

A Study on Implementation of Schemes under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for Children with Special Needs in Government Schools of District Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

Concept 'special needs education' has a specific meaning i.e. needs of the 'Children With Special Needs' (CWSNs) which is considered as right and ensured through specific policies and access to education compared to most children of the same age. The special educational needs are referred to the children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that hinder their learning and access to education compared to most children of the same age. The CWSN may need different or additional support from what is provided to other children of the same age. The additional support may not be uniform to everyone and at all times. It depends on the nature of the problems they face, such as difficulties in thinking, understanding, learning, emotional and behavioral difficulties, physical and sensory difficulties and, difficulties with speech and language. Understanding special educational needs of the children is necessary to facilitate appropriate measures to include the CWSN in schools; otherwise, the school curriculum excludes children with disabilities from education.

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I. RATIONALE OF STUDY

Government of India has been spending quite substantial amount of funds for SSA therefore it was the purpose of the study to evaluate the ongoing programmes of SSA from time to time whether the programme objectives are being achieved or not.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were:

1. Explore the enrollment status of different categories of Children with Special Needs in the district.
2. Assess the coverage of the scheme (physical target achieved).
3. Examine the implementation process including availability, adequacy and timelines of funds earmarked for assistance to CWSNs for purchase/fitting of aids/appliances.
4. Identify good practices of inclusive education in the district at the elementary stage.
5. Examine the bottlenecks of the scheme and suggest remedial measures for improvement.

III. DELIMITATIONS

The following were the delimitations of study as:

1. Study was delimited to 10 schools per educational block.
2. Study was delimited to 50 schools out of 850 schools in the district Bilaspur (H.P.).

3. Study was delimited to government schools in the district Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh.

IV. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

Chadha, A.K. (2004) conducted study on "Evaluation of Inclusive Education under DPEP-III in Jharkhand Education Project Council, Ranchi". They carried the material for CWSN (14.5%) and offered assistance in one way or the other (29.0%). Most (96.5%) of them offered help voluntarily and 3.5% offered help only when asked to do so. They also took help from CWSN (67%). Most of them had CWSN as their friends (96.1%), involved them in play activities (91.75) and peers also visited the homes of CWSN (92.1%). Under DPEP, (65.2%) teachers received training for IED; some (29.4%) had been provided training on Integrated Education project. Most (82.1%) of the teachers had no prior experience of teaching CWSN. Training period ranged from 1 to 5 days. Focus of the training was on how to deal with CWSN (22.6%), teach them using games (13.28%) and use of TLM (10.2%). TLM development was not a part of their training programme (53.6%). Choudhry et al. (2008) examined a study entitled Impact of IED intervention in the area with full resource support and partial resource support provided from SSA-A comparative analysis. The results show that the resource teachers (RTs) and volunteers provided home based education (HBE) and counseled parents. Around 50% of parents felt that their children (CWSNs) were treated like other children. Respondents repressed satisfaction with

