

Supporting Neurodivergent Children Beyond the Classroom: The Roles of Parents, Extended Families, and Communities in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Background

However, since the publication of the UNESCO report on inclusive education in 2005, there has been increased momentum towards inclusive education as an overarching goal of educational policy and frameworks for disability rights. With regard to international treaties and national policies, states are increasingly required to provide equitable access to education for children with developmental differences such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia, as well as other neurodevelopmental disorders. In many contexts, inclusive education policies center around including these children in general classrooms and access to specialized educational services. Such advancements denote significant progress, of course, but inclusion is often understood as being placed in an education institution rather than actual and meaningful participation. This restrictive perspective threatens to neglect the wider sociocultural contexts in which children grow, intermingle and evolve.

But the day-to-day experiences of neurodivergent kids go far beyond school. The well-being and participation of children are affected at different levels by social influences such as families, extended kinship networks and community attitudes. These broader social contexts take on special importance in countries like Bangladesh, where family structures and community relationships exert a strong influence on children's daily lives.

Objective

In this conceptual study we explore the limitations of school centered inclusion models and argue that a broader ecosystem perspective is more effective for supporting neurodivergent children. This research investigates the role parents, wider family and community awareness have in either embracing children's inclusion, agency and well-being, or imprisoning them.

Methods

In this study, we employ a conceptual review to explore the influence of families and communities in providing support for neurodivergent children outside of official educational settings. That said, rather than collecting primary data, this study synthesised existing literature across the fields of neurodiversity, inclusive education, family-centred support and community participation.

The relevant literature was found using academic databases, including Google Scholar and ERIC, with keywords "neurodiversity," "inclusive education," "family support," and "community participation. Key themes surrounding contexts of inclusive support systems were identified based upon documents such as peer-reviewed journal articles (both theoretical and applied), policy reports, etc.

We conducted a systematic literature review and thematically analyzed selected literature to develop

conceptual understanding of how multiple social ecologies shape the inclusion of neurodivergent children

Results

Meaningful inclusion is not achieved through mere head-count of students. It takes a combination of adaptive teaching methods, informed parenting styles, extended family relationships that nurture rather than stigmatize, and socially-accepting attitudes within the broader community.

Conclusion

Drawing on the literature of social inclusion and ecosystem models, this study presents the Family-Centered Ecosystem Framework with schools and teachers at its center – conceptualizing inclusion as a collaborative and layered process across schools, families, and communities. The framework therefore proposes a shift away from needing to adapt children to rigid, often devolved systems of care towards a holistic socio-cultural dynamic system for enhancing support networks for neurodivergent children in Bangladesh and beyond.

Keywords: Neurodiversity Inclusive education Neurodivergent children Family-centered support Community awareness Bangladesh

Objectives of the Study

This study ultimately focuses on how systematized social support systems can ensure inclusion and well-being for neurodivergent children in Bangladesh.

Specific Objectives

1. Challenge the idea that working primarily on school placement and therapeutic elements is enough to support neurodivergent children.
2. Highlight the importance of parental understanding and empowerment in supporting the everyday needs of neurodivergent children.
3. To explore the role of extended family members, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings in shaping the child's home environment and daily experiences.
4. Investigate the effect of social attitudes and community awareness on neurodivergent children and their families' inclusion and social participation.
5. Suggest a layered ecosystem by the parents, extended families and community environments as a conceptual framework.

Research Questions

The study adopts the following research questions:

1. Why are school-centered inclusion models insufficient for supporting neurodivergent children?
2. What is the role of parents in shaping the emotional and developmental context for neurodivergent children?
3. What does their extended family contribute to the child's social lives in Bangladesh?
4. How do similar perceptions and awareness in the community affect the day-to-day inclusion of neurodivergent children?
5. How an ecosystem framework can be useful in conceptualising a multi-layer approach to support for neurodivergent children?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This paper using conceptual evolutionary research methodology. They provide a consolidation of existing prior works to form new approaches to illustrating complex social phenomenon.

