



THE CURRENT STATUS OF PROVISIONS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPEECH AND HEARING DISABILITY AS MENTIONED IN RIGHTS OF PERSON WITH DISABILITY ACT, 2016

Rehabilitation

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ABSTRACT

Education of children with speech & hearing disability (CWSHD) in India remains a challenging task. In current inclusive schools one side parents and family members do complain for the poor quality of trained professionals, school infrastructure and limited teaching learning materials (TLM) and accessibility. Other side trained professionals' complaining for not getting good employment, scarcity of accessible and affordable TLM, commitment of school management etc. The newly enacted Rights of persons with Disabilities (RPD) Act 2016 has included inclusive school for all. This present study will try to discuss these burning issues and other challenges related to inclusive education for CWSHD. This study will also try to bring some insight full solution for these issues that can change the future course of action for inclusive schools environment for children with speech and hearing disability in India.

KEYWORDS:

Children with speech & hearing disability, Inclusive Education, Teaching Learning Material, RPD Act, Special School

INTRODUCTION

According to the Newly passed Rights of Person with Disability Act (RPWD), 2016, "Inclusive Education" means a system of education wherein students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities". In the same act is also mentioned that the appropriate Government and the local authorities shall endeavour that all educational institutions funded or recognised by them provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities and towards that end shall fulfil the following.

Table 1: Provisions for children with SHD in inclusive schools (RPWD, 2016)

S. No.	Provisions for children with disabilities (Divyangjan) in regular schools to facilitate full inclusion
1	Admit them without discrimination and provide education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities equally with others
2	Make building, campus and various facilities accessible
3	Provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements
4	Provide necessary support individualised or otherwise in environments that maximise academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion
5	Ensure that the education to persons who are blind or deaf or both is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication
6	Detect specific learning disabilities in children at the earliest and take suitable pedagogical and other measures to overcome them
7	Monitor participation, progress in terms of attainment levels and completion of education in respect of every student with disability
8	Provide transportation facilities to the children with disabilities and also the attendant of the children with disabilities having high support needs.

Thus, Inclusive Education involves all children learning together in the same physical environment. This background seems to indicate that inclusion of children with Speech and hearing Disabilities (SHD) (Divyangjan) in ordinary schools is a right and not a privilege for children with this disability. The inclusion movement has been reinforced by many who believe that separate education is not an equal education, leading to the development of inclusive practices as a guiding educational policy in many countries.

Research indicates that inclusion does not promote positive attitudes, unless specific interaction experiences are planned and the environment is carefully structured (Jones, 1984). Many teachers have

negative attitudes toward students with disabilities because they do not know how to teach them (Clark, French and Henderson, 1986). This highlights the problem of lack of trained professionals in regular schools for Divyangjan. Furthermore, parents' concerns of children with disabilities regarding social integration and academic progress of their child in inclusive settings (Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Palmer, Fuller, Arora, and Nelson, 2001; Seery, Davis, and Johnson, 2000; Fox and Ysseldyke, 1997) create issues because of less adequate teaching learning material.

Parents undoubtedly play a critical role in the lives of their children therefore examination of parents' views is an important aspect of the evaluation of the inclusion movement. Useful conclusions could also be drawn from comparison on school environment for children with SHD (Divyangjan) in inclusive school, between parents of children with SHD, regular teachers and special educators. The purpose of this study was to compare the view of these three groups regarding school environment. In the new RPWD Act it can be seen that THE 8 responsibilities/ or provisions are axial to the school environment for children with SHD. The present paper sought to investigate the views of parents of children with SHD, Regular teachers of Children with SHD and Special educators on the availability of the above 8 provisions for promoting positive school environment for children with SHD.