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resource support in areas with falls resource support (40%) under SSA and with partial resource support 38% under SSA. Majority of the students were not satisfied with the aids and appliances provided to them. Chavuta and Siker (2008) conducted a study on the topic "Evaluate the progress of Inclusive Education in Malawi". The study had revealed a number of challenges that teachers, learners with or without disabilities were facing in schools. Those challenges included lack of knowledge and additional skills in teachers, inadequate resources and lack of communication with CWSNs, frequently absenteeism of CWSNs from schools, negative attitude of teachers and community towards CWSNs, inaccessible school furniture and lack of assistive devices. Mishra and Kumar (2009) conducted a study on Evaluation of Inclusive Education Practices in Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) Primary Schools. The study aimed to evaluate the influence of inclusive education practices on learning and teacher attitude towards children with special needs as well as to evaluate how children with special needs placed in regular schools have benefited. Twenty children with disabilities of two from each 10-randomly selected school were chosen for case study. A critical evaluation was done on all possible related variables responsible for meeting unique needs of child with disabilities such as: dropout/retention; provision of incentives including aids and appliances; individualized programme; curricular adaptation; academic achievement; attitude of teachers and peers; and resource support to school. It was observed that not only mild and moderate, but children with disabilities having any severity level were part of the primary schools. Significant gap between school age and chronological age; lower grade level inappropriate examination practices were observed. Retention of children with disabilities was found good with appropriate attendance. Half of the teacher's attitude towards these children were not favorable; however, positive peer acceptance was observed. Ali (2016) conducted an investigation in to the Implementation of Home based Education (HBE) for CWSN provided by Inclusive Education Resource Persons (IERPs) of SSA in Mahabubnagar District. The study was conducted on a sample of 21 IERPs (Inclusive Education Resource Persons), 89 CWSN children, 81 parents and 10 officials. The results indicate that the present implementation of HBE is not sufficient for the multiple disorder children. The SSA efforts have created a system but the multiple disorder children need more training for progress of their skills which meet their daily life routine. The same thing was expressed by the sectoral officers, MEOs, Parents and IERPs. Hence, the frequency of HBE visits should be increased and it is better to conduct HBE daily. For this purpose trained volunteers should be recruited and they should be assigned to HBE regularly. In order to monitor the HBE, the government should fix monitoring mechanism with trained personnel in IE activities. Jitendra (2016), there are three factors which hinder inclusion of students with disabilities in the classroom which are inadequate training of teachers, inadequate infrastructure and insufficient administration or administrative support. In context of these three factors, the picture of adopting Inclusion in Indian schools is represented by Eighth All India School Education Survey (2009). Report says that out of a total 12,99,902 schools in the country, only 2,74,445 (21.11%) schools adhere to

inclusive education for disabled children. The number of teachers who have received training of at least two weeks in inclusive education is 80,942 (1.32%) out of the 58,76,273 total teachers. The number of schools where special educator/resource teachers never visited is 42.69%. Out of the total schools in the country, 10.47% have Handrails, 3.81% have adapted laboratory and 7.64% have adapted lavatory. Pandey (2016) examined a study on Structural Barriers in Implementing Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs: A Qualitative Approach Towards Zero Rejection. The findings of the studies were as Out of ten schools, eight schools have well maintained doors as expected by the researcher. The door needed maintenance as oil, repairing or replacement as the doors were noisy in nature, windows were in poor condition of ventilation and the sharp edges weren't avoided. Out of five schools have no proper ramps or poor maintained ramps facility? Most of the schools are on the ground floor while two schools have well maintained Stair with Railing and rest two school have poorly maintained Stair with Railing. Out of ten schools five schools have proper toilet and water outlets (but not found in a good condition). Three schools have poorly developed toilet, while two schools have no toilet even for differently able. Almost every school have proper facilities like well space, light, air, enough space inside the rooms. Eight schools have well developed light and ventilation facility while ventilation facility of two schools is in maintained condition. The symbols/ signage's was available in print format only, none of the schools having signage's in Braille format.

Gupta (2017) conducted a study on evaluation of educational policies in inclusive education system. The finding of the study shows that resource persons teach CWSNs in resource room once in a week. Appliances are provided to CWSNs specific to their needs to cope up with their impairments. The teaching learning aids are very poor and are given to the resource room. In Kerla a number of aids and appliances are provided to CWSNs as per their needs. It is also found that Odisha and Madhya Pradesh resource rooms are constructed at block and cluster level. The other findings are also indicative of not providing equal and quality education such as special educators are appointed one for five CWSNs, evaluation provisions are not made available to CWSNs, removal of architectural barriers, provision of special toilets remains unlimited. Seikhari (2018) conducted a study on "Evaluation of methodology and strategies used by inclusive education resource teachers to teach children with special needs". The evaluation of inclusive education was done in 12 out of 22 districts of Punjab. A total of 66 primary schools and 59 CD blocks were covered. To seek answers to the queries made in the stated objective interview schedules-cum-questionnaires were administered to the concerned personnel during the field study. The data collected from 60 inclusive education resource teachers using numerous sources required simple statistical treatment such as, frequencies and percentage. Out of 60 Resource Teachers, 38 (63.3%) of them considered themselves to be capable of handling children with different needs. Because out of 38, 32 of them mentioned that they had 15 days training in multiple disability. Of the remaining Resource Teachers who considered themselves to be proficient in handling multiple challenges, 5 (8.3%) of them collaborate with other IERTs of

different specializations. One of them mentioned that apart from 15 day training, cooperation is enlisted from the IE volunteer, or seek guidance from the D.S.Es.

