

Notes from the Editor

This second issue of 2011 of the Bangladesh Education Journal focuses on inclusive education, both in its broader sense of bringing into school all children from varying circumstances and with diverse abilities, and in the narrower sense of serving children with special needs in the mainstream school.

Umesh Sharma makes the case for re-examining knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, and practice (hence, the reference to head, heart and hands) that can be inculcated in pre-service teacher education. Dr. Sharma argues that anchoring preparation of teachers to cultural and religious values in South Asia may be a way of coping with some of the challenges in this respect. He suggests that traditional and religion-based precepts of responsibility to and empathy for fellow human beings can be the inspiration for would-be teachers to practice effectively the inclusive approaches in the mainstream school. In this regard, it is noteworthy that in Bangladesh pre-service teacher education at the university level as part of the undergraduate degree is not the norm. Another issue is that religious and traditional values also can be divisive and contentious unless handled judiciously.

The theme of inclusive education is also addressed by Nasima Akter and Sodik A. Kuntoro in the context of the National Education Act 2003 of Indonesia and the challenges faced in dealing with education of children with special needs in mainstream schools. They note the lack of such a comprehensive law in Bangladesh which is proposed in the New Education Policy of 2010 and could provide a legal framework for implementing inclusive education.

Ahsan Habib looks at the role of the Educational Counsellor and Special Education Teachers in primary schools in Czechoslovakia. He proposes that a beginning should be made in Bangladesh by appointing counsellor+special education teachers as a pilot initiative in a limited number of schools.

The reflections on a visit to primary schools pursuing the Active Learning Approach (ABL) in Tamil Nadu, India by Janmajoy Dey and Mohammed Noor-E-Alam Siddiqee are also in a way a discourse on inclusive education about enabling all children to perform well in school. The authors argue for adopting and trying out the ABL methodology in Bangladesh schools as an activity under PROG3, the newly started third phase of Primary Education development.