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PRESENT STATUS OF RPWD Act- 2016 GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVENESS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN NADIA DISTRICT (WEST BENGAL)

SAJAL CHINTAPATRA

Sajal.chintapatra@gmail.com

M.Phil Research Scholar, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belur Math, Howrah -711202, West Bengal

Dr. Pradip Kumar Sen Gupta

pradipkumarsengupta66@gmail.com

Associate Professor, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belur Math, Howrah -711202, West Bengal

Abstract:-

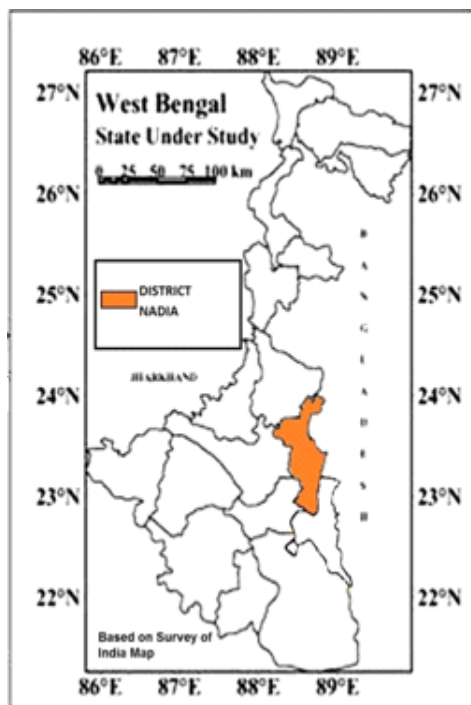
Every child has the right to education. But children with special needs have got their knowledge and education in special schools in the earlier education system. But this exclusion violated the human rights of disabled children. Inclusive education is a new approach in which special children learn better as they can learn with normal children under the same roof. . Nadia district of West Bengal lies in Eastern India, having a literacy rate 74.97%. Total elementary school including primary (i-iv) and junior high (v-viii) is 4067 schools in Nadia district. The main of this paper is to find out how far elementary schools follow the RPWD guideline with special reference to inclusive education. In this research paper, the descriptive survey method has been adopted. Inclusiveness is needed in common school paradigms.

Keywords:- RPWD. Children with special needs, Elementary level, Inclusive education.

Introduction:-

School is the miniature of society. It also helps to understand between right and wrong. Schools are not only provided theoretical knowledge but also teach social skills through interactions with teachers, staff and other students. In India, the school system has three levels: elementary (I-VIII), secondary (IX-X) and higher secondary (XI-XII). For the development of children, the role of elementary school is very much significant. Elementary education is the first phase of education. The elementary phase consists of classes I to VIII. According to RTE act, 2009, education is a fundamental right of every child between the age group 6 to 14. But it has been seen that there is a group of children, called children with special needs facing obstacles to getting a formal education. Special-needs children include those who have: Mental Retardation, which causes them to develop more slowly than other children; speech and language Impairment, such as a problem expressing themselves or understanding others; physical Disability, such as vision problem, cerebral palsy, distorts messages from their senses; emotional Disabilities, such as unsocial or other behavioral problems. Inclusive education is a new approach that concerns the education of all children in society, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, or linguistic deficits. Inclusive education provides education for all students including special need child. Inclusive education for special needs children means educating them in a mainstream school instead of special needs school. Inclusive education is carried out in a common learning environment, for this reason, students from different backgrounds and with different abilities learn together in an inclusive environment. Children with special needs may need additional support; it depends on the nature of the disability. Common learning is not a place where students with special needs learn in isolation from their peers. A special education teacher collaborates with a general education teacher to provide education for students. A special education teacher takes some strategies with the help of a general education teacher. The Salamanca statement and framework for action and disability education (1994) emphasized that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, social, emotional, linguistic or other condition. This framework stated the children with special needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs. The main aim of this paper to find out how far elementary school in Nadia district, follows RPWD Act-2016 guidelines with special reference to Inclusive Set-up which should be strictly followed by the school classroom transaction done through peer-group learning.