Literature Sources

In this study, we reviewed literature from multiple interconnected fields:

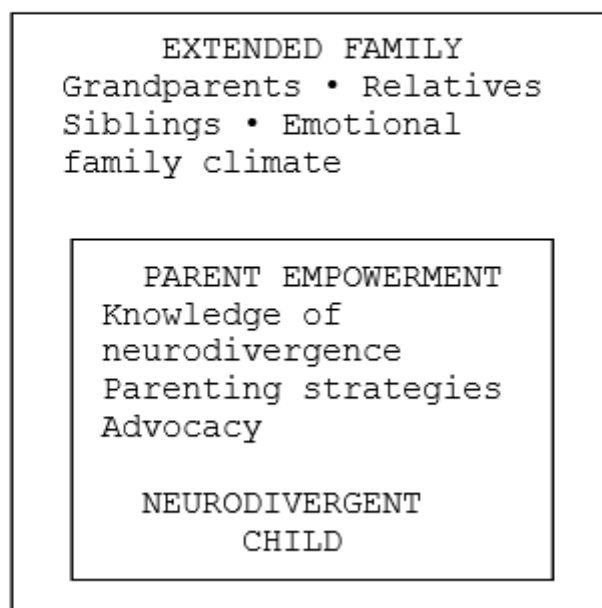
- Neurodiversity studies
- Inclusive education research
- Disability studies
- Family-centered intervention models
- Ecological systems theory
- Community participation and stigma research

Analytical Approach

This focused on examining prevalent themes in the research pertaining to experiences of neurodivergent children and social environmental factors affecting their development. These themes were synthesised to produce a conceptual model relevant in the sociocultural context of Bangladesh.

Figure 1 Family-Centered Ecosystem of Support for Neurodivergent Children

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
(Public awareness • Social acceptance • Reduced stigma)



The framework places the neurodivergent child at the center and highlights the interconnected roles of parents, extended family members, schools, and the wider community in supporting inclusive participation and well-being.

Figure 2

Ecosystem Support Flowchart

Neurodivergent Child



Parent Awareness & Understanding



Supportive Home Environment



Extended Family Acceptance



Community Awareness & Inclusion



Improved Well-being and Social Participation

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has emerged as one of the most impactful philosophies informing global policies regarding education and activism around disability rights in the past several decades. Universal frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006), highlight that all children have a right to an equal opportunity at education regardless of behaviours or developmental differences. Such frameworks promote the need for governments and educational institutions to enable learning environments that can accommodate different learners in mainstream education systems.

Consequently, children with neurodevelopmental differences (such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia and other neurodevelopmental disorders) are becoming more widely recognized. All of these children are commonly referred to as neurodivergent, which indicates that their neurological growth and functioning exhibit differences when compared to what is generally viewed as neurotypical patterns (Singer, 1999; Armstrong, 2010). Neurodivergent affects one's communication style, learning method, sensory processing, attention regulation, and social interaction.

Global advancements of inclusive education have influenced the redesign of education policies in multiple countries around the world. There is a growing awareness in the education sector that children with different developmental colors can earn their rights to be educated in traditional classrooms and participate in the same educational experience. E ntona c oros,ritden o woc e oulseducation p alicesaimsaut asideg o theE nsgSniuralQ jelgistrtoetue northRn an snithR tonrf htuNn RaiipleoAarrot iogurs ar ofete 2023.

But even with these policy advancements, inclusion is often understood in fairly narrow terms. Many educational systems interpret inclusion in its narrowest sense: physical placement. Success is often determined by numbers of enrollments rather than the quality and consideration regarding children's learning and emotional experiences in education.

A serious issue with prescribing inclusion in just this way. Some neurodivergent learners may feel even more alienated in physical classrooms, and physical presence does not equate to meaningful participation, social belonging or emotional safety. Even those children who are officially integrated into mainstream educational settings may face huge barriers to social engagement. These can range from sensory overload to rigid classroom routines and curriculum centred on neurotypical students, the need for teacher training in neurodevelopmental differences, peer misunderstanding to insufficient instructional adaptations.

Thus, having schools with neurodivergent children in mainstream education does not mean their needs will be met as a matter of course. Educators in inclusive education have increasingly argued that inclusion can not be considered as a question of access - but rather, should rather be conceptualised as participation and belonging (Florian 2014; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey 2010). True inclusion means creating educational structures and systems that respond to diverse learners rather than expecting learners to adapt to strict institutional expectations.

Not only do neurodivergent kids face hurdles inside the schools themselves, but their experiences are also influenced by social settings outside of academia. Children's daily lives are larger than classroom walls. They are also positioned in a thoroughfare with their parents, siblings, relatives, neighbors, and community members who shape their social development, emotional well-being and sense of belonging.

This integral context becomes particularly salient when thinking critically about inclusion in Bangladesh socioculturally. In this locality, Bangladeshi society is shaped by close families, extended relations and community-oriented social ties. In many families, extended family members such as grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins actively help with the childcare and socialization. Hence, the developmental milieu of a child is influenced not just by parents and teachers, but also extended family and community perceptions.

