



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Today every region of India is developing rapidly. Despite this, there has not been the expected change in the attitude of our society towards students with special needs. Today there is a need to make the society's attitude towards students with special needs positive. Only then will they be able to play a strong role in society building by joining the mainstream of development like the common people. It is true that there are some special schools for students with special needs, but there are not as many special schools available as there are large numbers of children with disabilities. About 69.5 % of the disabled population lives in rural areas. There are many rural areas of the country where there are no normal schools; hence Students with Special Needs have to face many challenges in their education. The objective of this article is to study the challenges faced by Students with Special Needs in their education. Therefore, keeping these objectives in mind the article discusses in detail the issues and challenges faced by students with special needs at the secondary level.

Key words: - Students with Special Needs, Special Education, Secondary Level, learning environment & inclusive curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Students who have special needs are referred to as exceptional children because they possess unique physical or mental characteristics that set them apart from typical youngsters. People with physical, mental, and social impairments who are unable to meet their basic requirements and are unable to integrate into society are also found

in our nation. These children have to overcome challenges and deal with adjustment-related issues at every stage of life because they are so different from other typical normal children that they are either far behind or ahead of other typical children of their age and group in terms of physical, mental, social, and emotional development. These children require special care and education to make proper use of their powers and adjust them properly. To educate them and develop their personality, special educational services and techniques are required.¹

Currently, about 10% of the nation's children are classified as Divyang, or children who are born with physical, mental, emotional, or mental handicap as a result of their environment or genetic makeup. These kids possess the same inner fortitude and aptitude as typical kids. If they have abnormalities in any one organ, their skill remains intact. If we keep their limitations in mind and provide special education, appropriate training, complete collaboration, and positive attitude, we may develop our skills and talents and work together as partners in the nation's growth. The greatest illustration of this is the case of renowned physicist Stephen Hawking, who has meta neuron illness. The term "amyotrophic lateral sclerosis" describes this. Their level of intellect is so great that they have solved numerous unresolved issues and are gleaming on the horizon via their study, despite the fact that they are unable to even move or talk on their own. Their powerful self-expression via the use of contemporary technology may be attributed to the appropriate system of their education and training. India is home to 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, as per the 2011 census. Approximately 54.52% (1.46 crore) of all people with disabilities are illiterate; of them, 55% are men and 45% are women. Approximately 6 lakh children with disabilities, aged between 6 and 13 years, do not attend school. In India, the government has set up special schools for the disabled, however the number of special schools does not correspond to the number of pupils who require special education. Every youngster in the nation is entitled to an education. All children are entitled to an education commensurate with their abilities, regardless of their degree of strength.²

Getting an education involves more than just reading books. Education in its purest form is that which satisfies the idea of holistic development. The primary goal of education is to help pupils become more adaptive to their environment. In order to help students with special needs in India become more independent and egalitarian, a number of programs have been developed with this goal in mind.⁻³

- The National Education Commission (1964–66) was the first statutory body to suggest that the education of children with disabilities should be organized not only on the basis of human kindness but also on the basis of unity and inclusion.
- In 1974, a scheme called “Integrated Education for Disabled Children” was started under which provision was made to provide education to disabled children along with normal children in selected general schools.
- The National Education Policy 1986 provided that children with disabilities should be given equal opportunities to study in all government-aided schools without any discrimination.

- In 1987, the Ministry of Human Resource Development in collaboration with UNICEF and NCERT launched the “Integrated Education Project” for students with special needs. The main objective of the scheme was to strengthen integrated education for children and youth with disabilities implementation.
- In 1995, the Government of India passed the Disability Act, keeping in mind the rights of students with special needs. The Act classified 7 types of students with special needs. The Act also provides for free education of disabled children.
- National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was implemented in 2006. In this policy, provisions have been made for education for students with special needs, employment opportunities in government establishments, possibility of self-employment, social security etc.
- The Government of India has enacted the Disability Rights Act 2016. Many provisions have been ensured in this Act for the education of disabled people.
- The National Education Policy 2020 also mentions that even children with special needs should have equal opportunities to receive the same education as other children.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- 1 **Jazeel and Fazmina (2022)**⁹ studied the awareness of inclusive education among parents of special need children in Sri Lanka. The major objective of this study was to find out the differential influence of selected factors on awareness of inclusive education for sustainability among the parents of the disabled. The target population of the study is the parents of the differently abled living in Sri Lanka. The sample of 50 parents living in Ampara district of Sri Lanka was selected at random from the list of parents of the differently abled from the census of 2011. Data were collected by using the tool of questionnaire and personal data sheet. The data were analysed with the aid of Mean, Standard Deviation and t test. In the analysis, it was found that urban parents, male parent and the parents studied more than GCE (O/L) have higher level of awareness than the rural parents, female parents, and the parents studied less than GCE (O/L) examination.
- 2 **Deepa. (2016)**⁵ conducted a study on “Awareness among primary caregivers of the differently abled children on Indian legislation: A cross-sectional study” (KLEU Institute of Physiotherapy, Belgavi, Karnataka). The objective of this study was to assess the level of awareness on Indian legislation among the primary caregivers of the differently abled children. A sample of 120 respondents from various centers attending services of day care centers, clinic setup and educational institutes for their children was administered. Data were collected by self-made questionnaire tool. The result showed a significant level of awareness on Indian legislation among the primary caregivers depending on the age group of the respondents.
- 3 **Saeed, Samavia. (2016)**¹¹ conducted a study on “Identify problems of special need students with disabilities in special school” (GC University of Faisalabad, Pakistan). The purpose of this study was to identify problems faced by students with special needs according their disabilities in special school. A descriptive