Das(2018) conducted study on Education of the differentially able at secondary level and role of RMSA: A study with special reference to Kamalpur development block of Assam. Twelve differently able students and their guardians have been selected out of thirteen differently able students as per U-DISE record from the four secondary schools of the Kamalpur Educational Block. Fourteen numbers of teachers and four Head Teachers of the respective schools and one Resource Person (Special Educator) were interviewed for collection of the data. All the guardians of the differently able in the study are found to be in favor of inclusive education. But around 50% of the teachers are not found to be in favor of it. According to 89% of the teachers in the study, the differently able students are motivated for vocational training but 66% of the guardians of the differently able denied about it. 94% of the teachers and 58% of the guardians in the study area advocated for the necessity of special curriculum for the differently able according to the degree of disability. In the study area there has been found lack of awareness among the teachers and guardians about provisions of legal aid of Persons with Disability Act, reservation, rehabilitation, provision of special and residential schools and remedial measures for controlling disabilities. Sharma(2018) examined the Reflection on current status of inclusive education in India. Result showed that only 61.2% disabled population between ages 5-19 are getting education and out of total enrolment of students from first to fifth grade aggregated 1.18% and sixth to eight grade 1.13% students in schools are the children with special need. Maximum population of disables lives in rural Area. All Disabled students do not have access to school. Based on reflections gathered from the literature, it is noted that the infrastructure, societal attitude, inflexible education system are obstructs in the way of inclusion.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used to conduct the research was determined by the nature of problem. Keeping in view the nature of the present study, descriptive survey method was used.

Sample: In the present study 10 schools from each educational block with all Children with Special Needs were taken randomly for the purpose of study. In this way 50 schools were randomly selected from all five educational blocks for research.

Tools: The data was collected by administering self prepared questionnaires as research tools. Three questionnaires were developed by the researcher for the purpose of data collection. The detail of these questionnaires is as follows:

1. Questionnaire for Teachers.
2. Questionnaire for District Functionaries (BRCCs, BEEOs, DPO and IED Coordinator).
3. Questionnaire for Children with Special Needs.

VI. COLLECTION OF DATA

After selecting the sample and deciding the tools and techniques for data collection, the data was collected from the target schools. A good rapport was established with subjects and assurance was given that their responses would be kept confidential and used for research purpose only. The subjects were told about the purpose of the study and necessary directions were given to them. The tools were administered personally and difficulties, if any, encountered by the respondents in filling the questionnaires were solved on the spot. Enough care was taken to see that each item of the tool was answered consciously and with the understanding of the items. No time was fixed for responding to the items of the questionnaires. The respondents were told that they should not leave any item of the questionnaire unattempted.

VII. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In order to draw meaningful conclusions from raw scores, frequency counts were calculated and converted into percentages. Therefore, simple percentage method and chi square were used for analyzing data and drawing conclusion.

