

# Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs at Elementary Stage in Himachal Pradesh

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**Abstract:** *The objective of the present study was to identify the nature of administrative, physical and attitudinal problems in implementation of inclusive education in Himachal Pradesh .It may be said from the results that the position of implementation of Inclusive education was not up to mark. In the nut shell it can be concluded that the status of implementation of Inclusive education in Himachal Pradesh was not satisfactory .There were a number of physical, administrative and attitudinal problems to providing education to CwSNs in an inclusive school. The school heads were perceived significant problems to inclusion by all stakeholders.*

**Key Words:** *Inclusive education, Children with Special Educational Needs (CwSNs), Himachal Pradesh.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

According to the census 2011, there are 26.8 million persons with disabilities in India constituting 2.22 percent of its total population. Out of the total population of persons with disabilities, 20.3 percent are locomotors impaired, 18.9percent hearing impaired, 18.8 percent visually impaired, 7.5 percent speech impaired, 5.6 percent mentally retarded,2.7 percent mentally ill and 7.9 percent suffer from multiple disabilities. The official figure on persons with disabilities in India, obtained through National Sample Survey Organization (2003) comprehensive survey on disability, revealed that there were 21 million disabled persons in 2002. The national Census of 2001 estimated that disabled persons were 2.13 percent of total population. However, estimates varied across sources and a World Bank Report (2005) on the disabled persons in India, observed that there was growing evidence that people with disabilities comprised between 5 to 8 percent( around 55-90 million ) of the Indian population. The figures indicated by the Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities (2007) are different from others. It has been found that there is a large discrepancy among different sources /surveys which estimated prevalence of disabled population in India. The discrepancy in counting number of persons with disabilities in India is due to varied reasons like survey is done by untrained enumerators; lack of single definition of disability and myths and conceptions related to disability.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Frieden (2004), Chairperson, National Council on Disability, Washington, DC, found lack of administrative support and time as major problems to education of the learners with disabilities. Other problems included: insufficient teaching materials, a mismatch between methods of teaching and learning styles, misfit evaluation procedures, and teachers' lack of understanding of the inclusive practices. According to Swain et al. (2004), the notion of inclusion is based on understanding the exclusion and the need to address problems to inclusion. These problems are understood in a range of ways. The problems may be structural, attitudinal or physical. The inflexible policies and inadequate allocation of resources were structural problems, the inability of students with disabilities to access different places in the school were physical problems whereas indifferent attitude of teachers and behavioural labeling of the 'disabled by peer group were categorized as attitudinal problems. The researchers viewed that inclusion should work for creating enabling rather than disabling environments, with a focus on overcoming a wide range of problems. The review of literature in Bangladesh and Vietnam by Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID), Bangladesh (2005) as cited in Ahuja and Ibrahim, (2006) reveals that inclusive schools were being operated in Bangladesh by the NGOs in a non-formal system and only marginalized children, and children with mild degrees of disabilities, were enrolled in the inclusive schools. The authors, after reviewing the literature on inclusive education in Bangladesh, concluded that the teachers were not adequately qualified and trained for inclusion, classrooms were inaccessible and seating arrangements were uncomfortable for children with disabilities. The review suggested that the classroom environment was not suitable for accommodating different types of disabled children and the supply of teaching/ learning materials/equipment was insufficient. In Vietnam, all the government special schools had been transformed into inclusive schools. Regarding Vietnam, the shortfalls indicted by this study were: insufficient resource allocation, inadequately trained teachers, inadequate supply of Braille book, lack of equipments and other teaching/learning materials, rigid curriculum, and improper planning.

According to Edmonds (2005), cited by the Asia Pacific Centre on Disability, there are at least four types of problems faced by people with disability-structures, information systems, governance, and attitudes. With regard to using teaching strategies in inclusive settings, a summary report of the European Agency for Development of Special Needs Education (2005) concluded that teaching approaches namely co-operative teaching, cooperative learning, collaborative problem solving, heterogeneous grouping, effective teaching, home-based education system etc., were suitable for the learners with disabilities at primary as well as secondary school level. In the same report, the case study of Luxembourg (2005) reported that teachers observed and documented the behavioral and learning difficulties of students with disabilities. These reports were shared with those who were teaching a specific class of the learners with disabilities. The case study of Iceland's schools (2005) showed that although the students with disabilities spent most of their school time in the inclusive classroom, a big part of their teaching and learning was individualized. Here, the study material was adapted and modified to the needs of the students.

