RESEARCH PAPER
Impact Factor : 3.6241
Physical Education
Index Copernicus Ic Value: 74.50
Volume : 5 | Issue : 12 | Special Issue Dec 2015 | ISSN - 2249-555X
Empowering People: Effective Social Work Approaches & Strategies



A STUDY ON UTILIZATION OF SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AMONG THE VISUALLY CHALLENGED STUDENTS OF SELECTED COLLEGES IN COIMBATORE, COIMBATORE DISTRICT

KEYWORDS: Visually Impairment, Schemes

Venkatesan P
M.Phil Scholar, Department of Social Work, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore

Dr. S. Udhayakumar
Guest Faculty, Department of Social Work, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore

ABSTRACT *India accounts for 20 percent of the visually impaired population universally. The problems faced by them in their daily lives are huge starting from environmental barriers to the extent of employment. A wide variety of schemes have been deployed by the government for the welfare and well-being of the persons with visual impairment. Though various such schemes have been developed the real hurdle still lied in getting such established schemes available to the respective deserving target group. The main drawback was found to be the lack of awareness among the targeted group and the ineffective functioning of the agencies responsible for making the schemes accessible to the PWDs at all possible levels. Hence the main aim of this study was to find the level of awareness among the students with one such disabled criterion (visual impairment) about the following five schemes available to them and to throw light on the hurdles faced by them in accessing those schemes. The study was conducted among the visually challenged college students in Coimbatore district, the researcher adopted descriptive research design for the study. Census sampling method was used. In this study an attempt was made to find the utilization and awareness of the schemes and policies in the field of education among the visually impaired students and to know about the difficulties faced by them in accessing those schemes.*

Introduction

India accounts for 20 percent of the visually impaired population universally. This is a huge percentage when compared to rest of the disabilities and hence the Government has tried ever since independence to make this population as an integral part of the society. For this purpose, the government of India has introduced various schemes in the field of education, employment etc… of the persons with visual impairment. Though various such schemes have been developed the real hurdle still lied in getting such established schemes available to the respective deserving target group. The main drawback was found to be the lack of awareness among the targeted group and the ineffective functioning of the agencies responsible for making the schemes accessible to the PWDs at all possible levels. Hence the main aim of this study was to find the level of awareness among the students with one such disabled criterion (visual impairment) about the following five schemes (3% Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions for PWD's, Full Fee Exemption in higher education, Educational Scholarship For Differently Abled Students, Reader Allowance and Scribe Allowance) available to them and to throw light on the hurdles faced by them in accessing those schemes.

Methods & Materials

Aim: The main aim of the study is to know about the utilization of specific government schemes among the visually challenged students of selected colleges in Coimbatore district.

Objectives:

- To study the socio demography profile of the respondents.
- To find the awareness level of the respondents about their schemes and policies.
- To encounter the difficulties of the respondents facing for accessing the selectsed schemes.

Population & Sampling

The universe of the study was visually challenged students of Government and Government aided Arts & Sciences colleges and the state university in and around Coimbatore. The researcher adopted the Census sampling method (probability sampling) and a total of 45 students were included in the study.

Research Design

The researcher adopted 'Descriptive Research Design' for this study as the research majorly focuses on the characteristics of the population. Descriptive research design is the fact finding study to get the information on the present status of a person or a situation.

Data Collection

The research used self-structured interview schedule for data collection. The interview schedule comprises of questions on personal profile of the respondents, on awareness about and usage of various government schemes for the visually challenged, about the difficulties faced by them in availing the schemes.

Results & Discussion

Table No : 1
Personal Profile of The Respondents

S. No	Personal Profile		Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	<22	31	68.8
		23-25	7	15.6
		>25	7	15.6
2	Gender	Male	32	71
		Female	13	29
3	EducationInstitution	Govt ArtsCovai	22	49
		Three Aided Colleges	18	40
		Bharathiar University	5	11
4	Major Subject	Tamil	10	22.2
		English	26	57.8
		History	7	15.6
		Economics	2	4.4
5	Nature Of Visual Impairment	Low Vision	10	22.2
		Blindness	35	77.8

Volume: 5 | Issue: 12 | Special Issue Dec 2015 | ISSN - 2249-555X

The above table indicates that more than half 68.8 per cent of the respondents belong to less than 22 years of age, 71 per cent of the respondents were males, almost half 49 per cent of the respondents were studying in Government Arts College, more than half 57.8 per cent of the respondents majored in English subject and the nature of visual impairment was blindness among more than 3/4th of the respondents.