VIII. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. A majority (70%) of teachers responded that children with special needs were identified through the day to day observation of student performance and the assessment of the disability had been done by the team of specialists and a majority of teachers responded this assessment of disability had been done with the help of the District Disability Rehabilitation Center (DRRC) for which a medical examination was the criteria of assessment of children with special needs. All of the teachers (100%) responded that a one-day medical camp was organized for medical assessment of children with special needs every year at the block level.
2. 70% of teachers responded that children with special needs were not covered through home-based education for their educational placement, 68% of teachers responded that children with special needs had not mainstreamed in schools through home-based education for their educational placement. 80% of the teachers responded that children with special needs had been involved in socially productive work i.e. participation in cultural activities and sports activities for their school placement.
3. All teachers (100%) responded that aids and appliances were distributed to CWSNs by SSA as per their requirements. 88% of teachers responded that Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) had not been involved in carrying out the activities of children with special needs.
4. All teachers reported that CWSNs had equal rights to admission in the school, 88% of teachers responded that they had been able to admit the students in their schools. 78% of teachers oriented the CWSNs after the admission. 94% of teachers oriented the parents of CWSNs to get admission in the school. 58% of teachers responded that they were providing remedial teaching to CWSNs.

5. 90% of teachers had attended the teachers training programme for the education of children with special needs and 92% of teachers reported that the duration of training was five days. 98% of the teachers responded that modules of inclusive training were prepared.
6. 60% of the teachers responded that there was no resource room in the school. 75% of the teachers reported that these resource rooms were maintained by the resource teachers. 56% of the teachers reported that basic equipments were not available in the resource room. 94% of teachers reported that resource teachers were available in the schools. 40% of the teachers reported that the existing support system in the school was good while 42% of teachers reported that the existing support system in the school was average.
7. 84% of the teachers reported that Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for CWSNs were prepared in the schools, 68% of the teachers viewed that resource teachers helped them in preparing the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) of children with special needs.
8. 78% of the teachers responded that they have done parents' counseling to retain children with special needs in the schools. 62% of the teachers reported that support of SMC towards the overall cause of CWSNs was good. All the teachers (100%) reported that parent-teacher meetings were organized at all school levels. 58% of the teachers reported that there was a significant effect of parent-teachers meeting on the academic and co-curricular activities.
9. 88% of the teachers replied that there was no special school nearby the area of 10 km. and 48% of the teachers responded that they had interacted with a special school for support of the education of CWSNs.
10. 84% of the teachers responded that the facility of the friendly toilet was available in the school, 94% of the teachers responded that the facility of hands and rails was available in their schools, 92% of the teachers replied that the facility of the ramp was available in the school and 72% of the teachers replied that barrier-free environment was provided to children with special needs in the school.
11. 70% of the teachers responded that disability-oriented games were organized for CWSNs. The majority of teachers responded that three days game activities were organized for children with special needs.
12. A majority (68%) of teachers carried out the quarterly evaluation of CWSNs to know their performance, 66% of the teachers responded the duration of games activities was three days. 50% of the teachers opined that they provided extra time to CWSNs in the examinations and 50% of the teachers responded that quarterly inspection was done by the appropriate authority in the schools.
13. The majority (84%) of children with special needs expressed that children without disabilities were their friends and 68.2% of CWSNs responded that they had taken help from nondisabled classmate in carrying out the academic tasks i.e. in subjects like Hindi, Mathematics, Social Science as well as in physical activities.
14. 100% of the children with disabilities responded that they had never felt discriminated by the teachers but 4.7% of children with disabilities responded that they had felt discriminated against by their friends in the classroom activities. 51.4% of children with disabilities responded that they were occasionally taken to resource rooms by the teachers.
15. 89.7% of children with disabilities reported that they did not need other facilities which were not provided to them, 90.4% of children with disabilities reported that teachers had adapted teaching methods to suit their needs in which 33.8% of children with disabilities reported that teachers made their proper seating arrangement in the classroom which suited their needs and 32.5% of children with disabilities reported that appropriate presentation of content by the teachers suited their needs.
16. 70.6% of children with disabilities opined that the teachers had assisted them after school time in performing academic tasks and 85.05% of children with disabilities reported that teachers had a positive attitude towards them.
17. 70.1% of children with disabilities opined that their schools were architectural barriers free, a majority (85%) of the children with disabilities reported that there was a provision of sports activities for them in the schools, 93% of children with disabilities reported that there was a provision of ramps and rails in the schools.
18. The awareness among district functionaries regarding the learning of basic skills, the effectiveness and awareness of programmes about the education of CWSNs among the society and the awareness regarding the familiarization of parents with the concept of inclusive education of children with special needs under SSA was good.
19. The awareness among district functionaries regarding the programme being run by SSA for parents and community guidance for the education of CWSNs was good
20. The awareness among district functionaries regarding identification, the facilities being provided in the medical assessment camps and convergence of education department with the health department for detection, identification, and medical assessment for the children with special needs under SSA was good.
21. The awareness among district functionaries regarding positive attitude of teachers towards CWSNs, the acceptance of individuality and diversity of CWSNs by other students and the access to education of CWSNs under SSA was good.
22. The awareness among district functionaries regarding the quality & procedure of aids and appliances provided to CWSNs after the medical assessment by SSA was good.
23. The awareness among district functionaries regarding efforts made by the teachers for improving teaching strategy, remedial teaching and contents simplification for CWSNs were average.
24. The awareness among district functionaries regarding the effectiveness of teacher's training about inclusive education, teaching methods adopted by the teachers after three days of adaptation training was good.

