

Saarth

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Challenges in Education of CwD's

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Purpose of Study

Like general education, special education opens doors to all possibilities. With specially-designed instruction that utilizes adaptive devices, benchmarks, supplementary aids and services, program modifications, peer-involved learning environments and progress evaluations, children with disabilities can become adults who pursue degrees, attain careers, achieve goals and set records.

- **Provide a standard of living**
- **Attain employment**
- **Fight the spread of diseases**
- **Reduce mother and child mortality**
- **Advance technology**
- **Create a greener planets**
- **Make the world a better place**

Statement of the Problem

- Stigma can undermine social cohesion and prompt possible social isolation of groups, which might contribute to a situation where the virus is more, not less, likely to spread. This can result in more severe health problems and difficulties controlling a disease outbreak.
- Stigma can:
- Drive people to hide the illness to avoid discrimination
- Prevent people from seeking health care immediately
- Discourage them from adopting healthy behaviour

Social isolation / Additional Psysical Support

"People need assistance with personal hygiene. ... Even being asked to wash your hands can be more challenging. We have to assist them in the shower," she said.

- GEETA DEVI said it was "not at all" possible to practice social distancing, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention described as maintaining a distance of 6 feet between yourself and others.
- Narayan Lal, whose 24-year-old daughter lives in a BHIM Rajsamand residence, similarly said that social distancing in a group home like where daughter lives is "not possible.
- " Pratap Singh said that's because of how intimate the work is and because some of the residents rely on being very close to others to establish a connection.

Social isolation

▪ Everyday lives for individuals across the globe have been severely affected due to COVID-19. Amidst this, it becomes important to keep children with physical and mental disability not only physically safe, but also look after their psychological and emotional wellbeing. In particular, social distancing and its effects are extremely novel and difficult to

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understand for children, especially those experiencing developmental and intellectual delays. This affects their wellbeing and places them at a higher risk for clinically significant mental health issues. COVID-19 has disrupted lives across the globe and is more likely to disproportionately affect those children with pre-existing vulnerabilities. Effective measures should be taken to seek immediate as well as long-term solutions to battle this issue.

Barriers to education can take a variety of forms-

They can be Physical, Technological, Systemic, Financial, or Attitudinal, or they can arise from an education provider's failure to make available a needed accommodation in a timely manner.

Unsufficient Funding:

Often, accommodation decisions are made based on budgetary considerations rather than on an assessment of the actual needs of students with disabilities. At the post-secondary level, the funding structure is highly complex, with some programs containing eligibility requirements and restrictions that raise human rights issues.

Lack of Tecnological Training

"The teachers also reported that 64 per cent of students (CwD) did not have smartphones or computers at home. As many as 67 per cent of students (CwD) said they needed tabs or computers or comparable devices for online education," the survey said. 70% of children with disabilities said they needed data/Wi-fi support for educational purposes while 61% expressed a need for scribes, escorts, readers and attendants, it said.

Struggle with online education / limit internet

"There are children, whose parents are construction workers and agricultural labourers, who were already struggling to go to school. They are dealing with prejudice in the house too. The biggest motivation of education is to go to school and mingle with other children. Moreover, online education is only rote learning. With the COVID-19 restrictions, we should at least try and overcome the digital divide,"

Websites are not Up-To-Date

Accessibility is nothing but ensuring that information and functionality is available to all users including people with disabilities. The Accessibility Guidelines identify an accessible website as one which can be perceived, operated, understood and is robust. Today, thanks to the advancement of technology, people with disabilities are able to use computers and perform every task that others do. For example, a visually impaired person uses the screen reader to access the computer; a deaf- blind user uses a refreshable Braille display, hearing impaired persons rely on captions to understand the multimedia, learning disabled users rely on image based content and elderly people prefer to see large fonts and so on. In addition, there are lots of features available in the browser itself. For instance, in Firefox, we can increase the font size by using the key combination of CTRL and Plus and can also change the contrast of the page.

A brief survey of some 1500 of these websites revealed that barely one per cent of these meet the requirements of the above guidelines. Many of them are not up-to-date and some don't even reveal their government identity that could actually make users think of authentication.