Increasing awareness of inclusive practices has been noted in Bangladesh (Inclusion International, 2018), though challenges remain in the area. Research studies have recognized barriers of limited teacher training in relation to special education, low level infrastructure, insufficient number of learning resources and a social stigma towards children with disabilities and developmental differences (Ahmed, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012; Ahsan & Mullick, 2013). The impact of these challenges on the success of inclusion policy will determine how effective or even beneficial, learning environments are for learners who identify as neurodivergent.

Moreover, social attitudes around developmental differences affect how children and families engage with the world on a daily basis. In certain contexts, parents of neurodivergent children may experience misunderstanding or blame from relatives and community members — coupled with stigma. Especially when a child shows other behaviors that lack the typical norm of stages of development, mothers in particular might face blame or pressure. Such social pressures can lead to emotional stress for families and may act as a disincentive for them to seek support services or be involved in community life.

For this reason, one cannot understand the lives of neurodivergent children only in terms of institutions such as schools or therapy centers. Rather, their development and well-being are formed by multiple layers of social interaction: family relationships, community attitudes and wider cultural expectations.

A broader perspective of child development also finds support in theoretical approaches from developmental psychology. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, children grow up within a series of nested, interacting influences, including from their immediate family environment and those in the wider community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). From this approach, development is influenced by interactions between people and the settings where they reside.

Within the ecological systems model, the microsystem is described as the immediate environment of a child that includes parents and caregivers. Mesosystem: focuses on relationships between the various microsystems of a family, such as home and school interactions. The exosystem encompasses broader social structures outside of the child's immediate environment that can still indirectly impact her life, like community institutions and systems of social norms. Finally, the macrosystem includes cultural beliefs, social norms, and societal values.

To understand how it is important to consider not just schooling but also familial and social systems of neurodivergent children through the lens of power, disability studies looks at the family. These intertwined systems shape whether children feel supported, accepted and able to participate in everyday activities.

Traditionally, family ties, especially in the context of Bangladesh are far broader than those acknowledged in Western societies where the nuclear family is paramount. Extended family members often help shoulder the burden of caregiving and play key roles in household decision-making. As a result, their view on things like neurodivergence can play a large role in the emotional atmosphere around the kid.

As an example, when people in the extended family don't know much about neurodevelopmental conditions, they might misinterpret behaviors related to autism, ADHD or dyslexia. Sensory sensitive behaviors, divergent ways of communicating or paying attention, for instance, may incorrectly be seen as disobedience or bad parenting. These misconceptions can add pressure on parents and create settings in which children feel misunderstood or judged.

On the flip side, when family members gain an understanding of neurodivergence, they can be a positive addition to the child's support system. Having supportive parents can help strengthen routines, lend emotional support and lessen the burden on parents. Their involvement can bolster family resilience and foster more inclusive home environments.

How the broader community influences on neurodivergent kids Neurodivergence. Community mindfulness matters on whether families feel safe to go outdoors for parks, restaurants, social gatherings, religious events and more. Families can face stigma, unwanted attention, or social discomfort when in public places when the community members have little knowledge about developmental differences.

Existing research on disability stigma suggests that negative societal attitudes can have a substantial impact on the psychological well-being of individuals with disabilities and their families (Goffman, 1963; Scior, 2011). Stigma reduction via awareness and education is thus a key foundation toward striving for more inclusive communities.

There are a few initiatives started in Bangladesh to raise awareness regarding developmental disabilities and inclusive education. They expand further because government agencies, non-governmental organizations and community programs increasingly recognize the importance of supporting children with diverse developmental needs within their service or support populations. But there are still vast gulfs between policy ambitions and the day-to-day lives of families.

These confirm the need to expand our understanding of inclusion beyond institutional settings. Thus, inclusion needs to be understood less as a spatial arrangement — a classroom configuration — and more as an ecological social system of nested relationships and settings.

So, this paper argues that meaningful inclusion can't forget about families and communities of neurodivergent children. Instead of putting all the onus for adjustment on the child, societies must adjust environments to embrace neurological diversity.

By building on the existing literature in neurodiversity studies, inclusive education research, family-centered practice and ecological models of child development, this study presents a Family-Centered Ecosystem Framework of Support. In this approach, neurodiversity and inclusion are understood as a multi-layered process

emerging from the connections between parents and extended family members, community environments and neurodivergent children themselves, in which new possibilities for well-being rise out of moments of interaction.