Location of the study area:-



Nadia district of West Bengal lies in Eastern India bordering Bangladesh in the east, North 24 Parganas and Hooghly district in the south, Purba Bardhaman in the west, and Murshidabad in the north. The district covers an area of 3927 sq. km having a population of 5,168,488 as per census 2011 with a growth rate of 12.2 % from 2001 to 2011. The district has 17 Panchayats consisting of 187 Gram Panchayats and 8 Municipalities. The total number of police stations in the district is 19. The density of the population is 1300 persons/sq km and it has 947 females as against 1000 males. The district comprises four subdivisions: Krishnanagar, Kalyani, Ranaghat, Tehatta. Krishnanagar subdivision consists of Krishnanagar municipality, Nabadwip municipality, and seven community blocks: namely Kaliganj, Nakashipara, Chapra, Krishnanagar I, Krishnanagar II, Nabadwip and

Krishnananj. Kalyani subdivision includes Chakdaha, Haringhata and Kalyani. Ranaghat subdivision includes Shantipur Municipality, Ranaghat Municipality and Birnagar Municipality and four community blocks like Hanskhali, Shantipur, Ranaghat-I and Ranaghat-II. Tehatta subdivision includes four community blocks: Karimpur I, Karimpur II, Tehatta I, Tehatta II. The literacy rate of Nadia is 74.97%. Total elementary school including primary (I-IV) and junior high (V-VIII) is 4067 schools in Nadia district.

Significance of the study:-

The Constitution of India does not support inequality. Hence every child has the right to education. Exclusion violated the human rights of disabled children. Parents who have students in separate special schools stated that they have to face difficulties due to segregation. Traditionally education had come to be into general education and special education. It had believed earlier that children with special needs must be given education separately in a special school. Inclusive education has developed from the belief that every child has the right to education whether the child is normal or children with special needs. But since the last three decades, this segregation in the education system has come under criticism and now a step has been taken to emerge inclusive education instead of segregated education. Educators now feel that each child should be allowed to learn in his way with his peer group. Inclusive education has emerged as a reaction to the limitation of segregated education. Segregated education created discrimination, isolation and separation of children with special needs from their peer group who were normal children. Inclusive education promotes communication skills and interaction skills from each other in an easier and faster manner. All students including children with special needs develop a friendship from these activities in inclusive education. Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) clearly stated that the existence of separate special education is only acceptable

if mainstream education has not yet developed insufficiently to accommodate all children. Elementary education is the first stage of formal education. Elementary education usually takes place in an elementary school. Children enter the formal education system through elementary education. At an elementary level, inclusive education is beneficial for all children including special children because it provides better opportunities for learning of special children as they learn with normal children under the same roof. At the elementary level, special children learn better in an inclusive education system than in a separate education system. No critical analysis has been undertaken or done to date in the Nadia district on the subject of the status of inclusiveness in elementary education. Hence the study is very significant in this regard.

Objectives of the study:-

1. Whether the school authorities admit them without discrimination and provide education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities equally with others or not.
2. Whether the school authorities provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements or not.
3. Whether the school authority organizes different types of courses or not.
4. Whether the school authorities make suitable modifications in the examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities such as extra time for completion of the examination paper, the facility of the scribe, exemption from second and third language courses or not.

Research Question:-

- What is the status of proper classrooms for children with special needs in elementary schools?
- What is the status of the presence of a library for a normal child with children with special needs in elementary schools?
- What is the status of the presence of hostel facilities for a normal child with children with special needs in elementary schools?
- What is the status of the presence of ramp facilities for children with special needs in elementary schools?
- What is the status of the presence of transportation facilities for normal children with children with special needs in elementary schools?
- What is the status of co-curricular activities for normal children with children with special needs in elementary schools?

Delimitation of the study:-

Delimited of the research work are as follow-

- The research work has been delimited to the Nadia district only.
- The research work has been delimited to the elementary level only.
- The study has been delimited to the students of Bengali medium school only.
- The study has been delimited to government-sponsored elementary schools only.

