

Inclusive Education: Infrastructural Facilities for CWSN in Delhi

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is indispensable for achieving education for all. Children with special needs are under special services due to developmental disorders. In terms of disabilities, children with special needs (CWSN) are themselves physically and psychologically deficient and face multiple challenges in the wake of unique barriers whether architectural, attitudinal or institutional which may include a lack of understanding and co-operation from administration, faculty, and other learners as well. Besides, inaccessibility to buildings facilities and other support service are the measure challenges in the education of CWSN. The present study aimed to identify the available infrastructural facilities for CWSN. The study was conducted on 50 Senior Secondary Schools of Delhi. Data were collected through questionnaire developed by the researchers. The sample was taken by using systematic random sampling. Findings of the study revealed that architectural facilities for CWSN were good on physical facilities and teaching-learning facilities but independent living facilities was on average level for CWSN to including them in mainstream.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Infrastructural Facilities, CWSN.*

Across the world every person has its unique identity and own power to take action. And there are million people who are different from others and unable to perform even their daily routine activities due to some disabilities as physical, hearing, vision, mental so on (Ashfaq, Bashir, & Hassan, 2015). Children who have some difficulties with respect to their physical, emotional, mental and social aspects are considered CWSN (Simorangkir, 2021). Sharma (2018) also argued that all children have their own abilities to learn and they vary in learning strategies also. Therefore, the educational system must be designed as that is accessible to all children and suit the needs of all as every child has the inalienable right to education irrespective of their diverse needs (Devi & Reddy, 2016). To deal with this diversity effectively inclusive education has emerged as a way not only to respond but also to celebrate these differences and to empower all who have been deprived of education (Kiran, 2020). Sudha and Indu (2015) explained that the origin of inclusion has emerged from special needs of education and this education system has explored different ways of responding to children with disabilities and those children that experience difficulties in learning. The concept of inclusive education emerged before the 20th century as many countries accept the importance of the inclusion of CWSN in mainstream education

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Received: November 25, 2022; Revision Received: February 15, 2023; Accepted: February 19, 2023

(Irerri, et al., (2019) and efforts are being made universally to promote inclusive education to accomplish the different educational needs of CWSN as the normal learners (Mpu, & Adu, 2019). As Shinde (2015) mentioned the recommendation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), that every child with disabilities would be benefited from education in their bordering school. Priyanka and Samia (2018) also stated that education is the fundamental right of every child and every child whether he is able or disabled should receive education in an approachable manner. UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) emphasized not only the active elimination of differences but also the prohibition UNESCO (2005) and Devi (2020) has also highlighted that inclusive classrooms are the places that provide equal opportunities for learning to all children whether they are different from each other on the basis of their gender, caste, language, religion, economic status or disability. Guleria (2021) identified that inclusion in education is a process that encourages the morals of forbearance and thoughtfulness among all children and benefited them without any discrimination. UNESCO explained (as cited in Garuba, 2008) inclusion as "the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitude, of creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education for the majority of children" (p.191-192) and Ajuwon (2008) viewed inclusion as an allegiance to teach every child to his fullest capabilities in the classroom and in schools. Similarly, Ydo (2020) defined inclusion as a practice of teaching in an approachable learning atmosphere with relevant support and to end segregated system of educational settings. UNICEF (2017) says inclusion as a system of education that provides assistance to all learners including disabled children at all levels of education whatever their abilities or necessities. Disability and Development Report (as cited in Barrett, 2019) pointed that though a number of efforts have been made for children with disabilities but still they are keep going with many challenges while having inclusion and participation in their society. United Nations (2020) declared that children with disabilities are underrepresented in education system and neither they are included in schools nor getting quality education because of lack of support from schools and the main unease for these children is the inaccessibility of educational infrastructure, materials and facilities at all levels of education. Though government efforts are continued to provide favourable environment for the participation of all children with disability in all realm of life, but there are still hinders to access favourable physical infrastructure and it has been found that the most of the public places do not have facilities of the lifts, elevators and ramps etc. (Kportufe, 2015). The agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 with the thought of leaving no one behind emphasize to providing the facilities like education, employment, empowerment, accessible transport, and accessible public places for all including persons with disabilities and other deprived groups (United Nations, 2019). As Salamanca Statement (1994) suggested providing equal opportunity to all learners who are at the line of segregation and encourage them to participate in educational activity in normal schools (Haug, 2017). In order to make the educational system more conducive to meeting the basic learning needs of all learners the first international initiative Education for All (EFA) launched at the Jometin World Conference (1990) in Thailand with the goal to meet the educational needs of poor people, girls, and learners with disabilities (Drame, & Kamphoff, 2014). Although, all over the world endeavours have been made to promote inclusive education but there are a number of challenges that make it difficult to the active participation of CWSN in mainstream education (Khan, Hashmi & Khanum, 2017). To overcome these challenges and to strengthen the learning capacities of the CWSN, they should be provided with an appropriate environment and accessible resources. As many researches revealed that supportive resources (like assistive equipment, material and school

