being practiced as a part of the SEN program for students with LD. Subba et al. (2018, p. 4) highlight that "in the pull-out classes, students receive three hours per week of additional individualized support and the group should not exceed five students". However, other researchers have not pointed out exactly how many hours and the number of students should be allocated for the pull-out class.

The current philosophy is that segregating these children with learning difficulty, even for short periods of time for remedial teaching, damages their self-esteem, restricts their social interaction with their peers and reduces their motivation to learn (**Cox, 2016 & Jones, 2002**).Therefore, many researchers believe that inclusion may reduce the stigma of students with disabilities, encourage collaboration between special education and general education teachers, and increase the interaction of the disabled and non-disabled students as well (**Barton, 2016 & Fernandez, 2016**). Another limitation of the pull-out class is that some students may feel stigmatized as a result of receiving a perceived less challenging curriculum. However, "inclusion is seen as a universal human right for everyone, irrespective of race, gender, disability, and other needs" (**Hurt, 2012, p. 13**). Similarly, one of the principles of inclusion is also about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and barriers.

Many studies support that the pull-out classes help students with LD and other Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) to achieve academic performance, but fail to mention specifically the kinds of learning activities and strategies that aptly help

students to attain an optimum level in pull-out classes. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on reading difficulty and other LDs in the Bhutanese context. Although there have been a few types of research in the Bhutanese context on; children with disabilities (**Dorji & Schuelka, 2016**), Bhutanese teacher's perspectives on inclusion and disability (**Kamenopoulou, 2017**) and Bhutanese teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (**Dorji et al., 2019**). Other areas of the studies were, parental involvement in supporting their children with special educational needs at school and home in Bhutan (**Jigyel et al., 2019**) and challenges for implementing inclusive education in Bhutan (**Sakurai, 2017**) but none of the paper highlights issues related to reading difficulty and other LDs in Bhutan.

Instructional strategies and classroom accommodations

Direct instruction is an approach to teaching. It is skills-oriented and the teaching practices it implies are teacher-directed. It emphasizes the use of small group, face-to-face instruction by the teachers and aides using the lessons in which cognitive skills are broken down into small units, sequenced deliberately and taught explicitly (**Archer & Hughes 2011; Carnine, 2000**). It is also easier for the teachers to adopt a direct instruction approach that research has shown to be highly effective (**Carnine, 2000, p. 7**). According to Jones (2002), it is found that on-task behaviors such as writing, reading aloud, playing academic games, reading silently, and answering academic questions were observed at a higher rate in the resource room – meaning children seem to do well in academic related activities in the pull-out class. For that learning activities should be multi-sensory, which involve reading aloud as well as silent reading, acting, drawing, singing, memory games, and the use of multi-media, such as video and e-learning programs to enhance learning (**Lindeblad et al., 2016; Parr, 2013; Yuen, 2005**).

Assistive devices can be another useful tool for children with reading difficulties to assimilate text as well as to boost their reading. International Organization for Standardization (**as cited in Svensson et al., 2019, p. 3**) defines assistive technologyas:

Any product (including devices, equipment, instruments and software), especially produced or generally available, used by or for persons with disability, for participation, to protect, support, train, measure or substitute for both functions/structures and activities, or to prevent impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions.

Children of the present generation are familiar with technical equipments, such as mobile devices, which they find comfortable to use in reading. "Few studies have focused on Smartphone's and tablets with applications as tools for increasing reading ability" (**Lindeblad et al., 2016**). Gasparini and Culen (2012) assert that the introduction of the iPad in the elementary class has, in general, been a success in particular; it offers clear support to some children with reading difficulties. Even though the iPad and tab were not a product designed specifically for education, it could be used to support it. Text-to-speech software, for example, can be beneficial for students with dyslexia who exhibit weak decoding skills, low levels of fluency, and strong listening comprehension skills (Parr 2013). Similarly, the use of computers and laptops is also found to have benefitted children's reading and writing. If we do not allow them to read with a computer, they may never learn to read in a way that supports their overall development. Lindeblad et al. (2016) emphasize, the importance of an early detection of reading impairment and of swift interventions to support and increase reading ability of children has been argued for within the research fields of reading and dyslexia by the researchers. In the mainstream classrooms, teachers lack

knowledge and skills to plan and deliver quality differentiated lesson plans and as a result, students fail in the academics (**Barton, 2016**). Tomlinson (2003, p. 121) defines differentiation as an:

Approach to teaching in which teachers proactively modify curricula, teaching methods, resources, learning activities, and student products to address the diverse needs of individual students and small groups of students to maximize the learning opportunity for each student in a classroom.

Roger and Sailor (2005) argue that owing to the big number of students in the general class in US schools, teachers will not be able to provide a differentiated lesson, which ultimately will lead LD students to be incompetent in their learning. Identifying and providing the right kind of accommodation for students with LD by the teachers can be one important way to increase academic achievement, however, sometimes teachers in the general classes are not confident on the kinds of accommodations to be used for the student (**Margaret, 2012 &Weis, 2016**). Often teachers are found to have got confusion between the terms 'accommodations' and 'extra support' they provide to the students in enhancing their academic performances. Childers (2020, p. 7) defines that an "accommodation" is a change of environment, curriculum format, or equipment so that students with a disability have the opportunity to learn the content and complete assigned tasks. Van Sciver and Conover (2009); Yuen (2005) affirm that special education student achievement depends on accommodations being implemented on a regular basis and inconsistent or inappropriate identification of accommodations for students can distract from or hinder students' academic success. So it is crucial that teachers select the most appropriate accommodations and use them consistently. According to Yuen (2005):

The commonly used accommodations in pull-out and mainstream classes are like; provide extra time to complete tasks (reading, writing, spelling words, comprehending), re-teaching concepts, classroom sitting priority, decrease quantity of work, simplification of instructions and use of multi-sensory approach of teaching.

This allows the teacher to give the student necessary adaptations and accommodations enabling them to increase their self-efficacy (**Barton, 2016 & Lewandowski, 2008**).

Reading difficulty and interventions

Reading difficulty is one of the common learning disabilities found among students, globally. Shaywitz and Shivwits (2005) assert, a manifestation of dyslexia may be a very slow reading rate; in fact, children may learn to read words accurately but they will not be fluent or automatic, as a result, there is a phonological deficit. Students with reading difficulty require specialized, explicit, cumulative, and focused reading instruction (**Childers, 2020; Westwood, 2008**). It has been found out that most phonemically explicit instructional condition produced the strongest reading growth for all children (**Torgesen, 2002**). According to Hughes et al. (2018, p. 9) describe explicit instruction as "a systematic method of teaching with an emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students". However, researchers state that globally, many general education teachers are not adequately prepared to teach children with reading and other learning difficulties (**Childers, 2020**). "Teachers must be thoroughly trained in reading and reading instruction that is based on sound research evidence both at the pre-service and in-service levels" (**Mc Cardle et al., 2001, p. 231**). Bhutan is not an exception; teachers are not trained and prepared to meet the needs of students with reading difficulties and other LDs (**Ministry of Education, 2014, as cited in Dorji & Schuelka, 2016**).