Review of related literature:-

1. Chakraborti- Ghosh S. (2013) in this paper **“Inclusive Education in India: A Developmental Milestone from segregation to Inclusive”**, attempts to highlight the key issues and challenges against successful inclusive education and made some suggestion that may assist in providing an appropriate inclusive education for an individual with disabilities in India.

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3. Djietor, Okai and Loapong (2010) in their study **“Promoting Inclusive Education Ghana”** discusses the measures for promoting Inclusive Education in Ghana, issues emerging and strategies for Improvement.

4. Hargrove, (2010) in his paper **“The views of general education teachers on teaching in inclusive classrooms”** investigates general education teacher’s perception about inclusion. The findings of the study revealed that professional development and training for general education teachers on inclusion was underprovided.

5. Kar, I. Dr. (2018) conducted a research on **“Inclusive education in India: opportunities and challenges”**. The target of this paper is to call attention to the hindrances and expand challenges in the field of inclusive education in India with exceptional reference to teacher preparation. The study found that the majority of school faculty in India is not prepared to outline and actualize educational programs for understudies within capacities in regular schools.

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school faculty in India is not prepared to outline and actualize educational programs for understudies within capacities in regular schools.

7.Kumar S. and Kumar K. (2007) in their paper **“Inclusive Education in India”** expressed that government agencies, as well as mainstream institutions, woke up to the reality that segregation of children with challenging needs is morally unjustifiable and a violation of human rights.

8.Lindsay, G.K. (2002) in this study **"Disability and Inclusive Education in India"** emphasizes the current status of Inclusive education in India with a focus on children with disabilities. After exploring the relevance of disability and inclusive education in the context of Education for All (EFA), this paper analyzed the implementation of inclusive education in India.

9.Mandal, A. (2015) in his paper **“The Universalization of Elementary Education on India Historical Analysis With Reference to Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009”**, discusses the historical development of free and compulsory education during the pre-independence and post-independence period in India.

10.Prof Dash, P. (2018) in their paper **“A Study of Inclusive Education Practice for the Students with Special Need at Primary Level in Orissa ”** attempted to study inclusive education practices at primary level of education in Orissa. The objective of this study is to examine the inclusive education practices adopted by a teacher to deal with special needs students and other students in an inclusive education setting.

Methodology of the study:-

Method of data collection

In research, data collection is a process of collection of information from all relevant sources to provide answers to relevant questions. The present study includes secondary data as well as primary data. Depending on the researcher's research plan and design, there are several ways of data collection. In the present research work, the secondary data has been collected through books, journals, articles, gazettes and annual reports of the educational departments. With the help of a questionnaire, interview and checklist, primary data has been collected.

Population

Population in research work refers to the entire group of people or objectives to which researcher wishes to generalize the study finding. Population for the present research comprises school students in elementary level in Nadia district.

Sample

Sample is a group of people, objects or items which are taken from a larger population. This sample is the representative of population to ensure findings from the research can be generalized. To examine the present status of inclusiveness in elementary education in Nadia district, it is necessary to select a sample. In the present study total 40 elementary schools in Nadia have been taken as samples. In the present study researcher used purposive stratified sampling for selection of sample. At the first stage, field work observation and pilot survey has been done. In the second stage 10 elementary schools from each subdivision in Nadia have been chosen for the purpose of sampling. The hierarchy of the sample is as under.....

40 Sample							
Ranaghat		Krishnanagar		Kalyani		Tehatta	
10 school		10 school		10 school		10 school	
Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Method of data analysis

To find out the status of inclusive education at elementary school, both qualitative and quantitative methods have been adopted for the analysis and interpretation of data. Descriptive analysis has been done for those data which was collected through questionnaires, interviews regarding opinion and views towards inclusive education. The information collected from the primary and secondary survey has been quantified absolutely and converted into a percentage figure. Various statistical techniques have been used for analysis and interpretation of data. Collected data has been analyzed through tabulation, graphical representation and statistical method.

Data analysis and interpretation:-

Data analysis and interpretation in research is the process of organizing the data and assigning meaning to the collected data in order to discover inherent facts. Data analysis refers to the process which unveils pattern and trend in data-sets and data interpretation involves illustration of those unveiled pattern and trends.