The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), New Delhi conducted a survey in 2009 to know the status of education of the disabled in the country. Three hundred and twenty two (322) universities and three hundred and nineteen (319) schools were contacted during the survey and out of these one hundred and nineteen (119) universities and eighty nine (89) schools responded. The result showed that only 0.1 % of the disabled students were in universities and 0.5% in the mainstream schools. The figure indicated that a considerable neglect of the disabled persons still prevailed in the society.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY-**

To identify the nature of administrative, physical and attitudinal problems in implementation of inclusive education in Himachal Pradesh.

### **4. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY-**

- The present study was delimited to investigate the implementation of inclusive education in four districts of Himachal Pradesh.
- The present study was delimited to 56 government schools of total schools that are either designated as inclusive schools or getting grants from state of Himachal Pradesh for inclusive education.

**5. METHODOLOGY** -In order to accomplish the objectives of the present study the Descriptive method of research was used.

**5.1 SAMPLE-** The sample of this study was drawn from 4 districts comprising 56 schools. The district of the research were selected i.e. Kangra, Solan, Una and Mandi. 14 schools were selected from each district. The multistage random sampling technique was used for drawing schools.

**5.2 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED** - In the present study, the data was analyzed, using appropriate statistical techniques, in the light of the objectives set forth for the investigation. The data collected through checklist for identification of problems to inclusive education was tabulated and entered into the master sheet. The data was analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The frequency of responses was converted into percentage for the purpose of analysis.

**5.3 . TOOLS USED-** The researcher used checklist to fulfill the objectives. The researcher divided the entire checklist into three main areas namely physical, administrative and attitudinal along with many sub-areas/dimensions of each main area. The first section of the check-list contained 39 items related to physical problems, the second section contains 25 items on administrative problems and the third section had 15 items to identify the attitudinal problems. While preparing the items, the guidelines issued by Government for creating 'Problem Free Environment' were also taken into consideration. The dimensions on physical problems included problems to entrance, ramps, internal access, classrooms, toilets, drinking water facilities, library, mid-day meal dining areas, and play fields. The dimensions on administrative problems included resource problems, enrolment problems, in-service teacher training problems, planning and management problems etc. The dimensions of attitudinal problems contained items on philosophy of inclusion, legal problems and rights and abilities of the disabled students. The literature on problems indicates that children with disabilities faces difficulty in reading, writing, understanding and accessing the classrooms, playgrounds, labs., toilets as well as there are issues like inadequate funding, lack of training on inclusion, collaboration between stakeholders etc. that needs to be taken care of if inclusion is to be implemented effectively. According to SSA guidelines, Problem Free Access (PFA) refers to universal access for all children and adults within the schools. It is not limited only to buildings and physical infrastructure, but also extends itself to curriculum and teaching learning processes. An attempt was made to cover these aspects in the checklist.

Afterwards, a check list rating scale was developed by the researcher. This rating scale was named as ‘Discrepancy Scale’. The purpose of the ‘Discrepancy Scale’ was to rate the extent/degree to which the items being rated meet the requirement of each standard set by the government/researcher for inclusive education. This scale is divided into four categories/levels. The first level was assigned a score of 1 and it was named ‘Major’. It means that a check ( ✓ ) in that column shows a major discrepancy from meeting the standard. A check in the second column ( score 2) designates a ‘Minor’ discrepancy of the standard, but it is close to meeting the standards/ requirements. A check in the third column (score 3) shows ‘No’ discrepancy. It means that the item being rated meets the full requirements of the standard. A check in the fourth column (score 0). Marked ‘NA’, shows that the standard is not applicable to the item being rated. The scale was easy to use and gave results which were easily understandable. A ‘comments’ column was also included in the checklist. It provided a space to the researcher to note down any specific observation related to rating. The information generated by the checklist items (standards), the rating scale, and the ‘comments’ column presented useful data concerning what type of standards were formulated by the government, to what extent the schools fulfilled these standards, and what actions (if any) were needed to overcome the discrepancies.

The validity of the checklist was determined on the basis of face validity. The validity was determined by experts after examining the tool according to the set objectives and considering the fact that it contained the items developed on the basis of acceptable reference sources government guidelines. The reliability of the checklist was determined on the basis of rating scores obtained by the researcher during the pilot testing of the checklist and comparing these scores with the scores given by a special education teacher, who accompanied the researcher during the pilot testing, on another set of checklist. The ratings of the two check-lists were compared in each category after the visits to schools during the try-out. After comparing the data of two sets of checklist, the co-efficient of correlation was found to be .83 which indicated a good degree of reliability for the checklist.