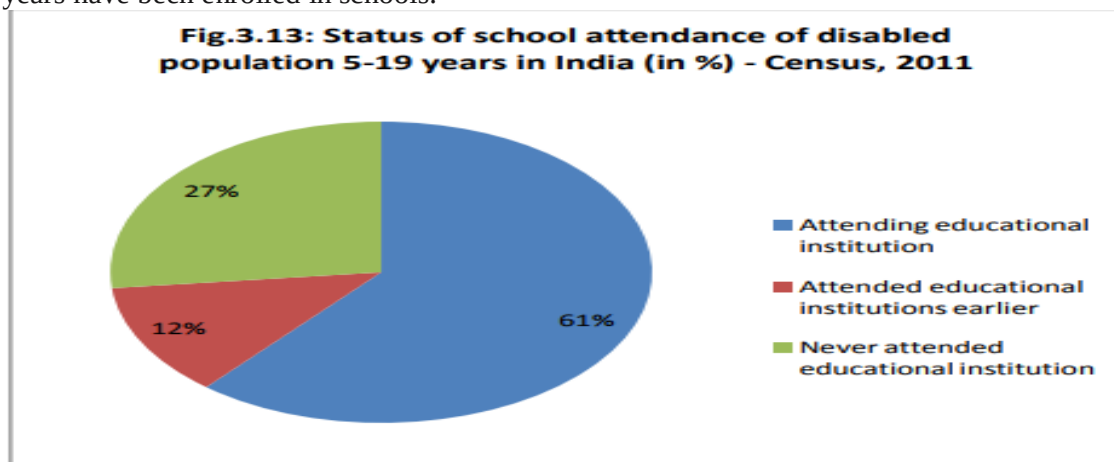
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Data Variables

■ Inadequacies in formal identification & continued invisibility in classrooms The annual school based survey - District Information System for Education (DISE) - collects data on several variables which measure progress towards including children with disabilities, such as their school enrolment rates, number of schools with ramps and accessible toilets. The Ministry of Human Resource Development in its Annual Report for 2014-15 states that, as part of the SSA initiative, 2.5 million children with special needs in the age group 6 to 14 years have been enrolled in schools.



Different Disabilities, Different Requirements



The other major challenge with online learning for this particular section is the wide spectrum of disabilities, with a specific disability requiring specific necessities. "One needs speaking computers for the blind, sign language for the hearing impaired. But such modifications are a very big effort,"

The need for disability certificates:

Disability certificate makes a remarkable difference in the life of a differently able person. More than 40% disability of person can gain this certificate, the certificate makes its holder eligible for various state and central government schemes, scholarships, and even an unemployment allowance. Only Medical boards of district civil hospitals can issue this disability certificates. In reality, over half of the people with the disability did not have disability certificates

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Government Policies and NGOs in the field of Disabilities

For children with disabilities, the government has special schools are located in urban areas and run by voluntary organizations. 'At present there are 3000 special schools for differently able children are operating across the country. Out of them, approximately 900 are marked for the hearing impaired, 400 for the visually impaired, 1000 for the mentally retarded and the remaining 700 for the children with physical disabilities. 40 percent disability of any such particular types is ideal for identification and certification for admission in special schools'.

Psychological Problem of Special Children in learning

Quitting, when tasks become difficult or frustrating;

Avoiding a task or activity for fear of failing;

Clowning, to hide lack of confidence or to relieve pressure;

Controlling, to counteract a sense of helplessness;

Being aggressive and bullying, to fend off feelings of vulnerability;

Denying, in order to manage the pain they would feel if insecurities were acknowledged;

Being impulsive, finishing tasks as quickly as possible "just to get it over with."

Lack of clarity in current laws

Although the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act) states that educational institutes should "*provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements and provide necessary support, individualised or otherwise, in environments that maximise academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion,*" it does not clearly specify norms and standards on 'reasonable accommodation', 'individualised support' and 'full inclusion'. Thus, without the necessary specifications, it goes only halfway in achieving the goal of inclusive education.

Further, there is a lack of harmonisation between the main legislations that govern inclusive education in India. For example, even though the RPWD Act makes inclusive education a statutory guarantee, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) does not even define inclusive education.

There is no saprate college or university for disabled

A large number of children with disabilities pursue education through NIOS

A large number of children with disabilities do not go to regular schools but are enrolled at the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).

A review of enrolment figures at NIOS shows a decline for most categories of disabilities between 2009 and 2015.