This multilayered framing helps in a nuanced understanding of inclusionary practices vis-a-vis the Bangladeshi context. Parents should be empowered and extended family members educated, while community awareness built for sustainable inclusion.

At the end of the day, inclusive education should not just be 'taking neurodivergent kids and plonking them in a mainstream classroom' — it should be creating school environments where they feel understood, supported and able to thrive inside and outside the school system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Neurodiversity Paradigm

Neurodiversity is a relatively recent concept, first articulated in the late 20th century, that provided a new lens through which to view differences between human brains. The term was introduced by sociologist Judy Singer (1999), who contended that differences in neurological functioning should be regarded as a natural form of human diversity and not just as medical defects.

Traditional medical models of disability often characterize developmental differences like autism, ADHD and dyslexia as deficits or impairments. When viewing developmental disability this way, the goals of intervention are to fix, right or lesson behaviors that deviate from normal complex behavioral development.

But scholars and advocates working in the neurodiversity movement suggest another way of conceptualizing what is happening. Neurodiversity frames neurological variation not just as a disorder needing correction, but as differences in the way people think and process information (Armstrong, 2010; Kapp, 2020).

This viewpoint asserts that the neurodivergent experience of the world may differ from the neurotypical experience in ways that are both challenging and advantageous. For instance, autistic people might show excellent attention to detail, pattern recognition and analytical ability. Those who have dyslexia might show creativity, problem-solving skills, and visual-spatial thinking skills.

The neurodiversity framework therefore favours a move away from deficit-focused explanations of developmental differences and towards acceptance of a wider range of human cognitive diversity (Pellicano & den Houting, 2022).

Neurodevelopmental Conditions and Learning Differences

Neurodivergence is an umbrella term for a range of neurological conditions that affect learning style, communication, and behavior. So-called neurodevelopmental disorders, like autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia are among the most frequently discussed.

Autism spectrum disorder, which is marked by variation in social communication, sensory processing and behavioral patterns (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Individuals within the autism spectrum are known to have increased sensitivity to sensory stimulation (noise, light, crowded areas...), according to research (Ashburner et al., 2010).

Students may struggle with attention, regulating their emotions, or participating in classroom settings due to sensory overload. Neurodivergent students may feel stress or anxiety that distract from learning without the proper environmental adaptations.

Another prevalent neurodevelopmental disorder is attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, which impacts attention regulation, impulse control, and activity levels. Certain school settings can be particularly difficult for

children with ADHD to succeed in, as they are often required to engage in activities that are very regimented and require long-term focus and sustained effort (Barkley, 2015).

Dyslexia is a specific learning difference in reading and language processing. Dyslexic children frequently face challenges in decoding written language, (Snowling, Hulme & Nation, 2020), phonological processing and reading fluency.

Importantly, research suggests that these developmental conditions often co-occur. Research indicates that neurodevelopmental disorders have high comorbidity rates and people may present with features associated with multiple (or all) of the conditions above at any one time (Pennington, 2006).

Particularly when working with students to identify and connect their strengths, we should work to understand the complexities of learning so that flexible spaces can be designed.

Inclusive Education: Global Perspectives

Inclusion is now a guiding policy goal worldwide for all children to have access to the same opportunities in education regardless of disability or variation in development.

On the international scene, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) has been fundamental in advancing inclusive education. The document stressed that schools must include all children, regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

Around the world, inclusive education as a fundamental human right was further confirmed by global initiatives like United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015).

Many of the benefits of inclusive education have been researched. It is argued that inclusive classrooms may encourage social interaction, decrease stigma, and afford children with disabilities the chance to share learning experiences (Hehir et al., 2016).

Yet commitment to policy cues alone is not enough to deliver on inclusive education. Proper implementation of inclusive education is contingent upon several variables such as the adequacy of teacher preparation, resource allocation, ways to adapt curriculum and supportive institutional climate (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Limitations of School-Centered Inclusion

While the international movement toward inclusive education has opened doors to mainstream schooling for many disabled students, scholars now argue that simple presence in general education classrooms does not equal real inclusion.

According to Avramidis and Norwich (2002), to be inclusive, education is not only about teaching practices, curriculum design but also about changing school culture? At this writing, children with developmental differences continue to be excluded from classrooms or neglected once they are there without those changes — many may be in their room but still on the fringes.

Including and accommodating diverse learners hence requires a shift away from individualistic models of student self-determination to proposing non-exclusive pedagogies focusing on the design of learning environments that support students' interdependence through collective action (Florian, 2014).