Studies have shown that training young children in phonological awareness facilitates reading acquisition, particularly when introduced in conjunction with teaching the children about letters. Childers, (2020) and Torgesen (2002) suggest that students with reading difficulty should receive intensive phonics-based interventions and reading instruction by trained teachers. These interventions should be systematic, well-structured, and multi sensory. Torgesen (2002) used the Class Wide Peer Tutoring model to increase the amount of academic engaged time and this increase has been consistently associated with improvements in learning outcomes in children's reading. It is also important that more teaching and learning opportunities per day than typical classroom instruction need to be provided. If at-risk children do not receive more teaching and learning opportunities per day than other children, they will acquire reading skills more slowly, and thus will experience the disadvantages later in their lives (**Torgesen, 2002**). The lack of adequate acquisition of vocabulary is also found to be one of the causes of reading difficulty in children and adults worldwide. According to Nation, (2019) poor reading comprehension was associated with vocabulary deficits whereas good reading comprehension was not. So there is a need to help children acquire and build on vocabulary through the use of strategies like; maintaining daily records of new words with meaning, building word walls in classrooms and through other relevant strategies.

Assessing children's academic performance is another crucial part of any curriculum because the fact is, ultimately, Children's understanding level of what they studied need to be evaluated and provided feedback if necessary. Moseley (2004, p. 134) states:

Most teachers use a mixed approach in early literacy work, expecting holistic recognition of 'sight' words (high frequency words many of which have irregular spellings) and either whole-word or analytic recognition of 'phonic' words (usually beginning with CVC words and moving on to more complex patterns including clusters and digraphs.

There is a variety of techniques to evaluate children's day to day classroom learning through; oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, spelling, reading sight words, high-frequency words, checklist, reading and writing portfolios cloze test, question-answer techniques, and construction of simple sentences in their own. Fiderer (1998) asserts observational checklists are excellent tools for determining an individual child's ability to match letters with their sounds or to recognize familiar words and portfolios provide visible evidence of growth over time.

Parental Support at Home

Parental support at home is another vital component for the wholesome development of a child and in particular the child's performance in academic at home and in the school. Christenson (2004) commented that it is now well accepted that the home plays an important role in children's learning and achievement. Some children learn values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors at home and prepare them well for the tasks of school. The kind of environment created by parents for a child's participation and learning at home has huge positive or negative impacts on the child learning in the school. Many studies in US suggest that children whose families help them and functionally interact with them, use effective educational styles and where there are few arguments and low levels of stress, do better at school and learn more easily (**Bodovski & Youn, 2010; Guoliang, Zhang , & Yan, 2005**). Further, parents' positive attitude towards their children and family support increase children's confidence in their abilities and awakens their interest in meeting parents' expectations (**Campbell &Verna, 2007**). While a psychologically supportive atmosphere at home represents parents who help their children develop better attitudes and beliefs toward their academic abilities, a pressure environment suggests a demanding parent who applies

pressure to maintain high achievements (**Campbell and Verna, 2007**).However, in troubled or dysfunctional families, children receive fewer stimulation and of lower quality and their academic development is therefore slower (**Ghazarian & Buehler, 2010; Sheppard, 2005**).

Further, parents' education level also accounted for the child's performance in the school. Harris and Goodall (2007) emphasize that the more educated the parent, the greater was their involvement in their child's education. "Parental involvement for children with special educational needs (SEN) is even more crucial due to the fact that parents have a unique understanding of their child's needs" (Lo, 2010, p.405). Roberts et al., 2005, p. 347) believe that:

Parents who are responsive, sensitive, and accepting of a child's behavior, and who provide structure, organization, and a positive general emotional climate at home tends to have shown to score higher on later measures of language, cognitive, and academic skills.

However, in general, many of the Bhutanese parents seem to lack proper support and instead engage their children in house chores like; washing utensils in the kitchen, washing clothes, fetching firewood from the tap, and looking after the cattle at home. Phuntsho (2015) reveals that his parents usually tell him to complete the household chores first and then study. By that time it is too late for him to study. Similarly, anthropological evidence shows that village parents do not feel much need to make adjustments in domestic arrangements on behalf of their school children's house chores (**Levison et al., 2017**). Numerous factors contribute to these concerns about impediments to children's educational success, many of which have been studied, but little attention has been given to children as fetchers of water and wood, especially in rural areas (**Levison et al., 2017**). In one of the studies in Tanzania, water-carrying might be expected first thing in the morning, even if that makes children late for school. So, to solve these common problems of a child and parents, the school needs to intervene and coordinate with better communication and collaboration. Epstein model of overlapping spheres of influence states, "as a parental involvement at school, at home, and with other parents can be explicitly understood through six types of parental actions in the education of children: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community" (**Epstein, 1992, as cited in Jigyel, 2010, p. 2**). However in general, schools seems to lack good collaboration between school and the parents and which in turn impact negatively on monitoring part of a child's performance by the parents at home.

The deficit views

Negative perceptions in society can create feelings of shame among families who may keep their child with a disability away from public view. In some cases, children with disabilities are hidden away or forbidden from taking part in social activities due to stigma or negative perceptions. Sometimes children with disabilities are kept away from school because parents think they can benefit least from the academic learning in the school.

Deficit view of a child by family, teachers and the society

Beliefs and prejudices constitute barriers when the school, teachers and the community do not see the value of educating children with disabilities and when family members have low expectations of their children with disabilities. Research has shown that the expectations that parents hold for their children influence children's actual academic outcomes as much if

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not more than previous academic performance (**Jacobs 1991, as cited in McCoy et al., 2016, p. 2**). For children with a learning disability, cognitively they will not be able to perform like any other peers in the school and therefore parents may have lesser expectations from their children. Parents may hold lower expectations for such children than for children without a disability which may, in turn, affect children's development (**McCoy et al., 2016**). These kinds of behavior and actions from the parents can lead to the stigmatization of children at home and in school. 'Stigma research suggests that being labeled as having a disability or special educational need can lead to a change in the behavior of adults who may encourage learned helplessness' (**Thomas 1979, as cited in McCoy et al., 2016, p. 3**).

Teachers have deficit view on the child when the child's parents are illiterate and lack 'knowledge' to be shared with their child (**Gonzalez, 1995**). The assumption is that poor families do not or cannot support their children's learning needs (**Baroutsis & Woods, 2018**). The main problems encountered by parents in educating their children with disabilities are stigmatization, negative attitudes from members of the society and parental ignorance (**Mwangi & Orodho, 2014**). Such a child is a shame to the whole family, hence their rejection by the family or the community. The construction of the deficit view of the child is also due to the socio-cultural context and Bhutanese traditional conceptualization of disability influenced by Buddhist beliefs. It is generally believed that a person who is born with a disability is due to the bad deeds that he or she had accumulated in the past life. Schuelka (2015, p. 822) specifies that "a belief in karma allows a general mistrust of an individual with disabilities because it is believed that they had committed a sin in their previous life that has consequently led them to their current disposition". A good majority of people still believe that a disability is retribution for past wrong deeds committed (United Disabled Persons of Kenya, 2003 as cited in Odongo, 2018). Further, in one of the studies conducted in Kenya revealed that there is traditional beliefs that view disability as a curse or the result of witchcraft are still present as well as the belief that disability is contagious (**Bii & Taylor, 2013**). In fact, such views are being developed as a result of our social and cultural environment that we are brought-up with and kind of strong beliefs we have in our religion. False and harmful beliefs about disability can have implications for all aspects of the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.

