

A Study on Education for Children with Special Needs in Assam

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education



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Chapter – V

Major Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

5.0 Major Findings

The main conclusions of the study are provided in this chapter and are based on the examination and interpretation of the data that was provided in the previous chapters. The following study objectives have guided the order in which the findings have been presented.

- To find out the types of disabilities children with special needs in special schools of Assam.
- To determine the facilities available for children with special needs in special schools.
- To determine the problems faced by children with special needs in special schools of Assam.
- To evaluate the various problems faced by teachers in the teaching-learning process in special schools.
- To know parents' perception towards their children's education.
- To determine the role of the Government's schemes/ Policies towards improving the education of children with special needs in Assam.

5.1. Types of Disabilities of Children with Special Needs in Special Schools of Assam

Children enrolled in special schools during the 2022–2023 academic year were revealed to have seven different categories of impairments. Children with visual impairments attending special schools accounted for the largest number of disabled individuals (925). The remaining six categories of disabilities include mental retardation, autism spectrum syndrome (105), multiple disabilities, orthopaedic/locomotor impairment, cerebral palsy (90), hearing/speech impairment (652). Out of 2,033 special children, 925 were visually impaired, showing the highest percentage (46%) among the children with special needs, followed by hearing/speech impairment (32%) and Autism spectrum syndromes (5%) and multiple disabilities children constitute 5 per cent. On the other hand, Orthopaedic/ Locomotor Impairment (85) 4 per cent and Cerebral Palsy children and those with mental retardation were the least (90) 4 per cent.

5.2 Facilities Available for Children with Special Needs in Special Schools

➤ Infrastructure Facilities

In the study, the result shows that 68.23 per cent of schools have a sufficient number of classrooms. Further, it was observed only 23.7 per cent of schools have modified furniture for Children with special needs. All special schools have proper library facilities in their institutions including Braille slates, study guides, learning devices such as building blocks, geometric shapes, puzzles, books, and other supplementary materials, etc.

All existing special schools in Assam were given free study materials during the academic session (2022-23). Proper sanitation facility is provided in every special school in Assam. Besides, cent per cent (100%) of special schools have proper water facilities in both school and hostel campuses. The schools provide water purifiers for safe drinking water for children with special needs. Hostel facilities are obtainable for both boys and girls in every special school. The result also shows that 25 per cent (05) of special schools have separate hostels for both boys and girls. Where 50 per cent (10) of the schools have a common hostel for both boys and girls, and 25 per cent (05) of schools have a hostel for diverse types of disabilities.

The conclusion reflects that all special schools in Assam for children with special needs have proper medical units. Similarly, various health campaign programmes in every special school were organized for children with special needs. However, only 23.7 per cent (05) of schools have psychological clinics; and the majority of schools do not. Proper transportation facilities are available including school buses and vans. While 25 per cent (05) schools lack medical emergency facilities in their transportation system.

➤ Teaching Learning aids

In terms of technological aids, every school was well equipped with the necessary facilities. The special schools have technological devices such as wheelchairs/electric wheelchairs (60%), hearing aids (75%), and learning devices (100%). While a lower percentage of schools have assistive devices specifically designed for physically disabled children. This could be owing to the lack of physically disabled children in special schools. As a result, private special schools run by Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) have better access to technological aid than government special schools.

The proportion of schools with sufficient resources for student with special needs is 68.23%.

➤ **Other Facilities**

Every special school organizes co-curricular activities such as music, singing, art and craft, drama, plantation programmes, drill practice, organizing excursions and picnics, and other different kinds of sports activities. The schools also provide facilities for organizing different kinds of co-curricular activities. Remedial instruction is provided in all Assam's special schools in accordance with the requirements of the children who attend them. In Assamese special schools, vocational courses were not provided for children with exceptional needs. Every year, all Assam's special schools go on field trips or quick getaways. The respondents state that guidance and counseling services are provided for children with special needs in all Assam's special schools in the state.

Further, all special schools of Assam conduct motivational programmes for the holistic development of students. All special schools conduct recreational activities such as drawing, painting, arts and crafts, singing, building blocks, etc.

In general, the equipment and facilities that are now available in Assam's special schools are rather gloomy. In order to provide education for children with special needs, the facilities must be upgraded.

5.3. Problems Faced by Children with Special Needs in Special Schools of Assam

The key to resolving the issue of regularity among children with special needs is student attendance. It was reported that proportion of kids with special needs attended special schools on a regular basis. The instructor's responses indicate that every single child turns in their assignment on time. A range of recreational activities and creative and craft projects are beneficial for kids with special needs because they help them grow holistically. While a portion of students with special needs were engaged in play activities.