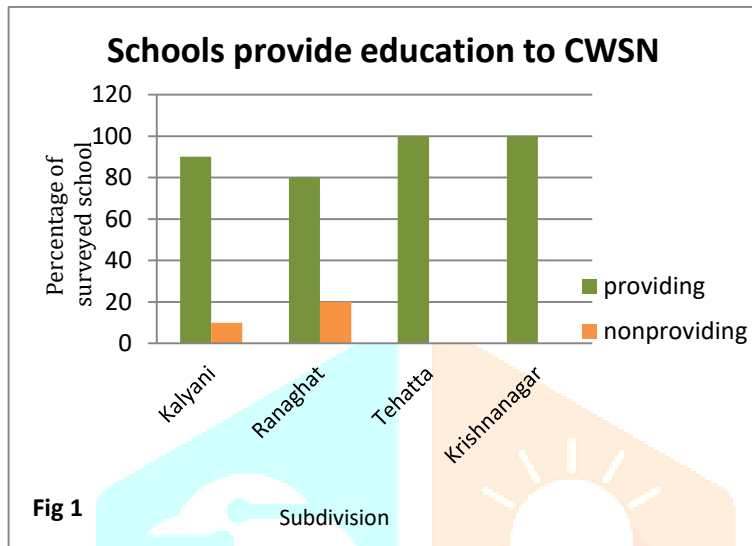


Fig 1

Figure 1 indicates the percentages of the schools which are providing education to children with special needs. The concept of inclusiveness is projected to remove exclusiveness in traditional education system in which special schools are secluded from the mainstream school system. Special school system creates isolation in the mind of CWSN. To remove segregation, all of the children with special needs must be enrolled in elementary education. The study reveals that in Tehatta and Krishnanagar subdivision, all of the sample headmasters (100%) confirmed that CWSN are providing education with normal children in their school. But in Ranaghat subdivision, 80% of headteachers confirmed that CWSN provided education in their school. In Kalyani subdivision, 90% of headteachers replied that CWSN is provided for education according to their individual needs in their schools.

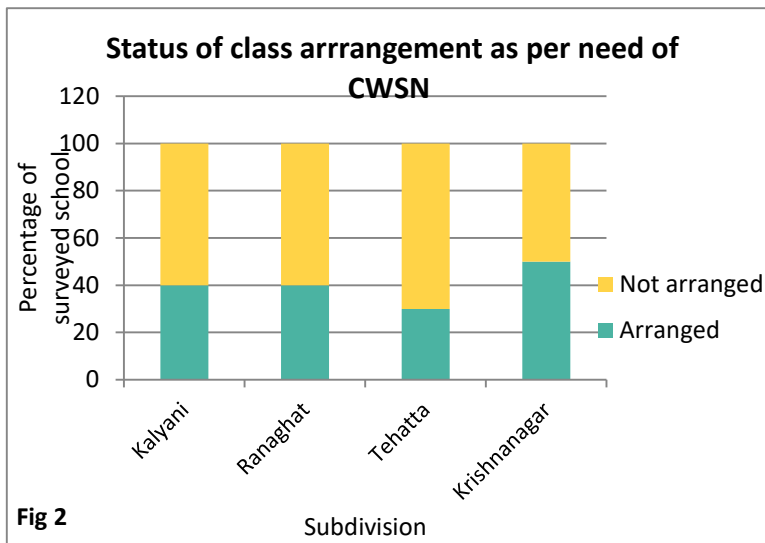


Fig 2

Figure 2 indicates status of classroom arrangement as per need of children with special needs. Classroom arrangement generally impacts the learning process of the students in the school. A proper classroom environment can help children to be active participants in classroom activities. It is also seen that classroom environments can affect the child's mental health. It is seen from the table that in Tehatta subdivision, the classrooms have been arranged by 30% of sample schools according to the suitability for CWSN. In Ranaghat and Kalyani subdivisions, proper classrooms have been arranged for CWSN by 40% of schools. In Krishnanagar subdivision, classrooms have been arranged properly for CWSN by 50% of the surveyed schools.