Advocacy for parents

Advocacy plays a vital role in dissemination of important messages and information aimed at helping people understand their rights and express their views. According to Ghazala et al. (2001, p. 20) define advocacy as "a way to defend the interest of a person, and to make sure their needs are met, especially someone who already feels disempowered". Advocacy is considered to be an important vehicle for prevention and early intervention in safeguarding processes (Bauer et al., 2014). Similarly, "through advocacy, citizenship rights can be safeguarded, negative images challenged and positive identity developed" (**Begum 1992 & Downer 1998, as cited in Ghazala, 2001, p. 21**). Teachers are often the best educational advocates for the parents who have children with learning disabilities as parents are the best educational advocates for their children. Ghazala (2001) affirms that many people with learning difficulties have few friendships, even within their own communities, and are unable to go out as often as they wish. So, it is important that besides advocating parents of children with learning difficulties, it is also equally important to teach children how to do a self-advocacy for themselves in the school and the community. Phillips (2008, p. 1807) assert:

Parents often lack the necessary knowledge about disability and educational options, and often have difficulty interfacing with school officials in special education proceedings. These gaps in knowledge and ability make it difficult for parents to advocate effectively for their children without any external help.

So, it is crucial that teachers provide advocacy for parents' better understanding of their children's learning difficulties. Without effective advocacy, however, the promise of special education for children with disabilities cannot be realized (**Phillips 2008**). As stated by Ghazala (2001, p, 21), "the disabling effect and feeling of total helplessness that can result from a lack of advocacy". In fact teachers are the one who play key roles in propagating and making better understanding of a child with learning difficulties by the child's peers, the parents and the community. Multiple scholars have argued that parents are often not fully aware of educational options available for their children and therefore have a difficult time forming accurate expectations of schools and teachers (**Phillips 2008**). "Although parents with learning disabilities value and benefit from the additional support provided by advocacy services in this situation, they are among the least likely to seek help independently" (**Bauer et al., 2014, p. 3**). However, with the given opportunity to attend the advocacy program for the parents of children with learning difficulties, their attitudes are found to have changed positively and as a result maximizing their support towards their children.

Methodology

Research methods

The approach of the research was a qualitative descriptive case study (QDCS) with a single embedded unit of analysis that will discover the impact of pull-out class on a child with reading difficulty. Lichtman (2010) asserts that the critical element of qualitative research involves looking deeply at a few things rather than looking at the surface of many things. The world view or the paradigm of this approach is constructivism which is also known as interpretivism with multiple realities (**Creswell, 2003**). "The qualitative research takes place in the natural setting where by researcher often goes to the place of the participant to collect data" (**Creswell, 2003, p.181**). As the design of the research is a case study; it specifically focused on the single embedded case (individual child) but the data was collected from multiple sources. Yin (2002, p. 13) defines a case as "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context." Lichtman (2010) reveals that we are more interested in the richness of the information we generate from the case than the ability to generalize. Although a case study is an in-depth study on any given subject and topic, however, it will be a poor basis for generalization.

In this case study, purposive sampling was used as per the nature of the study, since the data required to be collected are from specific participants. Creswell (**2007 as cited in Dorji, 2015, p. 26**) asserts that "purposeful sampling offers the opportunity to gather information-rich enough to purposefully inform an in-depth understanding of the research problem and the central phenomenon or the case in study". There were six participants for the study; a child with reading difficulty, an English pull-out teacher, an ex-English pull-out teacher, a mainstream teacher who teaches the child in a mainstream class, a guardian, and the SENCO of the school. Participants were selected based on the criterion of who deals with the child every day and who can provide the best knowledge and information about the child.

Data collection tools refer to the devices used to collect data, such as a computer-assisted interviewing system, checklists, interviews, observations, surveys, or questionnaires. An interview can be semi-structured and structured. Observation can be direct as well as participant observation. Document analysis provides evidence on the data collected from other tools. So, data collected from different sources by different tools actually triangulate and validates the data collected. According to Willis (2007) validation of research findings can be done through triangulation, member checking, and participatory research, extended experience in the environment, peer review, researcher journaling, and audit trails. Further, Willis (2007) emphasizes that member checking is a way of confirming findings in the research. Another was done through establishing a chain of evidence and having a draft case study report reviewed by the peers. This study has avoided becoming dependent on a single informant and sought the same data from other sources to verify its authenticity by corroborating evidence.

Interviews: In this case study, the guided or semi-structured interview was used as one kind of data collection tool because it allows the researcher to collect in-depth information through open-ended questions based on responses received from the interviewees. As advised by Robson (**2011, cited in Kamenopoulou, 2017, p. 7**) "semi-structured interview guide will be developed to direct the interview process and to keep the focus on the topics pertinent to the research questions". Moreover, case study design provides an opportunity for the researcher to express personal views like; perceptions, attitudes, and meaning from its observations and data collection. "Although provision for negotiation, discussion, and expansion of the interviewee's response is made, the semi-structured interview will also impose an overall shape to the interview and help prevent aimless rambling" (**Opie 2004, p.118**). In the study, a child, a guardian, two English teachers of the mainstream as well as the pull-out, former pull-out English teacher, and special educational needs coordinator were interviewed. The interview was tape-recorded to get an accurate account of the conversations and avoid losing data since not everything can be written down during the interview. Taped interviews of the participants were then transcribed.

Observations: The observation was another data collection tool used as it has the advantage of being able to observe and record physical environment and human behavior directly by the researcher over other tools. "Observing humans in natural settings assists our understanding of the complexity of human behavior and interrelationships among groups" (**Lichtman 2010, p.165**). The study also used direct observation as a data collection tool. The researcher did not participate with the children in the activities and instead took a seat at the corner of the class noting down everything observed in the class. Observation of the child predominantly happened in classroom learning activities and also during outdoor activities as the focus of the study was on the child's academic learning, although other places for observations included; playground, library, and other normal interaction with teachers and peers in the school campus. In the process of observations, forms were also used to record as and when a child demonstrates certain behaviors so that observations become reliable and accurate.