The teacher respondents opined that children were found sensitive toward teachers' praise and reward and they (children) were approaching them (teachers) for solving their difficulties. On the other hand, 95.26 per cent of the teachers assured that children with special needs accepted their suggestions in learning activities. Besides, 41.23 per cent of teachers reported children facing communication problems in the classroom.

Related to learning problems, the common difficulties children faced were in communication, language, adjustment and lack of understanding. Furthermore, the study indicated that the

majority of the children in special schools had challenges studying in the classroom scenario and they also confront different concerns relating to physical, emotional, cognitive, and social issues.

Regarding health, a cent per cent of children is observed with various types of health issues such as low immunity, problems with movement and balance, prolonged infection, and loss of appetite. Children with special needs face different health hazards especially low immunity problem. Problems with movements are also associated with the child which causes difficulty in moving. Many of the children are treated with medication, surgery and different therapies. These therapy and surgeries have affected on the child's health and immunity system.

5.4 Problems of Teachers in the Teaching-Learning Process in Special Schools

Throughout the teaching-learning process, teachers frequently run into a number of issues. One hundred percent of teachers who work with children who have special needs report facing various difficulties.

Regarding issues with teachers, one hundred percent of them said they experienced issues when instructing students with special needs. According to the teacher replies, they regularly struggled to communicate with the kids. Teachers have stated that one of the primary causes of poor comprehension and easily becoming fatigued is the language barrier.. Furthermore, they also stated their difficulty in balancing the diverse needs of different types of disabled children.

Besides, 77.73 percent of teachers mention having disruptive students in the classroom. Where only, 23.7 percent of teachers mentioned some of the common problems such as lack of experience in handling the child in case of emergency, in experience with severe and profound disabilities, inadequate teaching aids, and lack of coordination with therapists.

Regarding the assessment, cent per cent of schools conducted both half-yearly and annually. A few schools also mentioned that they periodically assessed the students. Consequently, 81.04 percent of teachers reported having challenges related to the many kinds of disabilities that their students had.

A high percentage (91.00%) of teachers stated many issues and challenges faced in special schools. The common issues and challenges were less student enrolment, lack of competencies, rigid curriculum, negative attitude of parents and stereotypes, inadequate infrastructure, lack of assistive devices, unattractive methods of teaching, lack of community

willingness and participation, retention of children, physical inaccessibility, lack of individualization, ineffective dispute and resolution mechanism.

5.5 Perceptions of Parents towards Education of their Children

Every parent who responded to the survey talked about the different problems that come up when raising a child with special needs and stressed the value of actively supporting their child in all facets of life.

The data indicates that all Assam's special schools offer assistance to parents of children with special needs. Additionally, parents of children with exceptional needs might receive assistance from special schools in 67.96% of cases. All parent respondents confirmed that their children education has suffered as an outcome of their financial situation. The majority of parents also stated that their socioeconomic situation had a negative impact on their kids' schooling. The findings reflect that every child was influenced by family problems, which impacted their education. However, 67.91 per cent of parents stated that they discussed their child's academic progress or performance level with the concerned teacher at school.

The results showed that 85% of parents had reacted on the scheduling of the twice-yearly parent-teacher conferences. According to the finding, 100% of parents were asked about setting up annual or yearly parent-teacher conferences. 60 per cent of parents surveyed expressed confidence in the yearly performance evaluation report they received regarding their children's development. On the other hand, parents claim that the government does not offer adequate assistance; just 44.78 per cent of parents say they receive medical treatment, and 10.45 per cent say they receive financial aid for the 2022–2023 academic year.

5.6 Role of Government's Schemes/ Policies towards the Improvement of Special Schools in Assam

➤ Role of Government

The result shows that the government of Assam has taken initiatives for special children, such as providing free education to children 6-14 years of age group. According to the findings, 50 per cent of schools rely on student fees, 20 per cent are funded by the state govt, and 30 per cent receive financial aid from local NGOs. Besides, a good number of schools are funded by NGOs, the Social Welfare Department, and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. On the other hand, 23.70 per cent of children with special needs have received financial assistance in the form of scholarships and medical expenses. Only 47.39 per cent of school expenses are covered by government schemes and welfare programmes.

The Social Welfare Department of Assam regularly organizes programmes for visually and hearing-challenged persons, such as immunization, leprosy eradication, and supplementary nutrition programme, in collaboration with Guwahati Medical College, Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital and many other health centres. Besides, the government funds 16.11 per cent of special schools to present facilities for the early detection and recognition of children with special needs. As a result, this service is strongly suggested in every school for prevention of the disability in children.