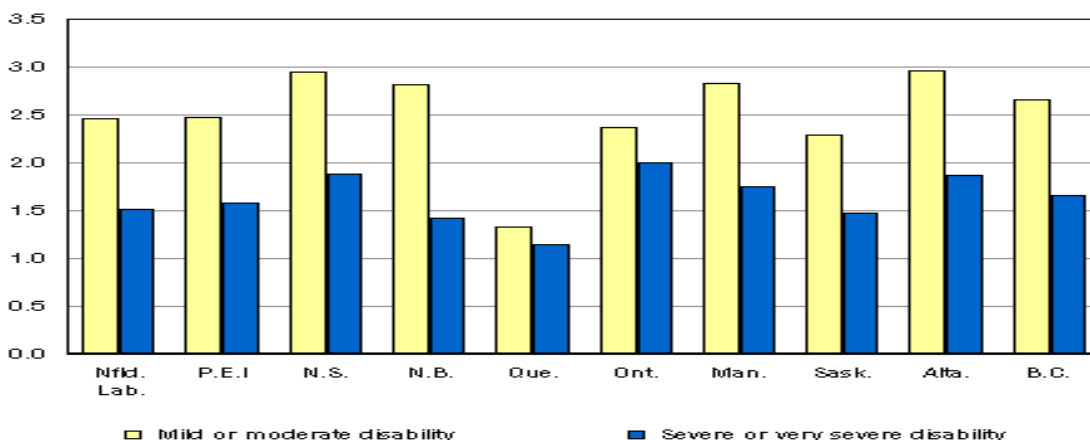
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"The biggest group of CWDs enrolling with NIOS over the years have been those with learning disabilities. While there has been a drop in enrolment of students with locomotor and visual impairments, there has been a rise in those with multiple disabilities. Reported disability especially for mild or moderate disability, 2001

Percentage of children with a disability



Conclusion

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 - Attain employment
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 - Advance technology
 - Create a greener planets
 - Make the world a better place
1. Improving the work on identification of children with different disabilities and promoting overall access to school for them are vital.
 2. Involvement of different stakeholders such as school, community leaders, government officers, parents having children with disabilities, Disabled people organization in facilitating education for children with disabilities by adopting partnership approach.
 3. The creation of barrier free environment including provision of ramps, transport facilities for accessibility to school.
 4. Creating facilities for home based schooling or special education for children with multiple disabilities, deaf-blind and intellectual and severe disabilities who may not be able to attend regular school.
 5. Organizing teacher training refresher courses for all teachers from private and government school on information on disability, individual educational plans, teaching-learning methods to support the education of children with disabilities.
 6. Addressing attitudinal barriers by community awareness programme on disability and education
 7. Making it mandatory for representation of parents of children with disabilities in education committee

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8. Conducting parental education programme such as workshop, training materials to help parents support their child's learning
9. Ensuring coordination with various ministries and line departments responsible for education and spell out each one role for effective implementation of educational policy for children with disabilities

There is no permanent post of SPECIAL EDUCATOR in Government KVS, NVS, SVMS, MGMS (CBSE) Schools

1. To create commensurate permanent posts as per the just ratio to be specified by the competent authority for the rehabilitation professionals/special teachers who can cater to the needs of CwSN;
2. To initiate appointment process to fill-in vacancies for the posts so created for rehabilitation professionals/special teachers for being appointed on regular basis. The same shall be completed within six months from the date of this order or before the commencement of academic year 2022-2023, whichever is earlier;
3. To overcome the shortage of resource persons (rehabilitation professionals/special trained teachers), the training schools/institutions must take steps to augment the number whilst ensuring that the norms and standards specified under the governing laws and regulations including that of the Council for grant of recognition and registration are fulfilled;
4. Until sufficient number of special teachers becomes available for general schools and special schools, the services of special trained teachers can be availed as itinerant teachers as per the SSS within the school block (cluster schools) to optimize the resource persons and as a stopgap arrangement;
5. The other teachers and staff in the general schools be given compulsory training and sensitized to handle the CwSN in the general schools, if admitted; and
6. The authorities may also explore the possibility of merging unviable special schools with relatively viable special schools in the neighbourhood, so as to entail in consolidation of assets and resources for better delivery to the requirements of CwSN.

References

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0

Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW)

The RPWD Act, 2016

WHO online learning platform

Unicef Agora platform of online learning

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and classroom observations, in six primary schools, in three districts of Rajasthan