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infrastructure so on) are improve the learning abilities of all learners, no matter what circumstances they faced (Buhere, & Ochieng, 2013) and to continue the education of CWSN they should be facilitated with the utmost feasible infrastructure and teaching-learning aids as well (Simorangkir, 2021). Matundura, Bota and Kodero (2022) also pointed out that CWSN require specialized material resources for continuing their education.

Although most of countries around the world have promoted the concept of inclusive education in their mainstream education but we are still far from achieving the notion of the real inclusion of the CWSN. It is evident that there are numerous challenges that make difficult the implementation of inclusive education in normal schools (Valdivieso, 2020). As Bhat (2017) also highlighted that lack of proper infrastructure, and lack of supportive assistive technology, are the major issues that hinder inclusion. Sarao (2016) added some others such as restrictive curriculum, inappropriate infrastructural facilities, lack of awareness, untrained teachers, and negative attitude, are the hurdles to extending the concept of inclusive education in India. Many researches and policies (as IEDSS 1947, PWD Act, 1995 and RPWD 2016) have made efforts to make conducive environment for CWSN. Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty (1997) argued that successful inclusion of CWSN not only depends on appropriate policies, schemes, legislation and regulations, indeed the availability of materials, equipment, financial sources and environmental issues (Kumar, 2018) are the frontier challenge of inclusive education. Extending these arguments, the present study aimed to identify available infrastructural facilities for CWSN to enhance their enrolment in mainstream.

Objective

To identify the available infrastructural facilities for CWSN in secondary schools of Delhi with reference to architectural facilities, physical facilities, teaching-learning facilities and independent living facilities for CWSN.

Assumption

Secondary schools of Delhi have good infrastructural facilities with reference to architectural facilities, physical facilities, teaching-learning facilities and independent living facilities for CWSN.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was limited to secondary schools (9th to 12th classes) affiliated with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The data was collected from 50 schools in Delhi and a simple random sampling technique was used. The data was collected by using Infrastructural Facilities for Inclusive Education Questionnaire (IFIEQ) developed and standardised by researcher. The questionnaire includes 20 items covering different aspects of infrastructural facilities mainly architectural facilities, physical facilities, teaching-learning facilities and independent living facilities. The scoring for each item was 0 for 'NA', 1 for 'Never', 2 for 'Rarely', 3 for 'sometimes' and 4 for Always. To validate findings of the study the researchers also conducted interviews with five (5) teachers of different schools who were handling with CWSN.

Data Analysis and Results

The availability of infrastructural facilities for CWSN in secondary schools of Delhi with reference to architectural facilities, physical facilities, teaching-learning facilities and independent living facilities are presented and analyzed in Tables 1 to 4.

Table 1: Availability of infrastructural facilities for CWSN in secondary schools of Delhi with reference to Architectural Facilities

Item	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		NA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Architectural barriers are removed to enhance the accessibility of CWSN in your school building.	20	40	05	10	12	24	13	26	00	00
CWSN in your school can easily access safe drinking water.	47	94	01	02	00	00	02	04	00	00
CWSN has easy accessibility to the classrooms, indoor and outdoor facilities in your school.	36	72	10	20	03	06	01	02	00	00
CWSN are provided with separate space for keeping aids and appliances in your school.	41	82	04	08	02	04	02	04	01	02
Your school building has audio amplifier facilities for benefit of the hearing-impaired children.	34	68	07	14	05	10	04	08	00	00

Table 1 showed that 40% of schools were found free from architectural barriers to make easy accessibility of the CWSN in the school buildings and 26% schools were failed to remove the same. Majority of the schools (94%) were found with good facilities for safe drinking water for CWSN. A separate space for CWSN to keep aids and appliances provided by 82% schools and 8% of the schools found it difficult and 4% of the schools were unable to provide the same. Accessibility of the CWSN to the classroom, indoor and outdoor facilities were appropriate in 72% of schools, satisfying in 20% of schools and rarely in 6% of schools. 68% of schools facilitate with audio amplifier for hearing impaired children whereas 8% of schools were incapable to provide these facilities.