survey method was used in this study. A number of 89 students were taken as a sample of study. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The result of study was showed that the students faced many problems in special school like- lack of building structural facilities, attitude of society, poverty, insufficient government leadership, on availability of human and material resources etc.

- 4 **A., Bhuvanewari. And Dr. Swarnakumari. (2013)**¹ carried research on “Enthrallment of differently abled in higher education” (Research Department of Rehabilitation Science, Holy Cross College, Trichy). The objective of this study was to find out percentage of the enrolment of persons with disabilities in higher education over the past 5 year. To compare the strength of persons with disabilities in higher education in reference to their gender and type of disability. In this study a descriptive survey method was used. Sample of 28 colleges of Trichy District was selected by purposively sampling technique. A self-made invented checklist was used to collect data for the study. After descriptive analysis the result was found that A great percentage of student were enrolled in private colleges. The majority of the respondents were enrolled in under graduate course. Male students were the highest to be enrolled than the female students with disabilities and the physically handicapped were the highest to be enrolled.
- 5 **Tripathi, Preeti. And U.V. Kiran. (2012)**¹³ did research on “Infrastructural facilities for differently abled students- A comparative study of Government and Nongovernment institutions” (BBAU, Lucknow). The objective of this study was to identify the differences in infrastructural facilities and student’s level of satisfaction among government and non-government institutions. A descriptive survey method was used in this study. 30 students (15boys and 15 girls) were selected from Lucknow city for sample of the study. A self-developed inventory was used for collect data. The data was analysed through Mean, SD and t-test statistic. Result revealed that non-government institutions were providing more facilities for differently abled students in comparison to government institutions. It was found that 74.28% the students belonging to government institutions had low level of satisfaction comprised to 55.71% of students belonging to non-government institutions.
- 6 **Jameel, Syed Salma. (2011)**⁸ did research on “Disability in the context of higher education: issues and concern in India” (National University of educational planning and administration, New Delhi). The purpose of this research was to find out the main issues of the students with disabilities in higher education. A survey method used in this study. As a sample 15 colleges were randomly selected for this study. This study was carries out information pro forma and interview schedules made for this purpose. The result was found that the mostly students with disabilities are concentrated in the humanities. The main issues of students with disabilities were financial problem, negative environment, non-availability of facilities and society’s attitude etc.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The presented study is based on secondary sources.

- In the presented study, the results have been analysed on the basis of previous research work.
- The presented study is limited to secondary level only.

ISSUES & CHALLENGES

Various schemes and policies have been implemented by the government for the education of children with special needs. Despite the establishment of special schools, rehabilitation centres, vocational training centers and voluntary organizations for the implementation of these schemes, many disabled children are still deprived of education or are not able to get complete education. Despite the schemes implemented by the government for the education of Students with Special Needs, they still have to face many problems related to education such as-^{6,7}

- ❖ **Lack of awareness among general teachers about the problems of disabled children:** - The issues facing secondary school-aged students with disabilities are not well understood by general educators. Teachers lack scientific and educational understanding of disability and awareness connected to it, although having their own social and cultural views toward the disabled. As a result, these educators are unable to fully comprehend the issues faced by children with disabilities, which makes it difficult for them to establish a suitable learning environment for kids with special needs.
- ❖ **Inappropriate Curriculum:** - Children with disabilities were not included in any of the examples used in the textbooks, and there was not a single lesson in any of the secondary level textbooks that covered topics pertaining to them. Even throughout the book's numerous parts, there is a dearth of representation of pupils with special needs in the photographs. As a result, special needs pupils are often overlooked in these areas. An inclusive curriculum that allows pupils to connect emotionally and absorb new information is essential to the current educational system.
- ❖ **Lack of proper learning environment in school:** - The school's learning environment does not adhere to the core ideas of inclusive education. They so have to deal with learning challenges. Certain activity-based courses, like science and art, are taught in certain schools without the necessary resources or instruments, which makes it difficult for each of us to master these subjects on our own.
- ❖ **Lack of support from family members:** - Families do not provide enough assistance for their impaired children's schooling. Families ought to step up and enroll their children in school, but this doesn't happen often since many parents neglect their kids' education for economical and non-essential reasons.
- ❖ **Academic and administrative problems:** - Although the Indian government makes sufficient efforts to support the education of handicapped individuals, in practice the beneficiaries do not receive the full advantages. The primary cause of this is the improper execution of the plans. Administrative officials do a poor job of overseeing and implementing the programs designed to help handicapped individuals enhance their educational opportunities. As a result, they do not receive the full benefits of these plans. Currently, India is home to several initiatives pertaining to the education of the disabled. However, relatively few

handicapped persons are still benefiting from these initiatives. These policies and plans are not published correctly due to improper management, which prevents the desired outcomes from occurring.