Document Analysis: As a part of a document analysis to support data collected from other sources, this study looked at all the available documents in the school like; child's notebooks, teacher's lesson plans, teachers' assessment record of a child, portfolios and individualized educational plans (IEP) to authenticate the data collected from the interview. Noor 2008, declares that documentary evidence acts as a method to cross-validate information gathered from interview and observation have given that sometimes what people say may be different

from what people do. As evidence of the document analysis, relevant child's work from notebooks and assignments including test papers were photocopied and maintained as a portfolio for easy reference during the data analysis.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical consideration is one important aspect that the researcher needs to be mindful of before planning to carry out any kind of research. "Ethics has to do with the application of moral principles to prevent harming others, to promote the good, to be respectful and to be fair" (**Opie 2004, p. 25**). The rights of the participants were given due respect. Participants were provided a consent form to be signed before engaging in the research. Likewise, participants were also given the option to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at any time. The anonymity of the participants was guaranteed in all areas of the study. All six participants were given pseudonyms as participant A, B, C, D, E, and F to protect their identities. In qualitative research, inquirers use aliases or pseudonyms for individuals and places to protect identities (**Creswell 2003**). During the data analysis and interpretation, the confidentiality of the participants was maintained by coding the data. Similarly, the data that was once analyzed was kept in safe custody so that it has to remain protected for about five years. Any research-related issue that is likely to appear will be prevented. Since the main participant in the study was a child with reading difficulty, the child had difficulty in understanding the ethical issues of the research, so a consent letter from the guardian was asked on behalf of the child. Finally, all those who took part in the study were given due acknowledgment.

Data Analysis: Data collected were analyzed after every collection, so that data does not remain piled up to be analyzed at the end of the data collection. "Data collection and analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research" (**Merriam 1988 & Marshall 1989, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 203**). The six participants were given pseudonyms as participant A, B, C, D, E, and F respectively to protect their identities in the study. During data analysis, the data was organized categorically and reviewed repeatedly to make it systematic in reporting the findings of the study. Field notes and diary entries were maintained and reviewed on a daily basis, so that important data do not get missed out. For case study analysis, one of the most desirable techniques is to use a pattern matching logic in drawing the themes (**Yin 2014**). It involves the comparison of a predicted theoretical pattern with an observed empirical pattern in drawing up the themes of the study. Transcribed interviews of the six participants were color-coded and data were analyzed accordingly and a number of significant major themes emerged. The six themes are; pull-out class, academic performances, assistive devices, parental support at home, mainstream's inability to support the child, and deficit views of a child. Further, each theme is broken into different sub-themes and discussed in the study.

Results

Child's interest for pull-out class

There are children who are to be placed and educated in pull-out classes while some do not like to be in the pull-out class due to the social stigma and discrimination. Participants C, B, E, and F stated that the child would like to receive SEN support services in pull-out class because the child receives individual attention from the teacher and is taught explicitly

with minimum distractions. The interest of the child in the pull-out class has been highlighted by (**Hurt, 2012; Jones, 2002**) due to the small class or group size, child is being benefitted a lot as teacher can provide individual undisrupted attention to the child. Jones (2002) apparently stated that it is less embarrassing even if they make mistakes in the resource room than in the classroom with more students.

Participant E stated, *"I like to study in pull-out class as teachers provide easy tasks to perform and I enjoy being there with my peer"* (**Participant E6, September 4, 2021**). Similar kinds of findings have been discussed by (**Moody & Hughes, 2000**) on child's interest to be in the pull-out class. Similarly, participant B said*, "Curriculum itself is quite simple and whenever we conduct examinations and class test, he is scoring good marks"* (**Participant B6, September 21, 2021**). In line to other two participants, further, participant A declared, *"I found him to be more interested in pull-out class because besides his studies he also gets opportunities to play some academic related games, play with models, shapes and also watch videos based on his own interest"* (**Participant A6, August 17, 2021**). The researchers like; Childers, (2020) and Torgesen (2002) express the use of multi-sensory teaching generates children's interest in pull-out class.

However, participant D contradicted by saying that the actual interest of the child cannot be said:

I cannot really say that he has a genuine interest to be in pull-out class because he does not turn up for the class by himself after checking the timetable and I have to repeatedly go after him and call him from the mainstream class. (**Participant D6, September 6, 2021**)

Furthermore, participants A added, *"He hardly brings a book and a pen when he comes to the pull-out class and most of the times I have to send him back to the class to get his books and pen or pencil"* (**Participant A, personal communication August 23, 2021**). It means it would be difficult for anyone to draw a conclusion and declare that a child has a genuine interest to be in the pull-out class. The researcher's perspective here is that child finds it difficult to perform the learning task in the mainstream and looks for ways to escape from there. However, the researcher viewed that the interest of the child in pull-out class depends on how interesting the lesson has been planned and executed in the class by the teacher. In fact, this study cannot actually assure that the child is interested to be supported academically in pull-out class.

Benefits of pull-out class

In this study, all the participants agreed that there is a benefit of child being taught in the pull-out class as compared to the mainstream. According to participant A:

In mainstream class, there is more number of children and more responsibilities for the teacher. But in pull-out class teachers can provide adequate and quality time with the children and even if they have doubts, the teacher can clarify immediately and provide timely interventions. (**Participant A12, August 17, 2021**)

Similarly, participant F stated, *"I can see lot of improvement in his reading and writing in pull-out class besides his high class test and examination scores than when he was in the mainstream class before"* (**Participant F13, August 28, 2021**). Correspondingly, participant A asserted, *"He learns when given adequate individual attention and taught explicitly in the pull-out class, although he does not remember everything taught in earlier classes"* (**Participant B17, August 19, 2021**).The benefits of the pull-out classes have been found to be immensely positive and supported by the researchers like (**Hall 2009; Reifler, 2021; Barton 2016**). In one of the researches conducted by Jones (2009) at Rowan University, USA,

revealed that on-task behaviors such as writing, reading aloud, playing academic games, reading silently, and answering academic questions were observed at a higher rate in the pull-out or in the resource room. Further, the benefit of pull-out class due to a small group of children, face-to-face instruction by the teachers and breaking down the instructions have been discussed by (**Moody & Hughes, 2000; Hurt, 2012; Archer & Hughes 2011**).

 Although there is no study being conducted to find the impacts of pull-out class on the children with reading and other LDs in the context of the Bhutanese schools, yet many including the participants, case (child), and many researchers agree on the academic benefits of the pull-out class. As long as the child considers pull-out as a least restrictive environment (LRE), the child is going to benefit from there. On contrary, there is a huge discussion contradicting the benefits of pull-out class in terms of child's communication, interaction, and other social skills. Pulling-out a child for short periods of time for remedial teaching can damage their self-esteem and restricts their social interaction with their peers (**Cox, 2016 & Jones, 2002**).

Impact of pull-out in academic performance

Even from the research's point of view, the academic achievement of the child has been found to be doing better in pull-out class than in the mainstream although there is still some kind of contradictions and argument in it.