Similar concerns are raised in research involving autistic students included in mainstream schools. In a sample study conducted by Humphrey and Lewis (2008), it was stressed that many autistic students faced socialisation, peer misunderstanding, and pressure to suppress their behaviours to fit into the mainstream of society.

But these findings suggest that inclusion cannot be measured by enrollment numbers, but rather the extent to which children enjoy meaningful participation and belonging.

Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, awareness of inclusive education has increased significantly over the past two decades. Government policies and educational reforms have increasingly emphasized the importance of integrating children with disabilities into mainstream educational systems..

Yet, studies have shown that there are still several impediments to successful inclusion in the country.

Some relevant studies by Ahmmed, Sharma, and Deppeler (2012) that identify various factors affect teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in Bangladesh included limited special education training, lack of resources and poor institutional support.

In a similar vein, Ahsan and Mullick (2013) explain that the emergence of inclusive education in Bangladesh has always been an integrative process where more positive steps were taken but with residual challenges.

Their study was later challenged by Chowdhury et al. (2024) demonstrate how neurodiverse learners in Bangladeshi schools face social and institutional barriers. Barriers such as misunderstandings of neurodevelopmental disorders, an insufficient system in place or lack of partnerships between families and educational organizations.

These results indicate the policy framework supporting inclusion was already in place but implementation varied.

Family-Centered Approaches in Child Development

Families are one of the most important components of children's developmental ecosystems. Developmental psychology and family studies have consistently documented that parents/caregivers heavily impact emotional reactions, communication strategies, and social development in children.

Family centered service delivery models stresses joint effort between families and professionals in the care of children with developmental differences (Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1988).

According to Turnbull et al. (2015) families can make a real impact on the developmental outcomes of children with disabilities when they are armed with knowledge, training and emotional support.

Parent involvement may include:

- learning communication strategies
- supporting daily routines
- managing sensory sensitivities
- advocating for educational accommodations

This holds true especially for neurodivergent children who might need individualized support within their daily spaces.

Non-Western Context of Extended Family Roles

Although, research on family involvement has broadly focused solely on mother and father engagement, it may not comprehensively portray how many societies (particularly non-Western) work.

Some families, like those in Bangladesh, may have a different structure than the traditional nuclear family. Caregiving obligations and decision-making processes involve grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins in many cases.

These extended kinship webs can affect the developmental settings available to children for both good and ill.

Extended family often does not have the same knowledge of neurodevelopmental conditions, which can lead them to incorrectly label and interpret behaviors associated with autism or ADHD as misbehavior or poor parenting. Such misunderstandings can amplify emotional stress for parents and add stigma to the family milieu.

On the other hand, informed relatives can be a source of valuable emotional support as well as practical help for families who have neurodivergent children.

Community Attitudes towards Disability and Stigmatisation

Favorable team mentalities that embrace individuals with disabilities impact the social lives of people with disabilities and their families.

The term stigma was one of Goffman's (1963) innovations to describe the different kinds of discrimination, social exclusion or negative labelling experienced by people who are viewed as different from societal norms.

Following research appears and demonstrates that people with disabilities for their daily wellbeing (and those who interact with them) are greatly affected by public perception of disability (Scior, 2011).

Family embarrassment continues when communities have no awareness of developmental difference. And fear of bad reactions can lead parents to skip social events or avoid community activities altogether.

On the other hand, greater awareness in communities can help to foster acceptance and reduce stigma.

It follows that in changing the treatment of neurodivergent children and their families in society, community education initiatives, public awareness campaigns and inclusive social practices can take on significant functions.

Ecological Approaches to Child Development

An important framework is the ecological systems theory, which focuses on multiple layers of environmental influence on child development.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), development occurs within a series of overlapping systems, including family environments, educational institutions, community structures, and broad cultural values.

This approach highlights the intersection of these different systems in shaping children's experiences.

An ecological theory lens gives us room to examine not only schools, but also the family constellation and community environments for neurodivergent children.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed in the following discusses essential insights:

- 1 Neurodiversity focuses on neurological differences, not deficit-based views.
- 2 Reforms aimed at inclusive education have widened access to provision for children in mainstream schooling but often remain focused on schools.
- 3 Neurodivergent children often face challenges in educational environments where they are not adequately accommodated.

- 4 Families have an important role to play in meeting children’s emotional and developmental requiremen-ts..
- 5 In collectivist societies like Bangladesh, extended family networks wield particularly powerful influence.
- 6 Their social participation is heavily influenced by differing community attitudes and stigma.

