

A Study on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in General Classrooms

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Abstract

Attitudinal barriers prevent children with special needs from coming to schools. Unless these barriers are demolished, success in bringing children with special needs to school may be in question. Hence, it is important to undertake widespread awareness on the need, importance and potential of children with special needs. Various modes like mabeti mela, bal sammelan print and electronic media, success stories etc. should be used. The training of community leaders and parents under SSA should also have an essential component on inclusive education. Mother Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Association (MTA/PTA) could be used as a powerful medium to inform the parents on the care, need, management and potential of children with special needs. Parents of children with special needs should receive counseling and training on how to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills. The present study is designed to know the issues and challenges of implementing inclusive education in primary school, I hope it will provide useful information both for existing teachers and for teachers in training.

KEYWORDS: CWSN, Inclusive Education, Attitudinal Barriers

Introduction

Education is the fundamental right of all children Universalization of Education is meaningful only when all the children in the age group of 6-14 are in school and get education. In this context the Children with Special Needs need to have different programmes to enroll and to retain them in schools. Equity –always remains an issue.

The Parliament of India has passed the constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, making free and compulsory elementary Education a Fundamental Right, for all the children in the age group of 6-14 years through inclusion of the new Article 21A in part III of the constitution. The government of Karnataka under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has brought out various interventions to reduce dropout rates and to eradicate illiteracy in the state. Univerlisation of elementary education can be archived only through bringing all children between the age group of 6-14 into mainstream.

SSA has adopted a more pragmatic approach to implement the programme of inclusive education. SSA Framework clearly states that SSA will ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. Inclusive Education in SSA is a more expansive concept, where the stress is to provide education to CWSN in an environment most appropriate to their learning needs, these options vary from a regular school of EGS Centers, bridge courses to prepare CWSN for schools and home –based education aimed mainly to either prepare CWSN for schools or for life.

Definitions of Different Kinds of Disabilities

- **Blindness** – total absence of sight

- **Low vision** – a person with an impairment of visual functioning even after treatment
- **Hearing Impairment:** Difficulty in hearing sounds from behind or any other side
- **Mental Retardation:** Incomplete development of brain and uncommon social behavior
- **Locomotor Impairment:** Disability of bones, joint or muscles leading to substantial restriction in the movement of any part of the body
- **Learning Disability:** Marked difficulty in reading/writing/calculating or hyper activity
- **Cerebral Palsy:** Varying degrees of disturbance of voluntary movements caused by damage to the brain.
- **Multiple Disabilities:** A combination of two or more disabilities
- **Others:** Any other impairment.

Education of Children with Special Needs

The concept of integrating CWSN in regular schools was introduced in many countries in 1960's. 1970's witnessed new initiatives in the area of integrated education, with awareness and services for children with special needs becoming more accessible.

Efforts to educate children with special needs began soon after independence when the then Ministry of Education established a special unit to deal with education of special children. At the same time, certain international agencies like Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and Cristophael Blinden Mission began experimenting with the integration of visually impaired children and other children.

The NPE brought the fundamental issue of equality centre stage. Section 4.9 of the policy clearly focuses on the needs of the children with disabilities. The objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.

The NPE was followed by POA (1992). The POA suggested a pragmatic placement principle for children with special needs. It postulated that a child with disability who can be educated in a general school should be educated in a general school only and not in a special school. Even those children who are initially admitted to special schools for training in plus curriculum skills should be transferred to general schools once they acquire daily living skills, communication skills and basic academic skills.

Rehabilitation Council of India Act, (RCI -1992)

The POA was strengthened by the enactment of the RCI Act, 1992. Experience showed that there was no mechanism in the country to standardize and monitor the training of special educators and other rehabilitation professionals in the country. Therefore, in 1992, Parliament of India enacted the RCI Act, subsequently amended in 2000, to establish a statutory mechanism for monitoring and standardizing courses for the training of 16 categories of professionals required in the field of special education and rehabilitation of persons with disability. Training of special educators and resource teachers that can offer support services to children with special needs in regular schools is the responsibility of RCI.

Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995

The most landmark legislation in the history of special education in India is the Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, protection of rights & full participation)

Act, 1995. This comprehensive Act covers seven disabilities namely blindness, low vision, hearing impaired, locomotors, impaired, mental retardation, leprosy cured and mental illness.