Instructional strategies

The use of instructional strategies is one of the important aspects of a pull-out class as well as the mainstream to enhance children's learning. According to participants A, B, C, and D, they are in use of strategies like; phonemic awareness and phonological (letter sounds) practice, picture cues, explicit instruction, and through multi-sensory approach (visual aids, pictures, drawing, and videos). For the students with reading difficulty to learn how to read they require specialized, step by step, and focused reading instruction (**Childers, 2020; Westwood, 2008**). One of the participants said, *"I tried using different strategies to teach this child in the pull-out class and he is found to be enjoying and learning. He can at least remember a few things that I taught in the previous lesson"* (**Participant B, personal communication August 19, 2021**). During the researcher's visit to the class, the strategies like; peer discussion strategy, picture cues, the practice of letter sounds (phonics and blends) for consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) and consonant-consonant- vowel-consonant (CCVC) were found to be used frequently as discussed by (**Mc Cardle et al., 2001**). Participant B said, *"In my class, sometimes I design activities based on blended learning through video and sometimes take them outside to have place-based learning (PBL)and mostly through multi-sensory approach, so that learning becomes real, enjoyable and memorable* (**Participant B9 September 21, 2021**).This statement supports the studies of (**Lindeblad et al., 2016; Parr, 2013; Yuen, 2005**) on how important for teachers to use a multi-sensory approach of teaching-learning process in child's learning.

   Nevertheless, (**Childers, 2020; Mc Cardle et al., 2001; Torgesen, 2002**) and others view that students with reading difficulty should receive intensive phonics-based interventions and reading instruction by trained teachers, but some of the pull-out teachers in the Bhutanese context are not trained enough and they have just attended a few hours of the professional development program in the past. One of the participants said, *"... I also feel short of strategies and not sure of appropriate strategies to be applied"* (**Participant B9 September 21, 2021**). Further, participant B asserted, *"I do not think that I am so confident to teach the child in the pull-out and I still need to have more knowledge and skill with some sort of training to teach this child"* (**Participant B24 September 21, 2021**). The above statements strongly support the studies of (**Margaret,**

2012 & Weis, 2016) on how teachers teaching the children with reading difficulties and other LDs face difficulties in supporting the children in the class. Although there is a common understanding among the participants of the study and the researchers worldwide on the need of training special aid teachers in schools but many of them lack the required skills and strategies in reality.

Accommodations

Participants A, B, C and D, agree that the child in the pull-out class is provided with accommodations like; simplified content, extra time to complete the assigned task, simplified instruction, and large letter font size. The evidence from the data collected tells us that there is the use of some kind of accommodations for children with reading and learning difficulties in a pull-out class. Van Sciver and Conover (2009) and Weis (2016) confirm that special education student achievement depends on accommodations being implemented on a regular basis which otherwise may not produce desirable outcomes. One of the pull-out teachers reported, *"It is quite difficult to make accommodation every time I teach the child, but most of the time I do it because he cannot perform the task on time"* (**Pull-out teacher, personal communication August 24, 2021**). Further, participant D stated, *"Whenever I teach short stories and passages, I use picture cards to teach rather than always through words and sentences and it works well"* (**Participant D10 September 2, 2021**).

However, it is crucial that teachers provide required accommodations consistently and appropriately. Van Sciver & Conover (2009) and Yuen (2005) point out that the inappropriate identification of accommodations for children can distract or hinder their academic success. Participant B mentioned, *"Sometimes I do not know what kind of accommodation would work best in child's learning because I lack adequate knowledge on the kind of accommodations to be made…."* (**Participant B8 September 2, 2021**).This statement corroborates the existing literature by (Margaret, 2012 & Weis, 2016) on the lack of teacher's knowledge in providing appropriate accommodations for the children. Further, such inappropriate use of accommodations has been observed by the researcher during the classroom observation. Nevertheless, the study in US revealed that the use of accommodations and adaptations increase the self-efficacy of children (**Barton, 2016 & Lewandowski, 2008**).

However, participant F said*, "more than simplifying the content of the curriculum and providing extra time, I do not do much"* (**Participant C16 August 28, 2021**). From the above statement, it is clear that there are teachers who use the accommodation as well as who do not use it for their own reason. Although in general, all the participants have a good understanding of what „accommodation" is, but lack when and where to be used appropriately. Therefore, it is important that teachers understand the learning diversity of the children and feed them accordingly rather than making a complaint for child's inability to learn like any other typical children. Planning a lesson or an activity with *„one size fits all'* cannot help to achieve the purpose of inclusive education.

Assessment

In this study, participants A, B, C, and D reported on conducting assessment through; child's reading, writing, worksheet, spelling test, and providing simple instruction in the class. Participant D mentioned that *"I assess him by letting him read, construct sentences, reading high-frequency words, letter sounds and maintaining running record to check the speed and accuracy of the reading"* (**Participant D14 September 2, 2021**). However, the researcher found out that the rest of the

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participants did not have clear ideas on how to assess the speed and accuracy of reading through the use of running record format. It indicates that there is some kind of discrepancies among the teachers in assessing child's reading and lack credible assessment tools. One of the participants asserted, *"...I was not oriented on the new form of assessment of reading through running record and I am yet to learn and implement"* (**Participant C personal communication August 28, 2021**).

In addition, Moseley (2004) believes that recognition of sight words (high-frequency words) and phonic word that begins with CVC words with clusters and digraphs are found to be effective in reading assessment. While each of these make a vital contribution to successful reading, they do not tell the full story of students" reading development or reading achievement. Participant B said, *"I assess him through the interview, through the worksheet and sometimes through maintaining reading and writing checklist"* (**Participant B14 September 21, 2021**). The use of worksheets for writing activities, maintaining a reading and writing checklist is clearly being recorded in the child's subject portfolio for evidence. The use of checklists is an excellent tool for determining an individual child's ability to match letters with their sounds or to recognize familiar words. Further, (**Fiderer, 1998**) discusses the maintenance of portfolios to provide visible evidence of a child's growth over time.

Apart from the child's daily classroom assessment, data collected from the study also revealed that the child is being assessed through the term tests and examinations. In a year, like other general students, a child appears two-term tests and examinations but with modified papers based on his IEP developed bi-annually. The examinations for two terms are conducted out of 50% marks in comparison to 100% marks for the general students. Participant F declared, *"I can write test papers well in pull-out class because questions are a bit easy and I can also score good marks"* (**Participant F personal communication August 28, 2021**). Overall, participants believe that a child's academic performance is far better in pull-out than in the mainstream as agreed by the researcher because of accommodations like; modified test papers, extra time, a separate exam room, and an separate invigilator to read and guide till the child completes the test.

Assistive devices

The use of assistive devices is pivotal as it enhances a child's learning especially in the area of reading. Today lot of devices including laptops, iPads, tab, TV screens, and smart boards are being used in the classrooms of the school.

Benefits

Data collected revealed that participants A, B, C, D, and E felt that the use of assistive devices in the classroom for teaching the child has been found to be useful. The usefulness of assistive devices for children with reading difficulties to assimilate the text as well as boosting their reading have been even stressed by Svensson et al., (2019) and Yuen(2005). Further evidence on the effectiveness of the assistive device was disclosed when Participant A expressed, *"the child shows immense interest in the lesson when taught through the use of devices like; projector, computer, laptop, and iPad. But when taught using board and books, child show the least interest"* (**Participant A11 August 17, 2021**). Similarly, the benefits of assistive device on child with reading difficulty, who exhibited weak decoding skills and low levels of fluency have been found to be doing well and agreed by (**Lindeblad et al., 2016; Parr 2013**) in their study.