This information serves as the conceptual basis for creating a larger ecosystem of supports.

Conceptual Framework: The Family-Centered Ecosystem of Support

Rationale for the Framework

Literature covered in the previous section illustrates that inclusion is more than simply a classroom-based strategy. Although inclusive education policies primarily construct co-located education delivery systems, and are sited within institutional settings of the mainstream, the quotidian lives of neurodivergent children are embedded in a more complex milieu of social contextualization and environmental affordances.

Neurodivergent children engage with a range of social environments: parents, siblings, extended family members, teachers, neighbors and larger community members. Each of these settings is influential in shaping the attitudes, expectations and supports that affect children’s well-being and engagement.

Extended family networks and the role of community environments are particularly important in collectivist cultural forms, like many found within Bangladeshi society. Children often live within big kinship networks and grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins share caregiving, supervision and family decision-making.

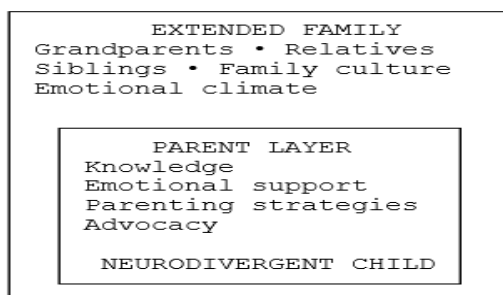
Despite their importance to existing collaborative networks, those social relationships which naturally revolve around family and community are given relatively little attention in models of inclusive education where the main focus remains on schools as institutions or professional services alone. This disparity indicates a need for a broader conceptual framework that considers the interconnected social contexts shaping neurodivergent children.

To fill this gap, the current study presents a Family-Centered Ecosystem Framework of Support. The framework focuses on the interconnectedness of parents, extended family and community backgrounds to ensure greater inclusion for neurodivergent children.

Figure 3 Family-Centered Ecosystem Model

Central Element: Neurodivergent Child

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
(Public awareness • Social acceptance • Reduced stigma)



The neurodivergent child is the model at the center of this framework. The child is at the center of the support ecosystem because all surrounding systems aim to improve the well-being, social participation and development of that child.

Neurodivergent children can have differences in a number of areas including:

- communication and language processing
- sensory perception and regulation
- attention and executive functioning
- emotional regulation
- actions of learning and ways to process information

These differences are an advantage, not a deficit. Instead, they are reflections of variations in neurological functioning that co-vary with environmental demand.

When environments are rigid or lack the right kind of support structures, neurodivergent kids can find themselves feeling stressed, anxious or disengaged. When things go this way, the children develop confidence, emotional security and engagement in learning.

Hence, the framework is primarily premised on the idea that support systems need to be responsive to the child's needs, rather than expecting them be forced into compliance with sometimes inflexible systems.

First Layer: Parent Empowerment

The first layer around the child is parent empowerment. Parents are the closest people to their children and they interact with them every day, so they have greater effect on the child's developmental environment. Evidence suggests that parents of children with disabilities, when both informed and empowered, can enhance both their child and family development outcomes (Turnbull et al., 2015).

Parent empowerment consists of multiple components:

Knowledge of Neurodivergence

More parents who understand neurodevelopmental differences can interpret their child's behavior — and respond with empathy instead of annoyance.

Supportive Parenting Strategies

Parents could engage in such practices as:

- structured routines
- visual supports
- sensory accommodations
- flexible expectations

These strategies can help children manage their emotions and engage in daily activities more comfortably.

Emotional Support

Parenting a neurodivergent child can be emotionally taxing for families. Parents might feel anxiety, ambiguity or societal pressure. Emotional support networks can thus enhance family resilience.

Advocacy

Parents are frequently critical in advocating for their children in schools and community settings.

Second layer: extended family support

The second layer of the framework refers to extended family.

In Bangladesh, extended family networks often take active parts in children's lives. Everyone from grandparents to uncles, aunts and siblings also play roles in caregiving duties, decision-making processes and day-to-day social activities.

Due to their role, the attitudes and understanding of extended family members can create a major impact on the emotional space of the child.

When relatives don't know about neurodivergence, they tend to:

- misinterpret behaviors as disobedience
- urge the parents to "correct" the child
- highlight the child's failure to meet correctives relative to their peers
- exacerbate stigma in the family

Such responses can raise stress levels for the child and parents alike.