➤ **Funding Aids**

The salaries of teachers in all the government schools are borne by the state government. In govt. special schools, the state government provided scholarships for students, and funds for building construction. Every special school including private receives support and assistance from NGOs. The government provided funding for awareness campaigns such as charity events, community meetings, workshops, and seminars.

➤ **Awareness Programmes**

The Social Welfare Department collaborated with the Health Department of Assam to conduct medical check-ups on children with special needs. Further, the government conducts 75 per cent of schools' public awareness programmes and raises awareness through television and radio broadcasts. While the govt. initiates 70 per cent of the school programmes by displaying posters and banners in public places such as streets, and community halls to educate people about the needs of special children. Some schools also certify that public awareness programmes such as charity events, community meetings, and sporting events are part of the state government's initiative. Following that, 27.96 per cent of special schools offer counselling services to parents of children with special needs.

Plans of action to accomplish the objectives of an inclusive education system for children with special needs have been announced by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission. Special schools adhered to the Secondary Board of Education's (SEBA) prescribed curriculum; children with special needs did not have any curriculum freedom.

➤ **Introduction of New Schemes**

According to the data, the Assam government has introduced a multiplicity of new schemes for children with special needs including Diksha, Vikaas, Samarth, Gharaunda, Niramaya, Sahyogi, Gyan Prabha, Prerna, Sambhav, Badhte Kadam, and so on.

5.7 Suggestions for Further Research

The process of research is ongoing and never-ending. In this case, new paths for examining the various processes of the associated field of study were made possible by one area of inquiry. It is not possible for the investigator to work on every aspect of the study at once. There were too many variables in the study related to exceptional schools for kids with special needs and the viewpoints of parents, teachers, and students for the researcher to address.

Since special education is a larger topic, the researcher was unable to cover every angle of the study because of time limits. It is necessary to do a thorough analysis of numerous components, potential variables, and issue in adjust to acquire a clear image of how education is being conducted under government plans. Only a handful of the important aspects of the topic that emerged during the research could be handled in a single study, and the investigator was only able to identify a small number of them in this one.

Thus, the following are some potential areas for additional research:

- A study on how special schools restructure their curricula for Children with Special Needs (CWSN).
- An investigation into how typical kids view those with unique needs.
- A study on the future opportunities and educational placement for Children with Special Needs.
- A study on the problems related to identifying Children with Special Needs at an earlier stage for proper care and development.
- A study on the introduction of children's guidance clinics in every school.
- Study on medical facilities offered in special education institutions.
- A case study on dyslexia disability children in inclusive education.

5.8 Suggestion for Improvement of Special Schools

There is a specific school for every exceptional child. The existing educational systems frequently fail to meet the requirements of children with special needs. Every kid with special needs has the right to receive instruction at the local school. Besides, results show that special education is only partially implemented in a few schools in several districts. The administration ought to move toward increasing the state's special education

infrastructure. As a result, changes in Assam's special school education system are desperately needed.

- **Provision of Adequate Staff:** There should be a sufficient number of trained instructors in special schools. At present, a few schools have surplus teachers, while others have only a single teacher. The staff rationalization principle should be followed to provide appropriate education to all Children with special needs. To put it another way, plans need to be finalized so that there are at least five instructors in each special school.
- **Early Identification of Special Needs Children:** Specific needs of teachers at the school should identify students immediately as is practical, following the parents at home. Teachers usually used daily observations of their students' academic progress and challenges in school-related subjects to identify student with special needs. In an ideal situation, the combination of all procedures, including day-to-day observation by teachers, reports from parents and peers, and the use of tool identification is more reliable than any individual procedure.
- **Provision of Incentives:** The government or other NGOs should offer incentives in the shape of stipends, scholarships, and financial aid to encourage children to concentrate in school and lower dropout rates.
- **Removal of Architectural Barriers:** Additionally, a considerable quantity of children with orthopedic disabilities is currently enrolled in special schools. In sort to facilitate attendance and mobility for students, especially those confined to wheelchairs, architectural impediments in schools should be removed.
- **Provision of necessary Facilities, Aids, and Equipment:** To ensure quality education for children with special needs, special schools should be equipped with the necessary facilities, aids, and equipment. The special schools in the state lack adequate facilities, owing to a lack of government funding. Therefore, the state government and school authorities should look into this matter.
- **Professional Development for Teachers:** Professional development for teachers has a direct impact on the student's achievement. At present, administrators and the government are not taking adequate steps to support teachers' professional development. Hence, it is recommended that special education teachers receive professional development training.