25. The awareness among district functionaries regarding the removal of architectural barriers and environmental modification done in the school according to the educational needs of CWSNs was good.
26. The awareness among district functionaries regarding the encouraging the SMC members to attend school meetings, the involvement of the community in the programmes organized by SSA for the education of CWSNs and the efforts made by SSA for community mobilization was good.
27. The awareness among district functionaries regarding the inspection of SSA authorities on the educational performance of CWSNs in the school and the role of SSA authorities to provide quality of education th them was good.

IX. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

An attempt was made in this study to present an overview of programmes and activities under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with reference to education of children with special needs at elementary school level, problems faced by the teachers in implementing the programmes, views of district functionaries i.e. BEEOs, BPOs, BRCCs, IED coordinators, DPO (ISSE) etc, teachers and students with regard to the education of CWSNs. Therefore the study provided an insight with special reference to the improvement of the programme Samagra Shiksha, which also aimed at the qualitative improvement of CWSNs education in the elementary schools and provides a barrier-free environment to CWSNs in the school and classroom for their full inclusion. The usefulness of the present study from the point of view of its implications can be presented as:

1. The study highlights the need to create awareness among students, teachers, and administrators about the services and facilities provided by the government to CWSNs.
2. It fills the gap of theory and practices with special reform to available resources under samagra shiksha and other programmes for CWSNs by knowing the real situations or ground reality.
3. It develops awareness among community members and parents as well as children that every child with special needs has a right to education in the school.
4. It emphasizes imparting equal opportunities to CWSNs to participate in socially useful works and contribute towards the growth of society.
5. It emphasizes the need for the teachers to create enough flexibility in syllabi, evaluation, co-curricular activities, plan the lesson, and effective use of teaching aids for CWSNs.
6. It also emphasizes the need to develop insight in SMC and community in the field of inclusive education and encourages them to participate in camps, orientation programs related to the education of CWSNs.
7. It provides the provision of facilities of resource rooms for schools in inclusive setting. The resource rooms are to

be equipped with some basic appliances needed for educating usually one category of students.

8. The study emphasizes recent interventions in teacher education programmes both in-service and pre-service to consider attitude towards education of children with special needs and implementation of inclusive policy.
9. According to the study appointment of more special educators/resource teachers is necessary for the education of children with special needs.
10. Normal children could not adjust to the CWSN mainly due to their superiority complex, the low performance of the CWSN in sports and games, competitive activities, dance and singing competitions, etc., Hence, there is a need to take measures to promote awareness and adjustability among all the students through cooperation, coordination, recognizing the potentialities of the CWSN, helping them to overcome their inferiority complex and counseling and convincing the children to overcome the bias. The headteachers, teachers, and parents should be oriented in this regard to promote harmony among them.
11. The institutions should take initiative to depute the teachers for in-service training programmes or sanctioned paid leave in case of government schools and by providing additional support to the NGOs running the schools.

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