- ❖ **Physical Infrastructures:** - India's inclusive education system is mostly focused on physical infrastructure. In inclusive education, it is a significant problem. Enrolling a kid with a disability does not ensure that the school will provide the accommodations they need or that they will be able to participate successfully in regular classroom settings. It meant altering the structure of already-existing institutions in order to better prepare youngsters of all backgrounds. Numerous initiatives were implemented in this regard, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the Mid-Day Meal, the Minimum Learning Level, and Operation Blackboard, which provided the minimal amount of classroom, blackboard, books, drinking water facilities, restrooms, and other physical infrastructure that schools needed.

If seen overall, the main problems faced by special students are as follows-

- Lack of awareness and sensitivity towards students with special needs.
- Negative attitude towards students with special needs and social backwardness of the society.
- Family non-cooperation and weak economic condition of the family.
- Government schemes and policies are not being implemented on time.
- Lack of coordination among different types of government schemes.
- Lack of medical facilities in school for students with special needs.
- Lack of vocational training centres for students with special needs.
- Lack of inclusion of modern technologies in special education and rehabilitation for students with special needs.
- Lack of special schools for students with special needs.
- Shortage of qualified and trained staff in special schools for all categories of students with special needs.
- Lack of proper learning environment and proper curriculum in the school.
- Inadequate training of teachers and lack of peer support.
- Lack of awareness among general teachers about the problems of students with special needs.
- Having a variety of educational and administrative challenges.
- Lack of basic physical facilities like ramps, toilets, entrance gates, grounds, seating arrangements etc.
- Lack of proper strategies and financial resources.
- There is no system of guidance and counselling in the school.
- Lack of appropriate educational aids such as audio-visual equipment, tactile learning materials, Braille letters, audio books, electronic books, digital and technical support etc.
- Lack of child-friendly sports equipment and other interesting activities in the school.

SUGGESTIONS

Education for students with special needs has been a long-standing issue of concern in India. Students with special needs face many challenges in education, not only in terms of gaining physical access to buildings but also in relation to more widespread accessibility issues related to curriculum, adaptations and accommodations teaching, learning and assessment. Therefore, the following are the major suggestions for the education of students with special needs in India:

- First of all the government and society will have to adopt a positive approach.
- The problem of the education system should be understood and efforts should be made to solve it.
- The special school should provide child-friendly basic facilities keeping in mind the different types of disability categories.
- Students with special needs should be provided free study material as per their speciality.
- Technically trained teachers should be appointed to teach students with special needs in schools.
- A person trained in child psychology should be appointed for counselling of students with special needs in the school.
- The quality of disability related institutions should be examined from time to time.
- To make students with special needs self-reliant, arrangements should be made for various types of small vocational training.
- For proper implementation of the policies and schemes made by the government, such committees should be formed at the district and panchayat level which will fully cooperate in the implementation of these schemes.

CONCLUSION

Following the aforementioned investigation, the researcher discovered that several policies, both at the national and local levels, have been implemented by the Indian government to support the development of children with disabilities. However, these kids are currently dealing with a variety of personal issues on several fronts. The nation still has a large number of districts and schools where appropriate standards are not being applied correctly for these pupils. All of the initiatives are just functioning in theory as written records. They don't appear to be applied correctly in practice. It is also evident from the data on special education requirements that children with special needs have far less educational advantage over their non-specialist peers. Overall, educational outcomes for children with disabilities in India are disappointing. It has become very important for everyone to understand the problems of disability and their types.

Therefore, the government and society play a significant role in the education and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. People in the society will feel more confident if they continue to be aware of their requirements, are

attentive to them, cooperate fully, and think positively. By integrating these kids with society's norms and helping them become self-sufficient, we can help them not only support themselves but also advance the country.

Significance of the Study

- Previous studies are related to awareness towards inclusive education, awareness towards special students, and enrolment of special students. Some studies have been done on the problems of special students, on the physical facilities of schools and on the problems in special schools.
- The presented study highlights the problems of special students at secondary level.
- The presented study will be helpful in solving the problems of special students.
- The present paper revealed the issues and challenges faced by students with special needs at secondary level, which was helpful to reduce these problems and also helpful in increasing enrollment of students with special needs.

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