One afternoon, the researcher went to observe an English pull-out class and there were two children (including the case) sitting face to face with their teacher and table in between them. The teacher played a „phonic practice" video lesson taught

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by a teacher on the iPad. It went on with letter sounds…A A for apple, J J for Jug, and I I for igloo…and they were asked to repeat after every letter sound in the iPad. They were seen smiling and repeating every letter sound louder by looking at the video on the iPad as shown in the figure 1.

Figure: 1: *Lesson through iPad in pull-out class*

The two children sitting opposite to their teacher, smiling and repeating after the voice in the video from the iPad made no doubt of their interest. Similarly, participant B affirmed, "*Through audio, it improves the child's listening power and familiarizes with letter sounds, through visual aid, the child learns better by visualization which helps in retention power of the child"* (**Participant B21 September 21, 2021**). This statement is further supported by (**Parr 2013**) that the child improves reading fluency and listening power through audio and other text-to- speech software. Participant A asserted, *"Sometimes in my class, I use a television screen to teach them short stories through video. They enjoy watching and listening to the stories. They say they remember what is being shown on the screen"* (**Participant A personal communication 6, 2021**).

Further, Gasparini and Culen (2012) agree that the introduction of the iPad in primary schools has benefitted children a lot and similarly in our context, especially the children with reading and other LDs. The effectiveness of assistive devices beingused is clearly spelled out by different researchers including participants of the study. Participant E stated, *"I use iPad in pull-out class not even in the mainstream class. If I take home I may lose it on the way or friends may take from me, so my teachers do not allow me to take home"* (**Participant E17 September 4, 2021**). However, a child's accessibility to an iPad or tab in the school is very limited. The child is not given permission to take and use it at home for the fear of losing the device and not using it appropriately. The researcher feels that child needs to be taught regularly with devices so that consistency is maintained for the child's learning and it enhances the child's user-friendliness of devices.

Parental support at home

Home support is crucial for the wholesome development of a child. It can be in the area of academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional development of a child.

Academic support

Providing academic support at home is crucial, if the child has to do well academically in school. However, it would depend on the parental educational level and other family members at home. All the participants agree that the child needs to be given support in academic areas (reading, writing, and completing home works timely) so that child performs better in school. Christenson (2004) agrees that home plays an important role in children's learning and achievement. It depends on how much time parents and family members can provide to their children in helping to complete school and home tasks. Participant F commented:

Usually, I provide a time to study between (7-8 pm) and complete his homework but most of the time I have to remind him otherwise he will not study. In my absence, he will not listen to his grandma and younger brother to study (**Participant F8 September 5, 2021**)

Further participant F stated, "When I get time, I guide him in his studies and especially help him to complete his homework but I do not pressurize him to study and get burden of something which he cannot perform…." (**Participant F7 September 5, 2021**). This statement strongly supports the studies of (**Bodovski & Youn, 2010; Guoliang, Zhang , & Yan, 2005**) that the low levels of stress in a child helps him/her do better at school and learn more easily.

Furthermore, Participant F said, *"We are happy at least because he listens to what we tell him to do and does his homework on time"* (Participant F personal communication September 5, 2021). The data confirmed the findings of (**Campbell & Verna, 2007**) that the parents" positive attitude towards their children and family support increase children's confidence in their abilities towards academic performance. Participant E asserted, *"I am happy to hear from my uncle and aunt that I am studying hard and I have improved a lot this year"* (**Participant E19 September 4, 2021**). In a troubled or dysfunctional family, children receive lesser attention and of lower quality and their academic development are therefore slower (**Ghazarian & Buehler, 2010; Sheppard, 2005**).

The academic support of the guardians at home was also felt by the participant E when he said, *"Although my uncle and aunt come late from their duty at home but I will have to study with my brother during the study time, otherwise my grandma will report to the uncle and aunt later"* (**Participant E12 September 4, 2021**). Although, there exists a clear evidence of family support for a child's academic learning at home, yet it can be a questionable when it comes to the quality of support and time a child gets from his family. The child's aunt and uncle work in one of the hotels and earn their living. Most of the time they have to attend night shifts in the hotel and they hardly get enough time to guide their two nephews at home. As expressed by Harris and Good all (2007) that, parental involvement in a child's education depends on their education level, the more educated the parent; the greater is their involvement in their child's education besides their availability of time.

House chores

There is evidence from the data collected that there is some kind of household chores performed by the child once he reaches home from school. Both the participants, E and F agree that the child is basically involved in house chores like; washing utensils, clothes, and cleaning rooms. Participant F reported:

It is important to provide basic household chores and farming skills to him because we never know what will come on the path of his future life. It is better we train him in these areas before it is late (**Participant F personal communication September 5, 2021**)

The importance of house chores for the school children besides academic learning is being stressed by (**Levison et al., 2017**) in one of their studies in Tanzania. They also point out that academic performances of children are affected as a result of house-chores and environmental chores like; fetching water, firewood from the forest and fodders for the animals.

Besides parental support in the academic, child is being made to carry out some doable house chores like; washing dishes, washing his clothes, cooking foods, and cleaning the house at home. In addition to that, the child is also given basic farming skills such as digging the soil, sowing seeds, and planting vegetables in the garden. These are basically the parental roles in preparing children for the world of work. Phuntsho (2015) reveals that his parents usually tell him to complete the household chores first and then study. By that time it is too late for him to study and this is the common scenario in Bhutanese homes where the children who come from low socio-economic background face similar kind of challenges. Participant F pointed out:

In the kitchen, he can prepare tea and cook rice in the rice cooker. Outside he can dig the garden and plant vegetables as he is quite grown up now. This year he even planted potatoes by himself as I did not get time to do so. (**Participant F17 September 5, 2021**)

It is vital that we ask ourselves these questions; what is important in a child's life? House chores, farming skills, or education? Are we prioritizing what they are going to learn at home and in the school?

On the other hand as Bhutanese, we have to consider and keep in mind the irreplaceable phrase '*phamai chongsha'* (Parenting style) laden with huge values. If the child has to do better in his/her life, discipline and work ethic must begin from home. Yet, not to declare that house chores and farm work is important over the education in the school. All of them are important for a child, and we need to organize the time spend on each. A child's education at home can be realized if parents, school, and community come together as mentioned in Epstein's (2015) model of overlapping spheres of influence, as parental involvement at school, at home, and with other parents.

The Mainstream schooling's inability to support the child

In recent years, the need for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream has been felt by many worldwide, while others would still believe in pull-out and other forms of segregation for children's social and academic enhancement. Furthermore, knowledge and skills of teachers dealing with children with special needs, accommodations made in the class and social interaction skills of the child will be discussed elaborately.