During the interviews the majority of the teachers' responses were positive about providing facilities like accessible environment, support services and special aids to CWSN to encourage their involvement in classroom activities. Two of them stated as:

For the CWSN many efforts are being made in our school to make their education easy. The drinking water facility in our school is very good for all. CWSN are given every outdoor and indoor facility according to their needs. As any hearing-impaired children come to our school, we provide him hearing aids according to his needs. (Teacher 1)

Our school building is free from most of the architectural barriers and CWSN has easy accessibility to the classrooms, indoor and outdoor facilities in our school. Audio amplifier is also available for hearing impaired children. (Teacher 3)

Table 2: Availability of infrastructural facilities for CWSN in secondary schools of Delhi with reference to Physical Facilities

Item	Always		Sometime		Rarely		Never		NA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
CWSN are offered transport facilities by the school.	25	50	05	10	02	04	17	34	01	02

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Auditory signals are provided for visually impaired children in your school building.	14	28	11	22	06	12	18	36	01	02
CWSN are encouraged to participate in scouting, art classes, outdoor camps, dancing, and adventure activities in your school.	15	30	12	24	11	22	11	22	01	02
Your school building has two-door facility.	13	26	03	06	10	20	24	48	00	00
There is a facility of the ramp on the staircase and the door-position for the CWSN in your school.	16	32	06	12	01	02	26	52	01	02

Data presented in Table 2 showed that only 50 % of schools were found with the good transport facilities for CWSN and 34% schools didn't have the even facilities of the ramp (only 32% of the schools having ramped) on the staircase and on the doors. Surprisingly, approx. 30% of schools were found successful to encourage the participation of the CWSN in scouting, dancing, camps and other activities and with the facilities like auditory signals, classroom with two doors. On the other side 50% of schools were failed to facilitate CWSN with the same.

The teachers, who were interviewed, accepted that physical facilities improve the participation of CWSN in different academic activities. As two of them were said:

There is no transport facility for CWSN in our school but we are trying to alter our transport facilities so that these children can move around with relative ease. And for the camps, picnic tours and adventurous and outdoor activities we encourage to participating all (excluding children with high level of disability). (Teacher 2)

Though in our school inclusive approach has been adopted and teachers are also willing to increase participation of the CWSN in all learning activities but sometimes it becomes quite difficult due to the lack of necessary equipment and facilities for CWSN. (Teacher 4)

Table 3: Availability of infrastructural facilities for CWSN in secondary schools of Delhi with reference to Teaching-Learning Facilities

Item	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		NA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Your school has required equipment for CWSN to perform its academic activities.	40	80	08	16	01	02	01	02	00	00
CWSN in your school has access to learning aids and appliances free of cost.	46	92	03	06	00	00	01	02	00	00
Hearing-impaired children in your school have access to television programs with sign language interpretation or subtitles.	12	24	12	24	07	14	19	38	00	00
Different technologies are used for the education of CWSN in your school.	22	24	17	34	03	06	07	14	01	02

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CWSN has equal accessibility to sports, recreation, and tourism venues as other children in your school.	31	62	17	34	01	02	00	00	01	02
Availability of content in audio, print and electronic media for CWSN	31	62	17	34	01	02	00	00	01	02

Table3 showed that 80% schools were found with good facilities of the required equipment (Braille slate books, charts, books and software, internet facility, CD's, concept oriented books, play cards etc) for the blind learners to make learning easy and comfortable as well. It is satisfactory that a large number (92%) of schools providing free aids and appliances for CWSN. In 62% schools CWSN have equal opportunities to participate in sports, recreation activity and tourism venues as other children and also found the availability of content in audio, print and electronic media for them. On the other hand, only in 24% schools, hearing impaired children were able to access television programs with sign language interpretation while 38% of schools didn't have such kind of facilities for CWSN. It is also noticeable that only 24% of schools were using different technologies for educating the CWSN.

