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READINESS FOR ACCOMMODATING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS IN REGULAR SCHOOLS: SUPPORT SYSTEM

B. Umesh Kumar Sharma

Assistant Professor in Special Education
North East Regional Institute of Education, NCERT
Umiam, Shillong

ABSTRACT

This study tried to understand the present situation of readiness for inclusion of children with special education need (SEN) in regular schools in north east states of India. The primary objective of the present article is to highlight the existing support systems available at primary schools located in the state of Nagaland. The study was participated by 99 primary schools from nine districts of Nagaland. Investigation was carried out to understand the existing facilities such as school building, classroom and signage, Teaching & Learning, Additional Educational Support, and Moral & Emotional. Information related to the basic facilities required for including children with SEN was collected using questionnaire and interview method. From the result, it was revealed that the buildings of 32.39% of primary schools and classrooms of 31.24% are suitable to include students with SEN. Also found that most of the schools are not paying attention to the signage, however 18.64% of schools are maintaining the facilities, which may suit to students with SEN. Teaching approaches implementing by 77.54% and teaching lessons by 68.73% of schools are quite traditional and not suitable to fulfill the needs of SwLD.

Keywords: Special Education Need, infrastructure, Teaching & Learning, Additional Educational Support, and Moral & Emotional

BACKGROUND

In the year 2006, National focus group on education of children with special needs (NCERT) discusses the issues relating to the provisions, practices and curricular concerns for children with Special Education Need. They recommended, simplifying the admission procedure, this should include private schools; promoting the teachers skill to function in an inclusive setting; making the curriculum flexible and suitable to accommodate the diverse

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inclusive setting; making the curriculum flexible and suitable to accommodate the diverse children including disability in both cognitive and non-cognitive areas; offer supports in the form of technology, TLMs and experts; involving parents, family, and the community at all stages of education.

In the year 2002, Jha M.M. cited that barriers to access and success can be viewed in physical as well as structural sense. For the present study Learning difficulties refer to the learners who are facing problems in reading, writing and math which are not because of other kind of disability like visual, hearing and physical impairment.

During State Coordination Committee Meeting 2017, it was raising an issue regarding the need of identification of students with learning difficulties in the elementary schools of Nagaland. Only the identification of these children may not help us to plan and provide corrective measures. Therefore, it was proposed to study about the state of learning difficulties and support systems available in the elementary schools of Nagaland.

Objective

This study tried to understand the present situation of readiness for inclusion of children with special education need (SEN) in regular schools in north east states of India. The primary objective of the present article is to highlight the existing support systems available at primary schools located in the state of Nagaland

Method

The study was participated by 99 primary schools from nine districts of Nagaland. Investigation was carried out to understand the existing facilities such as school building, classroom and signage, Teaching & Learning, Additional Educational Support, and Moral & Emotional. Information related to the basic facilities required for including children with SEN was collected using questionnaire and interview method.

Findings and Results

Present status of suitable services and facilities which supports SwLD under the categories of Infrastructure, Teaching & Learning, Additional Educational Support, and Moral & Emotional is presented.

Table 1: Suitable services and facilities for SwLD available in elementary schools, 2018-19

Services & Facilities		% of suitability to SwLD	% of NOT suitability to SwLD
Infrastructure	Building	32.39	67.61
	Classroom	31.24	68.76
	Signage	18.64	81.36
Teaching and learning	Teaching learning materials	34.7	65.3
	Teaching lesson	31.27	68.73
	Teaching approaches and techniques	22.46	77.54
	Resource room equipment	20.63	79.37
	Resource room teaching	19.58	80.42
	Curriculum accommodation	20.28	79.72
	Evaluation	24.3	75.7
Additional educational supports	Reading	10.94	89.06
	Writing	14.02	85.98
	Mobility	3.1	96.9
	Computation	3.1	96.9
	Expert consultation	3.09	96.91

N = 99

Of the total schools, 32.39% having building which is suitable for providing services to SwLD. Around 69% of school doesn't have a ramp which is the major barrier to access the building. However, after entering the building, many of the school building have enough wide entry doors to the classroom and office room (72%) of the school buildings are having wide

enough access route (74.2%). But, accessibility and facility of washroom and drinking facility are also a major drawback.

More than half of the school has slipped-resistant flooring (58.8%). Around 69% of the schools are not equipped their classrooms with basic amenities to facilitate SwLD. Furniture inside the classroom are needed to be improved. Colour of the building, classroom, door and other fixtures are not distinct (around 93%), this will be a barrier for the students who are facing problem in discriminating the visual items. In addition to this around 81% of schools doesn't maintain the minimum standard of the signage.

Most importantly, teaching approaches implementing by 77.54% and teaching lessons by 68.73% of schools are quite traditional and not suitable to fulfill the needs of SwLD. Of the total school, 65.3% are don't provide teaching learning materials suitable for SwLD, 20.63% are having equipments for resource room and 19.528% are providing resource room teaching service. Among all the schools, 79.72% are not accommodating the curriculum to meet the needs of SwLD and 75.7% are not planned and implemented the evaluation process according to the needs of SwLD.

Maximum of the schools (92.22%) is not providing adaptive and assistive devices for teaching and learning reading (89.06%), writing (85.98%), computation (96.9%) and mobility (96.9%) to SwLD. And, 96.91% of school does not consult any professional experts like special educator, psychologist, social worker, etc. required for proper service to SwLD.

Moral and emotional support is playing a major role to promote well being of SwLD in the school and their learning process. Of the total school, 33% are supporting fully where 32% are providing partial supports by school administrators to SwLD. Among class teachers, 32% are extending full support while 31% are partially extended to SwLD.

Suggestions

After analyzing the present situations, it was suggested to design school buildings and grounds to accommodate physical/social interaction and partnership between students,

teachers and the community, avoid physical barriers such as accessing the classroom, office room, library, resource room, washroom, drinking water, etc. Design for Colour contrast at the entry such as classroom, office room, washroom, library, resource room and ramp.

Importantly, it was suggested to expose class teachers to new approaches and techniques of learning like differentiated instruction, cognitive instruction strategy, explicit instruction, collaborative teaching, team teaching, station teaching, etc., planning and implementing adaptation and accommodation of curriculum (consider evaluation as major component) and SwLD in the classroom.

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