METHOD

The present study is a descriptive research design, using a questionnaire including 10 questions (Annexure 1) to collect data regarding the perception of parents of children with SHD, Special educators and Regular teachers of Children with SHD using a five point rating scale on the availability of the above 8 provisions (Table 1) for promoting positive inclusive school environment for children with SHD. Each question was intended for respective provision stated in act. Only those schools were included who had children with Speech and hearing disability and were therefore practising inclusive education.

The selection of 20 school was based on simple random sampling. 20 parents of children with speech and hearing disability and 20 regular teachers of children without speech and hearing disability in regular classroom, and 20 special educators working with children with SHD in inclusive school were selected from randomly selected schools using snowball sampling. 1 Member from each group was selected from each school. The only inclusion criteria was that child with SHD (of participating parent) should be attending a regular school, the regular teacher should be having few children with SHD in his/her school, and the special educator must be teaching a child with SHD attending a regular school having inclusive education. Therefore a total sample of 60 was collected. Descriptive statistics was done and ANOVA test was done to find the significance of variance obtained in values.

RESULTS

The present study show insight into whether and how many of the various provisions stated in Right to Person with Disability Act, 2016, are being made available in the inclusive education in the present scenario. The following figure (Figure 1) shows the finding of the three groups on the various provisions.

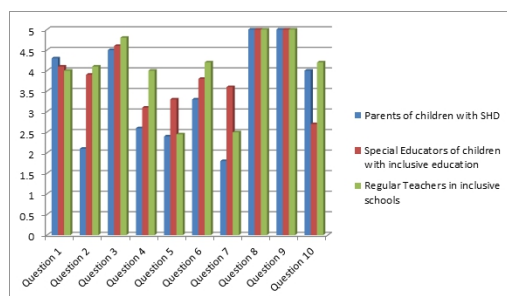


Figure 1: Comparison of means of the three groups for 10 questions

It can be observed in the Figure 1 that most of the participants of the three groups agree that the children with speech and hearing difficulty are admitted without and educated with equality in inclusive education, have access to the school building and are educated in most appropriate language, mode and means of communication. Participants gave remark of use of auditory along with visual modes which included green board as well as practical demonstration by models etc was done. However, the consensus for above was not 100% as observed for monitoring of participation and progress in education as well as providing transport facility to children with SHD in inclusive education.

The difference in opinion observed for equality in sports and recreation, providing extended teaching learning material distinctly required by children with SHD, providing resource person (Special educator, audiologist and speech language pathologist), Curriculum modification for children with specific learning disabilities and providing attendant for children with high support need was found significant between groups using ANOVA (with $F_{\text{observed}} > F_{\text{table}}$) the table of F values for the above questions where variation are observed to be significant is shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Result of ANOVA

Research Questions		Sum of Square (SS)	Degree of freedom (df)	s^2	F	Critical value of F using a significance of .05
Question 2: equality in sports and recreation	B	48.6	2	24.3	57.85	3.15
	W	24.6	57	0.42		
Question 4: providing extended teaching learning material distinctly required by children with SHD	B	20.4	2	10.2	9.6	3.15
	W	60.4	57	1.06		
Question 5: providing resource person (Special educator, audiologist and speech language pathologist)	B	10.8	2	5.4	10.2	3.15
	W	30.2	57	0.53		
Question 7: Curriculum modification for children with specific learning disabilities	B	34	2	17	39.5	3.15
	W	24.4	57	0.43		
Question 10: providing attendant for children with high support need	B	26.8	2	13.4	29.1	3.15
	W	26	57	0.46		

As observed in table 2, the obtained value of F is more than the critical value of F for 2 and 57 degree of freedom for vertical and horizontal axis respectively; therefore the observations are significantly different for different groups.

DISCUSSION

As mentioned in results, most of the participants of the three groups agree that the children with speech and hearing difficulty are educated in most appropriate language, mode and means of communication, however, there is variation between the groups and within group which were although not very significant but indicate that parents perceive that as the child has issues with language. Therefore education in just one medium may not be very effective with child when he has restricted vocabulary in the language and the child may need more than one sensory modality to understand as in total communication for hearing impairment where he may need written, auditory verbal as well as kinaesthetic or 3-D representation of the concept as well. Lack of this variety lead to reduced score in parent group.