When extended family members have a better understanding of neurodivergent conditions, however, there is so much they can contribute in the way of support:

- reinforcing consistent routines
- encouraging acceptance and empathy
- assisting with caregiving responsibilities
- less emotional pressure for parents

In that sense, giving elders in the family an overview of neurodivergence can thus augment the overall support network around the child.

Third Layer: Community Environment

The outermost layer of the framework represents the community context.

Community environments include:

- neighbors
- local social networks

- religious communities
- schools
- public spaces

Community norms shape the way families do everyday life. Families may be stigmatized or socially ostracized by members of communities that do not even know about neurodevelopmental differences.

At all, parents will be so afraid to bring their ladles to public areas because of the fear of being swiped by others.

In contrast, heightened community awareness can foster inclusive social environments that accept and support families.

Community awareness initiatives may include:

- public education programs
- awareness campaigns
- inclusive community events
- training for service providers

This helps to reduce stigma, and fosters acceptance of neurodiversity.

Support Ecosystem Flowchart

The following flowchart illustrates how the support systems interact with each other inside of the respective environments to produce a greater impact on inclusion.

Neurodivergent Child



Parent Understanding



Supportive Home Environment



Extended Family Awareness



Community Acceptance



Improved Inclusion and Well-being

Ecological Systems Theory Theoretical Alignment

The framework builds on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of child development, positing that children develop within nested environmental layers.

Ecological System	Corresponding Layer
Microsystem	Parents
Mesosystem	Extended family relationships
Exosystem	Community environment
Macrosystem	Cultural attitudes toward neurodiversity

Theoretical Alignment: As multidimensional-multilevel factor, child development can not be understood at the individual level or only on institutional level. Development does not happen within a vacuum instead, it occurs where people and their backgrounds interact.

Contribution of the Framework

The proposed framework brings three key contributions to the literature:

It conceptualizes inclusive education to go beyond school-based interventions.

It illustrates the critical but frequently unseen roles extended family members play in supporting neurodivergent children.

It incorporates family and community viewpoints into this ecological model of inclusion.

The framework, by highlighting the connections between various systems offering support and inclusion services encourages policymakers, educators and community organizations to foster broader based inclusion practices

DISCUSSION

These findings from this conceptual study can help elucidate the complexity of inclusion for neurodivergent children and highlight the benefits of broader frameworks to inform efforts. Though such policies have made significant strides in opening up access to mainstream schooling, the lived experiences of neurodivergent learners do not occur in a vacuum and are influenced by many factors beyond the school walls.

Having already explored the literature central to inclusion, it would also seem from this review that inclusion is not a simple matter of moving people around as outlined above. In contrast, meaningful inclusion consists of environments supportive of children's emotional security, communication needs and learning differences. Focusing solely on school placement without addressing different determinants of learning and environmental factors means young people may be in classrooms but still remain socially disconnected.

The proposed Family-Centered Ecosystem Framework is therefore based on the premise that inclusion should be viewed as a multi-layered social process. "Children grow up into networks of relationships that encompass parents, relatives and community spaces. All of these layers help create the child's experiences of belonging, support and participation.

Reframing Inclusion Beyond Schools

A key argument emerging from this study is that inclusion in education should be conceptualized beyond a school-horizon. Schools are still important institutions in that they provide forms of learning and social development, but schools are just one part of the environments that surround neurodivergent children.

Kids spend plenty of time outside traditional academic environments. Their daily lives are shaped by interactions with their own family members, neighbors and people at their local institutions. In school systems where these environments are unaware of neurodivergence, children risk misunderstanding, stigma or social ostracization despite their formal inclusion.

This study thus adopts an ecological perspective, which emphasises the need for responsibility for inclusion to be distributed. It should not be overburdened on schools and the education system but inclusion would mean collective efforts, from families to communities to social systems.

The Importance of Parents in Creating Supportive Environments

Parents are the closest and most powerful context in which children grow. Parents, as primary caregivers, set daily routines and emotional climates; they also communicate in ways that affect children's development.

A wealth of research in family-centered intervention models indicates that education and empowerment of parents can enhance developmental outcomes in children with neurodevelopmental conditions. When parents can learn more about neurodivergence, they become better equipped to understand their child's behaviors and also react with appropriate support strategies.

Parents familiar with sensory sensitivities, for instance, might design their child's surroundings to minimize sensory saturation. Parents who understand the differences in how communication happens may even take it upon themselves to use alternative modes of communication that empower children to express or engage.

In Bangladesh, the scarcity of specialized educational service providers in many areas could make parent empowerment particularly important. Having access to information, training and peer support networks can turn parents into pivotal advocates for their children's needs.