When teachers were asked about the required teaching-learning facilities a teacher stated:
“Different types of equipment are available in our school for CWSN and even according to our need, the required ones are provided by the authorized welfare society. There are equal opportunities provided to all learners including CWSN in our school to participating in sports, recreation, and tourism. (Teacher 5)

Table 4: Availability of infrastructural facilities for CWSN in secondary schools of Delhi with reference to Independent Living Facilities

Item	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		NA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
CWSN are offered vocational training in your school.	20	40	05	10	12	24	13	26	00	00
A help desk is available to hear the problems of CWSN and their parents in your school.	44	88	04	08	00	00	02	04	00	00
Computer facility is available for CWSN in your school.	28	56	07	14	06	12	09	18	00	00
There is provision for counselling to CWSN.	42	84	04	08	00	00	04	08	00	00

Table 4 mentioned that majority of schools were found with a help-desk (88%), provision for career counselling (84%) and computer facilities (56%) for CWSN. While on the other side a noticeable number (26%) of schools were failed to provide vocational training to CWSN.

When the teachers were asked about the facilities provided to CWSN to live their life independently one of them stated:
“There is a help-desk available to consider and eradicate the problems of CWSN and their parents in our school, but there is no personalised counselling and computer facilities for CWSN. (Teacher 4)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the above analyses, it can be concluded that although many schools were found with good facilities for safe drinking water, audio amplifier for hearing impaired children, easy access to the classroom, indoors and outdoors, career counselling, a help desk, and required equipment for CWSN. But on the other side most of the schools were not absolutely free from the architectural barriers and besides didn't have the facilities of auditory signals, classroom with two doors and ramp on the staircase and doors. Surprisingly, a less number of schools were encouraging the participation of CWSN in scouting, dancing, camps, and other activities. Data also indicated that few schools were providing vocational and computer training to CWSN to live independently. Overall, the obtained results emphasize that most of the schools included in the study still facing many challenges to educating CWSN.

Devi and Reddy (2016) and Mwangi, and Orodho, (2014) support the findings of this study they observed that majority of the schools have audio-visual aids and safe drinking water, and Braille books. These findings are similar to the results of studies of Limaye (2016) and Baquer and Sharma (2006) as they reported a lack of transport facilities and vocational training for CWSN. Narsaiah (2018) argued that due to architectural barriers in the schools CWSN face many difficulties to access the washroom, libraries, classroom, and playground and these are the most prominent reasons for less participation of CWSN in academic activities (Mondal & Mete, 2012; Lakshmi, 2018; Rimmer & Rowland, 2008). Kohama (2012) also found that only 18% of SSA schools were "barrier free schools". Gathumbi et al. (2015) noted that majority of the schools were not having adequate teaching aids and materials for CWSN. Most surprising Avcioglu (2017) and Maiwa, Syallow and Joshua (2018) found that challenges faced by CWSN emanate from negative attitudes of teachers and community, non-disabled peers, their parents. And scarcity of adequate material, equipment Ellis et al. (2007) and financial resources are also instrumental to implement inclusive education (Becker & Staufbergen, 2004; Scelza, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The study identified the available infrastructural facilities in secondary schools of Delhi and findings revealed that there are no adequate physical infrastructure and instructional resources to support CWSN. The majority of schools are poorly designed and few are facilities to meet the unique needs of CWSN, these are the crucial factors to make the implementation of inclusive education difficult. Despite various efforts for inclusive education in India, about 94% of CWSN didn't receive any educational services (Singh, 2016). It is need of the hour that the proportion of educational expenditure should be increased to overcome the financial challenges (Bhama, 2009). The commitment of the Government of India to make the whole population literate (100% literacy rate) cannot be fully achieved without considering the special educational needs of physically and mentally disabled children. Indeed we have to change commonly held beliefs and raise awareness of human rights in communities and disseminate the positive examples of disabled children and adults succeeding in life beyond school. As Inclusive education is not only a method of educating CWSN, infact it considers every child regardless of their disabilities and allows them to participate in all aspects of the classroom equally (Porter, 2002). We need to reform our education system to make learning joyful, interesting, learner-friendly, and beneficial so they feel like a part of it not apart from it.

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Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Pravesh, Km & Vaishali (2023). Inclusive Education: Infrastructural Facilities for CWSN in Delhi. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(1), 664-674. DIP:18.01.068.20231101, DOI:10.25215/1101.068