Table No: 2
Utilization of The Schemes among The Respondents

S.No	Scheme Utilization Particulars		Frequency	Percentage
1	Full fee exemption	Yes	21	42
		No	24	58
2	DDRO PWD scholarship	Yes	24	53.3
		No	21	46.7
3	Reader Allowance	Yes	23	51
		No	22	49
4	Scribe Allowance	Yes	31	69
		No	14	31
5	3% reservation	Yes	33	72
		No	12	28

The above table shows that more than half 58 per cent of the respondents did not make use of full fee exemption scheme, 46.7 per cent of the respondents did not utilise DDRO PWD scholarship, almost half 49 per cent of the respondents were not using reader allowance, 31 per cent of the respondents were not benefitted by scribe allowance and 28 per cent were not using the 3% reservation schemes.

Table No: 3
Difficulties Faced in Accessing the Schemes among the Respondents

S.No	Difficulties faced in accessing the	Frequency	Percentage	
1	Full fee exemption	Lack Of Awareness	21	46.7
		College Not Provide	20	44.4
		Difficult To Access	14	31.1
2	DDRO scholarship	Lack Of Awareness	19	42.2
		Difficult To Access	16	35.6
3	Schemes not provided on time	Full Fee Exemption	17	38
		DDRO Scholarship	18	40
		Reader Allowance	18	40
4	Emotional difficulties faced when accessing schemes	Feel Bad	32	71
		Give up The Scheme	19	42.3
		Confidently Deal with the problem	24	53.3
5	Role of institutions	Supporting	9	20
		Not Support	36	80

The above table depicts that lack of awareness about the schemes and non-supportive attitude from the educational institutions were major difficulties faced by the respondents in accessing the schemes. But more than half 53.3 per cent of the respondents deal with such problems confidently whereas 42.3 per cent have said that they give up on getting the schemes.

Findings

- The majority of the respondents (68.8%) are belonged to the age group of below 22 years.
- The majority of the respondents (71%) are male and remaining 29% of the respondents are female, female enrollment is very low compare to male in the higher education in this study.
- Half of the respondents (49%) are from Government Arts and Science college- Coimbatore.
- The majority of the respondents (77.8%) are blindness and remaining 22.2% of the respondents are low vision in this study.
- The majority of the respondents (95.6%) have the national disability identity card with disability certificate in this study.
- About 31% of the respondents are not aware about the PWD 3% reservation quota in this study.
- Nearly half of the respondents (46.7%) are not aware about the full fees exemption in this study.
- Less than half of the respondents' (44%) institutions are not implementing the full fees exemption scheme, University not monitoring its scheme and not creating awareness to the affiliated colleges in this study.
- The majority of the respondents (53.3%) are beneficiaries of the PWDs higher education scholarship through District Differently abled Rehabilitation Office, Coimbatore.
- The halves of the respondents (51%) are benefited by the reader allowance scheme in this study.
- Nearly half of the respondents (49%) are not benefited by the reader allowance scheme.
- The majority of the respondents (69%) are getting scribe allowance Rs: 75/- to each exam in this study.
- Nearly half of the respondents (42%) are not aware of reader allowance scheme in this study.
- More than three fourth of the respondents (80%) are facing difficulties in accessing full fees exemption.
- More than three fourth of the respondents (80%) are facing difficulties in accessing DDRO scholarship and reader allowance.
- Nearly half of the respondents (40%) agreed that, the DDRO scholarship and the reader allowance are not providing on time by the DDRO centre in this study.
- About 38% of the respondents told that, full fees exemption is not providing on time by the Educational Institutions in this study.
- The majority of the respondents (71%) is mentally depressed and feels bad, when they facing trouble on getting schemes.
- The majority of the respondents (53.3%) are confidentially deal with their problems of accessing those selected schemes in this study.
- Near half of the respondents (42.3%) are give up the schemes, when they facing trouble on getting schemes in this study.
- The majority of the respondents (64.4%) have enable unit in their institutions in this study.
- The majority of the respondents (80%) feel that, theirs institutions are not supporting to implementing or offering differently abled scheme (full fees exemption) without making trouble in this study.
- The majority of the respondents (73.3%) say that, DDRO centre is not creating awareness about the schemes in this study.
- The majority of the respondents (55.6%) are scored average to the DDRO centre's functions and activities on scheme implementation in this study.
- One third of the respondents (33.3%) told that, they don't know about the DDRO centre in this study
- More than one fourth of the respondents (35.5%) Colleges like, The State University and the Aided colleges (24.5%)

Volume: 5 | Issue: 12 | Special Issue Dec 2015 | ISSN - 2249-555X

have not special care & support unit for the respondents in this study.
- More than half of the respondents (60%) are aware about all the selected schemes (five schemes) in this study.
- The more than half of the respondents (57%) are benefited by all the selected five schemes, nearly half of the respondents (43%) are not benefited by any one of the selected schemes in this study.