Knowledge and skills

Lack of adequate skills and knowledge of teachers to deal with children with reading difficulty and other LDs are one of the concerns shared by many teachers in mainstream classrooms. Participants A, B, C and D, felt that teachers who teach the child in mainstream class are not competent and adequately prepared to teach the child. Participant B stated*, "I am not so confident to teach the child. I still need to have better knowledge and skills, and have some sort of training to teach this*

particular child" (**Participant B24 September 21, 2021**). There is a clear indication that teachers teaching the child in mainstream class lack the required knowledge and skills to deal with the child. If so, then how can we promote the academic learning and achievement of a child with learning difficulty in the class? Dorji and Schuelka (2016) apparently mentioned in their research that, mainstream teachers are not trained and prepared to meet the needs of students with reading difficulties and other LDs in Bhutanese classrooms.

Participant C revealed, *"To be honest I do not know much about inclusive education because I joined this school last year only"* (**Participant C1 August 28, 2021**). Furthermore, participant B declared, *"I do not think I am confident to teach the child, I still need to have better knowledge and skills with some sort of training to teach the child"* (**Participant B24 September 21, 2021**).The data confirmed the findings of (**Roger & Sailor, 2005; Mc Cardle et al., 2001**) that the teachers of mainstream class will have difficulty in meeting the needs of a child because they have limited knowledge and skills about the child. Further, one of the teachers in mainstream class asserted, *"I cannot do anything more than to engage him with a small activity of coping notes/ questions from the board or letting him draw some pictures"* (**Teacher, personal communication August 24, 2021**).

The above statements tell us that there is lack of teacher's ability to cater to the needs of a child with LD in the class. Hence, either teachers are to be trained in inclusive education or trained teachers need to replace those un-trained teachers with better skills and knowledge in the class. One of the teachers in the mainstream class stated, *"We are just told to engage him with some activities in the class and I do not plan anything separately for him"* (**Teacher personal communication August 16, 2021**). What participants and the teacher mentioned were seen exactly by the researcher during the observation in the class. All these happened as a result of poor coordination between school administration and the teachers teaching the mainstream class. If things have to go well in the class, there must be better coordination between teachers and the principal (s).

Accommodations

All the participants felt that accommodating a child in the mainstream class is a big challenge. Teachers can hardly make accommodations while teaching with general children. Participant C believes it is not easy to make accommodation for the child because there are other general children who will be left out without support. Furthermore participant C mentioned:

I do not give separate instructions or plan separate lessons because he is a child in pull-out class and taught by a SEN teacher. When he is in my class, I just try to engage him with a simple worksheet for him to engage and not to disturb others. (**Participant C5 August 28, 2021**)

The sole purpose of employing different accommodations for the child in the class is not to make the task easier but the means to support the child to achieve like other peers. It is important that we focus on *'equity'* rather than on the *'equality'* for the child with reading and other LDs. One of the teachers in the mainstream class stated, "*I do not have time to provide separate task or modify his lesson activity because I have to teach other students in the class…."* (Teacher, September 3, 2021). Further, teacher mentioned that, *"I not sure of what kind of accommodations are to be used for the child's reading and writing…"* (**Teacher, September 3, 2021**). Such findings corroborate the existing literature of (**Margaret, 2012 &Weis, 2016**) that the mainstream teachers are not confident enough to provide appropriate accommodation for the child. However, participant A commented, *"I let him sit in the front (teacher's table) so that I can provide him separate instruction and guide him. I also make him work on worksheets and he does pretty well when provided accommodations"* (**Participant A9 August 17, 2021**). This statement supports the studies of (**Van Sciver and Conover, 2009; Yuen, 2005**)

on how providing of accommodations in regular basis help enhanced SEN students" achievement. Further, it tells us that although the majority of mainstream teachers do not provide accommodations for the child, a few of them try to accommodate with their limited knowledge and skills in their day-today classroom learning activities.

However, Weis (2016) believes more than being able to use accommodations, being not able to identify and provide the right kind of accommodations for the children in a class is a big challenge for the teachers. Another concern is that there seems to be no monitoring mechanism as such for teachers in the mainstream as well as in pull-out classes by the school or SEN coordinator to provide required support in their skill and work knowledge. Teachers tend to support children with their limited knowledge and skills through *'trial and error'* methods most of the time.

Social interaction skills

Social skill is one area where children with reading and other learning disabilities are found to be benefitted in the mainstream class. Four out of six participants felt that child's communication and interactions with friends were seen in the mainstream class. Participant C stated, *"He talks, laughs and plays with his friends. Often he is seen going from table to table asking for things. He is not shy or timid"* (**Participant C11 August 28, 2021**). Barton, (2016) and Jones (2002) recommended that inclusion of the child in mainstream class may reduce the stigma of students with disabilities and encourage collaboration between special education and general education teachers as well. Participant A further added*, "He seems to be enjoying in the mainstream class because he gets an opportunity to talk, make fun and play with others but not really in studies"* (**Participant C personal communication August 28, 2021**).

Similarly, it was also observed by the researcher during the class observation that the child loves to move from table to table whispering to his peers and giggling as he looks at their faces. One of the teachers said, *"Most of the time he will be seen shouting, laughing, arguing and chasing after his friends in absence of a teacher in the class"* (**Teacher, personal communication September 3, 2021**). Furthermore, participant A stated*, "He seems to be enjoying more with his peers in the mainstream class than in the pull-out because he got to play with them…."* (**Participant A, August 17, 2021**). Further, data collected in the study revealed that the child gains social skills in mainstream class as agreed by (**Cox, 2016; Fernandez, 2016; Hurt, 2012**) in their studies. Although many believe a child achieves academically more in pull-out but least is being agreed when it comes to social skills. So, as shared by (**Barton, 2016 and Jones, 2002**) participants and the researcher too viewed that child is found to be benefitted socially in the mainstream class.

Deficit views of a child by their parents, teachers and the society

Deficit views of the teachers and parents on the child and child himself or herself can have an adverse impact on the child's academic performance in school as well as at home. It leads to the development of low self-esteem and confidence in comparison to his peers. Participant C said, *"I do not think he can do better by keeping in the mainstream class unless teachers provide him a simplified and down-graded task"* (**Participant C13 August 28, 2021**). Similarly, participant F reported:

My sister is suggesting that he should be admitted to a monastery to become a monk because he will not be able to complete his studies in school. For his future survival, sending him to a monastery would be the best alternative.
(**Participant F11 September 5, 2021**)

This statement strongly supports the studies of (**Mwangi & Orodho,2014**) on how parents of the children with reading and other LDs try to look for better alternatives for their children other than the school. It is apparent that parents or guardians of the child develop deficit views based on the child's performance in academic at school and at home and look for alternatives that may or may not be suitable and force upon the child. Sending a child to Drat hang (monastery) to become a monk has been always a way out for the child who does not do well in school. Many parents feel that to be a monk is not a difficult job but they never realized how tough it is for someone to be a monk. Sometimes it is found to be an excuse for parents and guardians to escape from the burden of taking care of such children at home. Similarly, when the researcher asked, will a child be able to become a monk? Participant F said:

I doubt whether he can be a monk, but my sister is suggesting that first, we will send his younger brother to become a monk and after year one or two, we can send him too, so that his brother is there to take care of him." (**Participant F12 September 5, 2021**)

However, when the researcher asked the child about his willingness to become a monk, he adamantly said 'No I am not interested.' This is one child who is depicted here in the study today and there will be many children who may have gone through such situations and who will continue in the future. Parents' low expectations from such children will lead to the stigmatization and labeling of their children with disabilities and ultimately encourage 'learned helplessness' (**McCoy et al., 2016; Odongo, 2018;Thomas 1979**). Parents and teachers must not let the child know that he is considered as a useless child due to his disabilities, so that the emotional wellbeing of a child remains undisturbed. Participant B asserted, *"Rather than providing an academic support to the child, it would be better if he is given some vocational skills for his survival…."* (**Participant B, personal communication August 26, 2021**). So, there is an apparent message of deficit views by the teachers and parents of a child.

The construction of the deficit view of the child is also due to the socio-cultural context of Bhutanese traditional conceptualization of disability influenced by Buddhist beliefs. According to it, a person who is born with a disability is due to the bad deeds that he or she had accumulated in the past life. Participant F stated, *"Sometimes, I wonder why he is like this, he cannot learn like his peers. May be because of his 'tshey hemai lay' (past deeds) in his previous life"* (Participant F15 September 5, 2021). Schuelka (2015) affirms that a belief in „karmic action" allows a general mistrust of an individual with disabilities because it is believed that they had committed a sin in their previous life that has consequences on their present life. Similarly, Bii & Taylor (2013) Odongo (2018) believes that a disability is retribution for past wrong deeds committed by a person. Such kind of belief of the society makes people think that it is something natural that cannot be avoided by a person.

Similarly, if we look at the deficit view through a 'social model' of disability, it is being socially constructed. Rather than supporting the person with disabilities by providing fundamental rights and inclusive infrastructure, sometimes society disables them by not considering all these rights and facilities. Society feels the burden of having people with disabilities because they cannot contribute anything productive to the society. So instead of viewing the child negatively, rather parents should closely monitor home activities that encourage academic competence such as homework monitoring, assistance with

school work, or going to science museums or libraries, will have stronger relations with achievement as pointed by (McCoy, 2016).

Advocacy for parents

The importance of advocacy is highlighted by Bauer et al., (2014) as an important vehicle for prevention and early intervention in the safeguarding process. However, during the process of data collection, it was found that the child's guardians were not actually aware of his learning difficulty and that hindered him in getting appropriate home support. Participant F stated:

We do not exactly know what is his problem in learning? He cannot read books like others and finds difficulty to read even books of lower grades. He does not remember what he learnt before. It is quite difficult for us to even provide support in his studies. (**Participant F9 September 5, 2021**)

It clearly states that the child's guardian and the rest of the family members are not aware of the child's disability and the kind of support required for his learning (reading and writing) at home. Further, people's lack of understanding of reading and other LDs are revealed when the participant C stated, *"As of now I did not know what the child's problem was until very recently when one of the teachers revealed about his disability to me"* (**Participant F, personal communication August 28, 2021**).This is one area whereby the concerned teachers can take up advocacy programs for parents of children with learning and other disabilities nearby the community. It has been said, teachers are often the best educational advocates for the parents who have children with learning disabilities as parents are the best educational advocates for their children. Phillips (2008) agrees that parents often lack the necessary knowledge about disability and educational options, and often have difficulty interfering with school officials in special education proceedings.

In the Bhutanese cultural context, respect for the teachers is something that is demanded by the society to be maintained at the highest point not only by the students but also by the parents. Whatever the teachers do for the child is always considered to be right by the society. In view of that concept, parents still feel that it is unwise to ask many things about their child to the teacher. Such gaps in knowledge and ability make it difficult for parents to advocate effectively for their children without any external help has been stated by Phillips (2008). When one of the children's parents was asked whether she has some ideas of children with learning and other disabilities in the school, she said, *"I do not have ideas on learning disability but saw one child with the physical disability who is on the wheel chair"* (**Parent, personal communication, August 28, 2021**). This clearly states that most of the parents are not aware of the kind of children exist with learning disabilities in the school. So, it is crucial that teachers provide advocacy for parents" better understanding of their children's learning difficulties. Without effective advocacy, however, the promise of special education for children with disabilities cannot be realized (**Phillips 2008**). Therefore, advocacy should play a vital role in creating awareness in the community and given the most priority in school's planning.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for the students, teachers, parents, school and the Ministry of Education.

Teachers
- There should be more collaboration between the teachers of SEN program and the mainstream teachers so that they can support each other and work together.
- Pull-out and mainstream teachers should sit together and plan the lesson jointly so that the child does not remain idle in the mainstream class.
- Teachers should be trained how to plan and teach with differentiated lesson plan. Planning a lesson or an activity with „one size fits all' cannot help to achieve the purpose of inclusive education.
- Children should be taught regularly with devices so that consistency is maintained for the child's learning and it enhances the child's user-friendliness of devices.

Parents
- Parents/guardians should stop viewing the child negatively and rather they should closely monitor home activities that encourage academic competence such as homework monitoring, assistance with school work, and providing adequate time to enhance academic achievement.

School
- School should strengthen and strive to provide professional development (PD) program to teachers on inclusive teaching strategies.
- School should proactively liaise with Dzongkhag, PCE and TPSD for support in providing professional development programs.
- School should consider the teaching workload of SEN teachers as it is tedious to teach the children with disabilities unlike in the mainstream classes.
- School should provide advocacy programs for the parents/ guardians of the children with disabilities so that they remained informed and know the kind of support to be provided.

Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Education should continuously provide professional development program for the teachers on inclusive education and its best practices.

Conclusion

Highlighted recommendations made to different stakeholders based on the findings and discussions of the study and followed by a brief conclusion. The recommendations were made to students, teacher, parents, school and to the Ministry of Education. The lack of advocacy for students by the teachers on children with disabilities was one concern pointed out in the research, which could lead to the discrimination of disabled by non-disabled children. Similarly, study also disclosed that there was a lack of collaboration among the teachers of pull-out and mainstream for the successful implementation of curriculum for the children with reading difficulty. Hence, there need to have better cooperation if children are to benefit academically in pull-out as well as in the mainstream classes. In continuation, the need to provide adequate PD program to the teachers has been also felt by the researcher so that they are well-equipped with appropriate teaching skills and strategies. This is an important recommendation because it suggested the need for teachers and school for better delivery of support services for the children with learning and other disabilities at home and in the school. This set of recommendations could be taken into consideration if the policy makers or concerned stakeholders feel it is appropriate for the teachers and

the education system as a whole to be improved in the near future. So, it is imperative that if inclusive program has to be a successful one, teachers need to be well-equipped in terms of knowledge and skills with relevant professional training and educational program.

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