National Trust Act, 1999

Landmark legislation is the National Trust Act. In 1999, the Indian Parliament passed an Act entitled “National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability. This Act seeks to protect and promote the rights of persons who, within the disability sector, have been even more marginalized than others.

These three landmark legislations have highlighted the enormous thrust that this area has received from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Major Schemes

The schemes dealing with CWSN can be categorized into educational and supplementary schemes. The Educational scheme includes the Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) and the supplementary schemes include the Scholarship as well as the Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP).

Need and Importance of the Study

Attitudinal barriers prevent children with special needs from coming to schools. Unless these barriers are demolished, success in bringing children with special needs to school may be in question. Hence, it is important to undertake widespread awareness on the need, importance and potential of children with special needs. Various modes like ma-beti mela, bal sammelan print and electronic media, success stories etc. should be used. The training of community leaders in SSA should also have an essential component on inclusive education. Mother Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Association (MTA/PTA) could be used as a powerful medium to inform the parents on the care, need, management and potential of children with special needs. Parents of children with special needs should receive counseling and training on how to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills.

Genesis of the Study

The framework is designed for teachers working in primary schools. It is aimed particularly at those who teach literacy, language and numeracy, either within discrete provision or embedded within another academic or vocational programmers, but who are not specialists in the field of special education. We hope it will provide useful information both for existing teachers and for teachers in training. Statement of the study is “A study on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in General Classrooms”

Objectives

- To study necessary supporting services to the children with special needs in the elementary education.
- To study school access to all Children with Special Needs.
- To study training of the teachers and parents to manage the CWSN in the process of education.
- To reduce the gaps between the normal children and Special Children in the context of elementary education.

Limitations of the Study

- The present study is restricted to only CWSN Children.
- The present study is confined only to Belgaum District of Karnataka.
- Only government schools are selected.
- The sampling size is very small.

Design of the Study: Survey method is used for the present study.

Population and sample of the study

The sample is drawn employing random sampling techniques. The teachers who have undergone special education training in the Belgaum district under SSA conducted at DIET were chosen randomly from Urban and rural schools of Belgaum and Bailhongal taluks consisting of 50 Teachers irrespective gender.

Tools used

Self constructed “Awareness about Disability questionnaire and Attitude Scales” is used as Instrument/tool to collect data. The characteristics of the tools have been well established.

Data Collection

The data was collected by using random sampling technique. Teachers were selected after going through the details given by DIET and BRC office of Belgaum district. Teachers who were given training on special education were the population for the present study. The investigator collected the data personally by giving a questionnaire, which was prepared based on the kind of training given to the teachers.

Statistical Techniques Used

Percentage analysis is employed for data analysis. The collected data is systematically interpreted, and graphs were drawn to check the percentage systemically.

Major Finding of the study

1. All the teachers have given the right response for the statement that inclusive education is the need of the hour.
2. Most of the teachers have agreed that if learning disabled children are put into regular schools they can be improved with some extra classes or special care by the teachers.
3. Teachers are aware of the interventions and incentives for children with special needs at elementary schools.
4. It is important to undertake wide spread awareness about the significance of education for CWSN.
5. IED programme is observed to have little success in meeting its objectives because of the limited roles played by the special educators.
6. SSA will provide incentives for Volunteers under HBE intervention.
7. DIET and SSA have taken it seriously to make inclusive education compulsory in all school's teachers are trained in this area.
8. Wheel chair and tricycle is given for children with multiple disorders.
9. The school headmaster has been made responsible for providing Mid-Day meals and uniforms for HBE children. In the absence of the headmaster the other teachers will take this responsibility.
10. Most of the teachers have given the opinion that for this kind of children special and flexible curriculum is essential.

11. Parents have been given orientation and training at DIET to handle such children at home but most of the children especially in rural area think that it is because of their fate.

Conclusion

There are attitudinal barriers present among teachers about Children with Special Needs. Unless these barriers are effectively addressed, success in bringing significant number of children with special needs to school may be difficult to achieve. Socialization of Inclusive education is essential. NGOs and other government departments like Child welfare, social welfare and Health etc. also join with the education department to bring awareness.

The educational needs of children with special needs are unique in nature. Teachers who are working in schools should have adequate knowledge and training on how to handle these children's problems. Without specific training in this area they may not be able to teach effectively. Certain remedial programmes confirm that with concentrated instructional skills on reading comprehension, these children will return to the regular class-room instructions and apply these skills on learning and eventually begin to improve their learning skills.

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