



## PROVISIONS AND CHALLENGES OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL: A TEACHING-LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT:

Education plays a major role in developing an individual's talents. Qualitative elementary education makes the base for future learning. Generally, visually impaired students are different from normal students. Here, the paper explores what the committee and commissions have suggested different provisions for improving teaching-learning standards for visually impaired students in India and the problems the visually impaired students face in inclusive schools' teaching-learning process. Visually impaired students face difficulties to receive knowledge because of the shortage of teaching-learning materials and Braille books, the scarcity of time, infrastructure, typewriter, recording devices, projector, talk device, and tactile maps, etc.

### KEYWORDS:

PROVISION AND CHALLENGES, VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN, INCLUSIVE, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

### INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization said that "Just recently About 285 million people are visually impaired around the world: 39 million are blind and 246 million have low vision" (WHO, 2019). As per Census 2011, "in India, out of the 121 Cr population, about 2.68 Cr individuals are 'impaired' which is 2.21% of the total population. Out of overall disabled persons, in which 19% are within visually impaired" (Ministry of Law and Justice 2016). Almost 40 million individuals in India, 1.6 million young children, are under the category of visually impaired or blind because of uncorrected refractive mistakes (Tribune News Service, 2019). "Primary school education is an important transition towards attaining an effective their adult years and positive work results. The participation in higher degree courses is an important part of the transition process specified in the Individual with Disabilities" (Education Act, 2004). The education act mandates that "appropriate support services need to be attended to students with disabilities in primary school education set settings to allow them to reside in an inclusive community." Some studies said that, "achievement of primary school education is often a transition goal and a pathway towards the successful transition from school to work" (Powersl et al., 2005). "The right of every child to education is announced Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and was strongly reaffirmed by the Jometien World Declaration of Education for All (1990)". In addition, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) said that "essential resolution to enhance the academic conditions of persons with specials needs." The Indian government has been amended important Acts for children with special needs. "This has major ramifications for the Indian circumstance in the type of four legislative Acts the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 (RCI Act), the Persons with Disabilities

(Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act, 2011) and The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016". People with specials needs technical, professional, and vocational training and work abilities to end up being able to get earning sources (Conway, Stodden, & Chang, 2003). It requires to guarantee that elementary education should make more flexible and accessible for pupils with specials needs. The incorporation of innovation support has actually been recorded to have a favourable result in improving primary school education availability for individuals with disabilities. It has also been discovered that there is a strong favourable connection between the achievements of grade school education to protecting successful work for individuals with impairments (Stodden et al., 2003). Primary education is an important shift towards attaining an effective secondary education. Pupils with impairments have been showing good participation in elementary Education (Powers and Palmer, 2005). Previous research has actually revealed that "the use of assistive technology influences accessible elementary school education and teaching students about self-advocacy skills to know their obligation in undertaking their program" (Stodden et al., 2003). To a higher degree, instructional materials play a very important role in improving people with an impairment to secure jobs and vocations. Pupils who are visually impaired include pupils exactly who are actually blind, have no vision, or have little capacity to utilize vision or pupils who possess low vision (Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992). However, many problems faced by people with impairments (Visually Impaired) cannot receive elementary school education due to numerous environmental barriers (Stodden et al., 2003). Barriers to available school education consist of shortages of

assistance, lack of available technology, and bad individualized education preparation dealing with the trainees' special needs.