The difference observed in providing opportunity for sports and recreation to children with SHD indicates that parents are more sensitive for participation of their children and still might be feeling discriminated whenever the child is left out in screening due to hearing problems in the sports involving active communication such as basket ball, hockey etc. However the teachers might be fulfilling their responsibility of inclusion of children with SHD in those sports where one does not has to actively listen and respond sharply, therefore communicate while playing.

In the variation in extended teaching learning material, it can be observed from figure 1 that a regular teacher since does not has a insight into the requirement of special material which may be little different and extensive than that needed for typically developing child, feels that the material being provided is more than sufficient. However a special educator and a parent realizes the needs better and are providing these material off school hence feel the material shortage in school. This justifies that each school must have a resource person which is a special educator and a speech therapist who are well aware of the needs of children with SHD and therefore the significant difference in perception for question 5 which id provision of supporting individual is felt and should be fulfilled for successful inclusion.

The parents who face the pain of teaching the syllabus of regular school to the child with SHD specifically Specific Learning Disability (SLD) knows and well realizes the need of curriculum modification, since parents do not want child to be a drop out of the inclusive school. However it is reverse for the school administration, which will give a few chances to a child with SLD but will then not take the pain to maintain him with equality and as a result the child is a drop out. To break this vicious cycle, the RPWD, 2016 includes a provision of curriculum modification. The significant difference in opinion between groups speaks aloud for implementation of this provision.

A child with Specific learning disability is a fighter. He faces trouble in even actions which we could not even think of being a problem for a typically developing child. For example a child with SLD may gets hurt more often in sports than any other due to his clumsiness, or he may not be able to button up his shirt if it gets open by chance etc. For these purposes, they need an attendant who is alert for their needs. This need is completely ignored by the school as they fail to understand why a 10-16 yr old child would need a attend to do these works.

CONCLUSION

The idea of inclusive education is gaining ground in many parts of the world, in an attempt to promote children's welfare that is paramount to parents. However India is the only country where 3 ACTs are there for the welfare of Divyangjan. the recent RPWD Act is another excellent attempt to foster Inclusive education. Although more strict actions are needed to enforce the ACT. The present study highlights which are the point in the ACT which needs to be strengthened by enforcing it with more strictness. At the same time the regular school teachers as well as administrators need to be sensitized for each provisions mentioned in the ACT through sensitization programs etc. As the implementation of inclusive practices continues, so does the need to evaluate their effectiveness and as mentioned in the ACT its implementation should be keenly monitored.

ANNEXURE 1

Dear Participant,

It is a pleasure to share with you that the newly enacted Rights of persons with Disabilities (RPD) Act 2016 has included inclusive school for all. However inclusion in school depends on various parameters. In this context we intend to go deeper in the society to know about the challenges in inclusive education. Therefore we request you to participate in this study and help us come to know the current realities. Your identity will be maintained confidential.

No	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1	Are children with SHD admitted and educated without discrimination and equally with others					
2	Are children with SHD provided opportunities for sports and recreation activities without discrimination, equally with others					
3	Is the building, campus and various facilities accessible to children with SHD					
4	Are children with SHD provided extended teaching learning material distinctly required by children with SHD					
5	Are children with SHD provided necessary support individualised/resource persons (Special educators, speech therapists) or otherwise in environments that maximise academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion					
6	Is it ensured that the education to persons who have SHD or both is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication					
7	Is Specific Learning Disabilities in children detected at the earliest and suitable pedagogical and other measures like curriculum modification.					
8	Is participation & progress in education monitored in terms of attainment levels and completion of for children with SHD.					
9	Are children with SHD provided transportation facilities					
10	Are children with SHD provided attendants for the children with speech and hearing disabilities having high support needs.					

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