Suggestions

·It should be made mandatory for all educational and training institutions to maintain data/record of all students with disabilities who apply for admission and who get enrolled.

The Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities needs to ensure implementation of all the provisions for education of disabled students as per The Disability Act, 1995, and take action against those institutions that fail to adhere to the law.

·About 46.7% of the respondents are not aware about the full fees exemption and nearly half of the respondents (42.2%) are not aware about the PWDs higher education scholarship scheme through DDRO centre. Creating public awareness and simplifying the procedures is as important as evolving of the schemes itself. Because of these limitations, a large number of people with disabilities are not in a position to take advantage of these schemes.

·The majority of respondents (97.8%) are needed both reader and scribe assistance for their studies; only 2.2% of the respondents need not both because who is using assistive devices. All the agencies involved in various aspects of imparting education, like curriculum development, assistive devices training and motivation, teachers' training, funding, etc., need to include disability in all their future agendas.

·The UGC needs to review the implementation of its schemes and take further proactive steps to enhance the access of higher education for disabled students.

·All the state and central government Universities and government institutions must provide free education with free hostel facilities to the all categories of disabilities in the country for increase more PWDs enrollment in higher education.

The majority of the respondents (80%) are facing difficulties in accessing full fees exemption and DDRO scholarship as well as reader allowance. the majority of the respondents (80%) feel that, theirs institutions are not supporting to implementing or offering differently abled schemes in the institutions. All the educational institutions must establish college level and university level care and support units for persons with disabilities, and practice institution based rehabilitation services for reduce the barriers.

Nearly half of the respondents (47%) are not benefited by the PWDs higher education scholarship scheme and reader allowance. DDRO centre's must ensure the all schemes to all the PWD students, if the schemes implemented through educational institution, barriers will be minimize and beneficiaries will be maximize.

The majority of the respondents (58%) are not benefited by the full fees exemption, no one getting full fees exemption in aided colleges; they are not implementing that scheme. University must create awareness its schemes and polices to all its affiliated colleges and the society through website, Application and prospectors, magazines, circulars and media. And ensure it to all the PWD students of the university.

Conclusion

In this study it was found that schemes and policies are plenty for the welfare and development of differently abled students in the field of education. But the schemes and policies are yet not mandatory by the implementing agencies. It make that the stepping stones are turn into the breaking stone of the target people. Recent survey says that only 0.52% of the differently abled are getting higher education by some of the institutions, majority of the institutions are not following rules and regulations of the policies and legislation related to differently abled. It shows the lack of awareness among the officials of scheme implementing authorities and as well as public. "Alone we can do so little; Together we can do so much" These words are uttered by HELLEN KELLER. It shows the possibilities of higher education to all the PWD students. In coming days right based approach is a new method for rehabilitation and empowerment of differently abled.

REFERENCE

1. Albrecht G.L, Katherine D Seelman. & Michael Bury, (2001) "Hand Book of Disability Studies" Sage Publication, London. pp 25-144|2. Mani M.N.G & M.B. Jaiganesh, (2010), "Source book on disability for social workers" UDIS Forum, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu. pp 51-121|3. Sightsavers India, (2011), "Policies and Schemes of Central and State Governments for People with Disabilities" Sightsavers, India. pp 18-128|4. Udhayakumar (2014), The researcher studied about "National level study on utilization of government selected welfare schemes among PwIDDS in India", Progressive outlook, (Quarterly) vol – IV, no: 1-A, (Special issue – Feb. 2014), IDEAL Foundation, Trichy, Tamil Nadu. pp 86-92|5. National Sample Survey Organization, (2002), "Disabled Persons in India: NSS 58th Round. Report No. 485", Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Government of India, New Delhi. |6. http://www.tn.gov.in/department/35|7. http://socialjustice.nic.in/policiesacts3.php 8.http://nhrc.nic.in/Publications/Disability/00%20NHRC%20Disability%20Manual%202005.html.