By the recommendation of "United Nations (UN) passed a series of conventions and declarations by the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in 1992, The World Declaration on Education for All in 1990, The Convention on the Rights of the children in 1989, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 stated that the general education authorities are accountable for the education of persons with impairments in inclusive settings". Inclusive education ensures access to conditions of excellence in education for everyone, consisting of those with learning problems and margins because of psychological or physical impairments or considering that of their social position (NCFTE, 2009). All children have the right to education, and Inclusive Education is a standard-essential human right for all kids with impairments. (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017 & RPWD Act, 2016). Inclusive education has been seen as an integrated and tactical approach to all learners' various requirements and maximizes participation in culture, knowledge, and community, and decreasing exemption from education and within Education (UNESCO, 48th International Conference On Education, 2006). Students with disabilities have been revealing a significant involvement in primary Education (Powers and Palmer, 2005). Classroom training strategies continuously challenge pupils with visual problems. Pupils who are visually impaired face many learning difficulties (Holbrook & Koenig, 2000b; Huebner, 2000). Although they can easily hear lectures and discussions, it can be challenging for them to access class syllabi, textbooks, overhead projector clarity, maps, videos, written presentations, films, and examinations. Trainees who are visually impaired need substantially more time than other kids to discover and explore (Finello, & Kekelis, 1992). Most human learning is visually based (Finello, & Kekelis, 1992). Visually impaired kids face lots of learning difficulties (Leigh, 2009). The absence of books and recommendation products and the problems in obtaining them are among the most challenging barriers dealt with by people with visual impairment (Khoo, 1998). Such findings have triggered elementary education studies dealing with visually impaired children (Bardin, 2004). This article explored what provisions have been made for VI students in teaching-learning and what kinds of problems and challenges faced VI students in that area.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

- What are the provisions are made for visually impaired children in India?
- What are common problems faced by visually impaired children in the teaching-learning process at inclusive elementary schools in India?

### **DIFFERENT POLICY, PROGRAM, AND PROVISIONS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN INDIA**

Constitutional Safeguards: "The Indian Constitution gives us all equal status and equality of opportunity. Everyone is treated equal, regardless of race or nationality (Article 14, 15, 19, and 21 respectively of the Constitution)". Article 45 states that "free and compulsory education shall be provided for all children until the age of 14 years". Thus, the Ministry of Education (MOE) enacted the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act 2002 that has made "education is the fundamental right. It protects the educational right of all children from the age of 6 to 14 years". Though it is not explicit on the visually impaired, it indirectly protects disabled children. Kothari Commission (1964-66): This commission was the first to address issues of participation and access by all. It emphasized the importance of a common school system that is open to all children regardless of one's creed, caste, community, social status, religion, etc. National Education Policy (1968): "Recommendations and suggested Kothari commissions on expanding educational facilities for mentally and physically disabled children and the development and promotion of an 'integrated program' enabling handicapped/impaired children to study regular schools". National Policy on Education (1986): This policy focused on the children's requirements with impairments. "The objective needs to be to integrate the special needs pupils with the general community as equivalent partners, to prepare all of them for normal growth and to allow them to deal with life along with courage and confidence. Integrated Education of Disabled Children (1974): The policy was transferred to the Ministry of Human Resources Development in 1982, then the Department of Education. MHRD's measures were educational opportunities in common schools for disabled children to facilitate their retention in schools and place them in common schools, which have already been set up in special schools following after they acquire functional communication and daily living skills. Plan of Action (1992): "It suggested that a child with a disability who may be educated in a general school should be educated in a general school only and not in a unique school. Even those at first admitted to special schools for training in plus curriculum competencies should be moved to general schools once they acquire daily living competencies, communication skills, and fundamental academic skills". Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Security of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995: which deals that "appropriate government and the local authorities shall provide education, guarantee that every child with a disability has access to free education in a proper environment till he attains the age of eighteen years. Endeavour to encourage the integration of learners with disabilities in regular schools". National Trust Act (1999): This Act looks to "protect and promote the rights of individuals who, within the disability sector, have been a lot more marginalized than others". This act does not directly handle students' education with special requirements. Its thrust areas are to promote programs, which promote inclusion and independence by making the barrier-free environment, establishing functional skills of the disabled and promoting