- **Curriculum Adaptations:** Teachers must modify the curriculum to fit the educational needs of children with special needs in terms of its content, delivery methods, assessment protocols, class schedule, and rules and regulations.
- **Ensuring Quality Education:** Special schools should not entail dumping children into normal classroom environments. Quality education includes more than just cognitive learning. Special schools should also teach human values, attitudes, skills, and competencies.
- **Medical Units:** Every special school ought to have access to adequate medical care. Children with unique needs who receive intervention in the form of medical care and education can perform better overall, especially in elementary school. Thus, the special schools should have a medical unit and a regular visiting medical executive to ensure the care and development of children.
- **Encouraging Participation in Extra-curricular Activities:** Children with special needs should be encouraged by their educators and parents to engage in extracurricular activities that will enhance their overall development as people. Encouraging children with special needs to participate in adaptable activities that meet their needs and learning styles is crucial.
- **Provision of Modified Furniture:** Modified types of furniture are very essential for children with special needs. Each child has unique needs based on their disability. Therefore, special schools should have a multiplicity of modified furniture to accommodate different types of disabilities.
- **Provision of Teacher Training:** Teacher training is one of the most important requirements. Advanced training, such as refresher courses for in-service teachers, orientation programmes for pre-service teachers, diploma and certificate courses for teachers, training programmes for different types of disabilities, and so on should be organized to improve teacher quality.
- **Counselling for Parents:** Every youngster looks to their parents for assistance. Similarly, to raise knowledge about the many kinds of disabilities, counseling sessions for parents of children with special needs should be held.
- **Advance Transportation Facilities:** Transportation is essential because children with special needs are unable to move. Every special school should have proper transportation in all weather conditions. Every bus or van should have a medical unit

on board to handle any medical emergencies. The seating arrangements in every school bus or van should be adjusted to accommodate diverse type of special children.

- **Psychological Clinic:** In the study, only 23.7 per cent of special schools have psychological clinics. Therefore, it is recommended that every special school should have a psychological clinic to help students with a multiplicity of problems.

5.9 Conclusion

Education for everyone forms the foundation of the special education concept. In India, every child is entitled to an education. According to the Indian Constitution, every individual has a natural right to education. Every child with exceptional needs should be able to attend ordinary schools on an equal basis with their peers without exception.

Special education enables a child who needs special care and attention to overcome their disability and become valuable members of society. The special education system is highly influenced by societal attitudes. A positive attitude contributes to the successful implementation of the special education system in society. Currently, Assam has 20 special schools, 4 government and 16 privates are managed by registered NGOs. According to the data, there were seven types of disability in children with special needs in special schools of Assam, with the majority of students having visual and hearing/speech impairments. The facilities available for children with special needs in special schools of Assam were generally inadequate. Facilities such as medical, health campaign programmes, sanitation, library, hostel, and transportation were available in all special schools. However, there was limited availability of technological aids in every special school. Only 23.7 per cent of special schools have modified furniture for physically disabled children. On the other hand, the data shows that almost every special school organizes co-curricular activities such as music, singing, arts, crafts, drama, plantation programmes, drills, and practice, excursions, picnics, and various sports activities.

Regarding problems, the data reveals that the majority of children faced various educational challenges. Students had the most difficulty communicating and interacting with one another and with their teachers. After assessing the various problems encountered by teachers during teaching teaching-learning process, it was found that teacher training is another factor in the effective implementation of educational programs. Teachers who work with children who have special needs require a great deal of training. In this sense, working with students who have special needs presents the majority of instructors with difficulties and obstacles. Teachers encounter challenges that are specific to the type of handicap that students have.

Parental perception is another significant in the education process because parents are closely associated with their children and are aware of their children's disabilities from the time they are born. As a result, the study reveals that most parents were optimistic about educating their children with special needs.

The government initiatives and policies of Assam have a somewhat minor effect on special schools in conditions of their function and policies. The government provided financial support to just 20 per cent of special schools. Special schools do not provide a curriculum tailored to the requirements of children. But only 16.11 per cent of schools offered early diagnosis and detection for kids with exceptional needs. While 27.96 per cent of special schools provided parent counseling sessions. Besides, the study reflects that the execution of schemes and policies under the SSA and the Govt. of Assam has been quite successful. At the same time, the NGOs play a vital role in special schools. The Social Welfare Department of Assam also takes various initiatives to improve the welfare in special schools. Thus, in order to effectively administer the educational process for children with special needs, the government as well as educators and administrators in schools should take a more active and involved role. In order to make education for all a reality in special schools across the state, the government should also be more aware of the problems pertaining to the operation of different programs and policies for the education of children with special needs.