## 6. ANALYSIS:

The summary of administrative problems to the implementation of inclusive education is presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Summary of Administrative Problems to the Implementation of Inclusive Education**

S.N.	Dimension	Number of Standards Surveyed	Number of Standard Met fully
1	Resource summary of identified administrative problems to the implementation of inclusive education is presented in Problems	3	3
2	Enrolment Problems	2	1
3	Planning and Management Problems	5	1
4	In-service Training Problems	2	1
5	Instructional & Assessment innovation Problems	9	0
6	Policy Problems	4	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>

Figures presented in Table 1 provide evidence that the school administrators were problems to the implementation of inclusive education. It is clear from Table 1 that only 6 standards out of 25 were fully met by heads (administrators) of the sample schools. This would imply that the provisions of inclusive education mentioned in SSA framework were not being adequately complied by majority of school heads.

The summary of physical problems to the implementation of inclusive education is presented in the Table 2

**Table-2**  
**Summary of Physical Problems to the Implementation of Inclusive Education**

Sr.no.	Dimension	No of Standards surveyed	Number of Standards Met fully
1	Entrance	3	1
2	Internal Access	3	2
3	Ramp	4	0
4	Toilet	7	0
5	Drinking water	2	0
6	Signage	1	0
7	Open Surfaces/Floor	3	0
8	Classroom	7	6
9	Library	2	0
10	Door	3	2

11	Mid-day Meal Serving Area	2	0
12	Sports/Recreation Area	2	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>11</b>

Figures presented in Table 2 provides evidence that overall picture for meeting the requirements of physical access was disappointing since only 11 standards out of 39 were fully met by the sample schools. This would imply that the needs of the CwSNs were not being adequately met in majority of schools with regard to being able to find a drinking water facility, mid-day meal serving area and using the toilet facility safely and without assistance. The researcher observed that that the mid-day meal area, drinking water resources, ground for morning assembly, toilets etc. were not easily identifiable.

The summary of attitudinal problems to the implementation of inclusive education is presented in the Table 3

**Table 3**  
**Summary of Attitudinal Problems to the Implementation of Inclusive Education**

S.N.	Dimension	Number of Standards Surveyed	Number of Standard Met fully
1	Attitude towards the CwSNs and their Disability	7	0
2	Attitude towards Inclusive Education	8	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>

Figures in Table 3 provides evidence that not a single feeling was positively expressed by all the respondents to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education. The negative feelings towards the CwSNs and inclusive education were expressed by majority of respondents. The negative feelings were related to the process of inclusive education than its philosophy. It may be implied from the results that the respondents need more awareness and understanding about the philosophy, policies and practice of inclusive education so as to enable them to positively contribute in the planning and implementation of inclusive education.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

The inclusive education under SSA was launched by the government of India in 2003 with an objective to increase the 26 enrolment of CwSNs at elementary stage by providing them accessible and quality education .This was in-line with policy of government to achieve the target of universal elementary education. However, the finding of this study show that the objectives set by the government 15 years ago has not been met so far. The position of the implementation of inclusive education was not found up to mark. It was noted that 55% of overall survey standards were not being fully implemented by the sample schools. The study found school administrators a problem to the implementation of inclusive education. Only 6 standards out of 25 were fully met by heads (administrators) of the sample schools. This would imply that the provisions of inclusive education mentioned in SSA framework were not being adequately complied with majority of school heads. The head of the schools miserably failed to encourage the teachers to use technology in classroom, prepare and use the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) etc. Some of the reasons for administrative problems are that the heads lacked autonomy, motivation and relevant training to practice the philosophy of inclusion. This study suggests a need to work on these three issues since autonomy is closely associated with motivation and planning.

In the nut shell, it can be concluded that implementation status of inclusive education in Himachal Pradesh was not satisfactory. The school heads were perceived significant problems to inclusion by all stakeholders. The problems may be overcome by creating awareness and providing training on inclusive education, recruiting special teachers at school level to meet the specific demands of CwSNs within the classroom and by getting the support from parents. Involvement of parents and CwSNs is essential while planning construction and classroom activities and providing transport facilities in consultation with teachers and administrators. The stakeholders have a vital role as partners to the implementation of inclusive education and identification and removal of problems to its success.

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**Note:** This research paper work as second author's doctoral research study and published another time with same title, Only same title with different contents, theory, analysis data published in other journal.