self-help groups. Integrated education for the Disabled (PIED): It was a joint venture of MHRD and UNICEF. It specifies 'anywhere possible, the education of children with motor handicaps and additional mild handicaps will be in common with others. District Primary Education Programme (1994): In these states, approximately 6.21 lakh teenagers with special needs had actually been registered in regular schools with adequate assistance services. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2000): said that "This adopts a zero rejection policy and utilizes an approach of assembling various existing programs and schemes. It focused on strengthening special schools and inclusive education". The RTE Act, 2009: The RTE Act attempts to "protect the children's rights from the disadvantaged groups and the weaker segments, safeguard them from any discrimination and ensure their elementary education fulfilment". CWSN, Act-2016: ensure that "education must be provided to deaf or blind people or both in the most appropriate languages and modes of interaction". To train and use teachers, including problem instructors who are Braille and also instructors who are trained to teach visually impaired children; to offer free of charge books, other learning materials, and proper assistive gadgets to students with disabilities; to use scholarships, where appropriate, to students with special needs.

### **PROBLEMS FACED BY VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS**

Although the pupils within inclusive setups are more adjusted than those in special schools, the hard reality is that their modification is not at a satisfactory level (Garg, 2014). The family climate and self-esteem of visually disabled children play a really important role in a children's scholastic life (Sharma, 2005). Inappropriate school environments and family atmosphere are the most prominent aspects that lead to the visually handicapped (Sharma and Sunita, 1988). Many of the disabled children or their parents are also not positive sufficient to look for equivalent involvement, and they are not familiar with the facilities offered to them (Laskar & Sarma, 2017 and Dash, 2005). Visually impaired students taking more time in translating meaning as reading in Braille needs more time and involves a great quantity of synthesizing and memorizing, considering the wholeness of expressions, sentences, etc. Format (for writing letters, applications, etc.) can be verbally introduced by the instructor (Anita et al., 2015). A couple of subjects also at a higher level of primary schooling are considered most challenging by visually impaired students (Julka, 2005). In the classroom, visually impaired students faced problems checking out the text written on the whiteboard.

Visually impaired students deal with difficulties while learning Geometry. He described challenges faced while finding out about Science (Physics, Chemistry, and Biology). The primary difficulty was with conducting lab experiments. Visually impaired pupils never performed any laboratory experiments. He discussed that the primary challenge with Braille material was that it was extremely

limited (Kaur, 2018: Sahasrabudhe & Palvia, 2013 and Dash, 2005). Also, in Math and Science, the teachers never let him take part in the laboratories. Math equations were complicated to find out and fix. Writing with Braille was not possible since Braille proficiency, lack of access to computers system, and screen reading technology. NCERT (2006). Pupils are experiencing specific finding out problems to receive creative and efficient support to increase their success (Sahasrabudhe & Palvia, 2013).

Teachers lack inexperienced instructors, unsuitable teaching-learning practices, absence of partnership and assessment among the instructors for the education of special requirements children, absence of specialized aid by the teachers, and lack of support by the teachers. Blind students carried out much better on multiple option tests by using Braille and needed more time while taking tests in Braille. The factors concerning schools are the lack of instructional products' unavailability, lack of linkage with special schools, and aids and devices. None of the schools has a resource space from where the special needs children obtain any specialized help. Moms and dads do not involve active participation in the education of their special needs children. Non- disabled peers do not supply peer tutoring to their disabled peers (Dash, 2005). Even if the books are asked for by students or teachers in Braille or audio form, it took several months, and their assessment is getting over. The software application JAWS (Job Access with Speech) used by the visually impaired to listen is not available. Once again, language reading is a problem, and its study material is also not readily available (Kaur, 2018).

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Hence, a more practical and available course of school education may be to set a structured program that enables students with impairments to have program access and support throughout the core curriculum. Hence, a more accessible and viable school education program would be to set an organized program that allows pupils with disabilities to have program access and support throughout the core curriculum. An appropriate inclusive school environment for children with visual impairment ought to offer facilities that are impairment friendly, teaching amenities (equipment and products), personnel, and other associated services required for the wellbeing of the pupils within the school milieu. Difficult subjects content should remove from the curriculum. An alternate examination should arrange for visually impaired students.

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