The Extended Family in Bangladesh

This study also distinguishes itself by focusing on the role extended family members have in supporting neurodivergent children. Family-involvement, the conceptual frame for family engagement in many Western research contexts, is frequently limited to parents. But this view may not wholly reflect the social implications of living in collectivist societies like Bangladesh.

In Bangladeshi families, child care and family decision-making processes often involve extended relatives. Other family members, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings may spend significant time with children and influence the home environment.

These relationships can dictate if neurodivergent kids have supportive or stressful environments. A lack of understanding about neurodevelopmental differences among extended family members can lead to behaviors signifying autism, ADHD or dyslexia being misconstrued as a discipline problem or poor parenting.

Discrepancies like these could bring some scrutiny on parents or make them feel pressure to push their children to match up with normal expectations. These responses can heighten emotional stress in families and lead to a sense of isolation.

But when family members outside the nuclear all know and umbrella understand neurodivergence, they can be rich allies of a child. Supportive family members can help establish routines, act as another source of moral support, and assist in alleviating stigma behind closed doors.

Understanding the impact of extended family networks is thus a crucial step toward shaping culturally informed inclusion strategies.

Community Awareness and Participation

Outside of familial dynamics, environmental factors within the community at large also impact the everyday experiences of neurodivergent children.

Where families feel comfortable engaging in social activity, such as the ability to visit public space, attend community events or engage with neighbors is influenced by community attitudes. Without community awareness of what developmental differences look like, families may be faced with negative feedback or uncomfortable social situations.

Such experiences may cause families to disengage from the community, despite being beneficial for children's social interaction and growth.

On the other hand, heightened awareness can also create more inclusive communities where families feel welcomed and valued. Stigma decline and more neurodiversity-supportive mindset can be encouraged through community-oriented public education and awareness campaigns.

As such, inclusion refers to systematic changes beyond organization policies; it demands wider cultural transformations in how communities perceive variability of development

Practical Implications

This framework has multiple implications for practice among various stakeholders including educators, policymakers, families and community organizations.

Educational Implications

Real Changes Needed Top Educational Institutions to accommodate Neurodivergent Student Diversities

Key strategies may include:

- developing teacher training in neurodiversity and inclusive pedagogy
- flexible instructional approaches
- sensory-aware classroom design
- differentiated learning strategies

These approaches will help make classrooms more accessible for neurodivergent students.

Family Support Programs

Parenting classes can be important in helping families with neurodivergent children.

Such programs may focus on:

- understanding neurodevelopmental conditions
- supporting emotional regulation
- communication strategies

- navigating educational systems

Making sure that the information and support networks for parents are readily available can help reinforce family resilience.

Extended Family Education

Considering the significance of extended kinship networks in Bangladesh, awareness programs should reach out to include extended family members as well.

Specialized educational workshops, community discussions and family-centered interventions can help relatives gain more understanding of neurodivergence.

Such interventions may lower stigma in families at home and develop supportive relationships.

Community Awareness Initiatives

Community-based awareness initiatives can help minimize social stigma through an idea-sharing approach to building positive attitudes toward neurodivergent people.

Possible initiatives include:

- public awareness campaigns
- community seminars
- inclusive recreational programs
- synergy between schools and community organizations

Such initiatives can create environments where families are more comfortable participating in public life.

CONCLUSION

This conceptual study argues that school-focused models of inclusion in their own right are insufficient for supporting neurodivergent children. Although inclusive education policies have extended access to mainstream schooling for children, the everyday lives of children are also shaped by broader social ecologies including family and extended kinship networks and community contexts.

The novel Family-Centered Ecosystem Framework suggested in this study emphasizes that neurodivergent children are supported by a network of roles played within a family (e.g., parents, relatives) and community context. This framework locates the child within a convoluted social constellation, highlighting that inclusion is not just an educational matter, but rather a social process.

Family structures and community relationships are the cornerstones of life for children in Bangladesh, so these wider social ecosystems matter a lot. Supporting parents, cluing up aunts and uncles, encouraging awareness in schools or workplaces — these measures can contribute to environments that are more open to neurodivergence.

We encourage future research to contribute to this conceptual framework through empirical interventions that explore family dynamics, community attitudes and educational practices as embedded systems shaping the child experience reported in the current study.

Raising neurodivergent children in inclusive societies also involves more than simply situating them in systems that are in place — it requires building environments that actively acknowledge and support neurological diversity

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