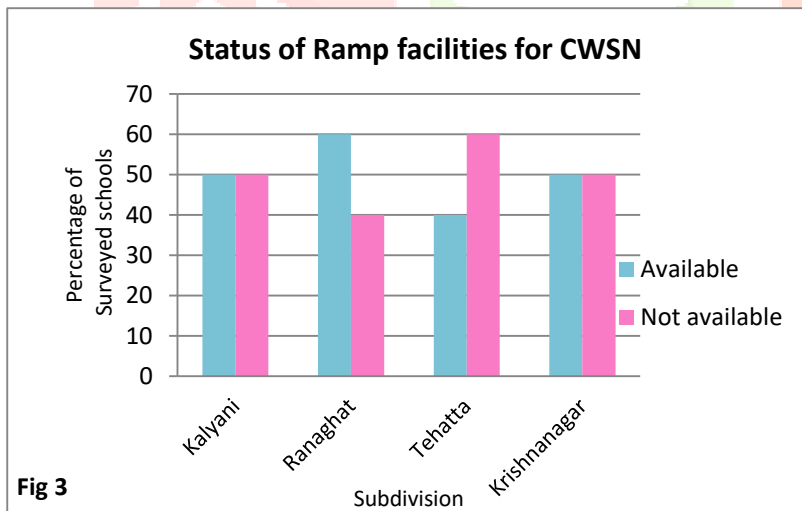


Fig 3

Figure 3 shows the provision of ramp facilities for CWSN in elementary schools in different subdivisions of Nadia District. For a barrier-free environment, the ramp must be accessible proper norms to let them feel accepted with self-respect and equal right to education. The study reveals that in Kalyani and Krishnanagar subdivision 50% of headteachers justified that ramp facilities have been provided for children with special needs. In Ranaghat subdivision, 60% of headteachers clarified that ramp facilities have been arranged for

children with special needed. In Tehatta subdivision 40% of headteachers stated that sufficient ramps have been arranged for children with special needs in their schools.

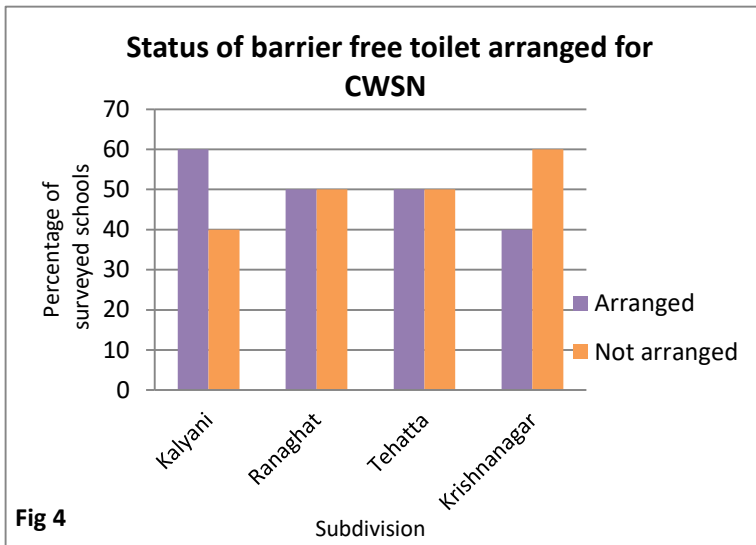


Figure 4 indicates the status of proper toilets for CWSN in elementary schools in different subdivisions of Nadia. It is also important to prepare a proper toilet for CWSN. The lack of proper toilets in schools is increasing the risk of sickness due to poor hygiene. It is clear from the table that in Kalyani subdivision, 60% of the headteachers expressed that they have proper toilets in accordance with SSA norms. In Ranaghat and Tehatta subdivision 50% of headteachers stated that they have proper toilets for CWSN and 40% of headteachers in Krishnanagar subdivision expressed that they have suitable toilet facilities for children with special needs.

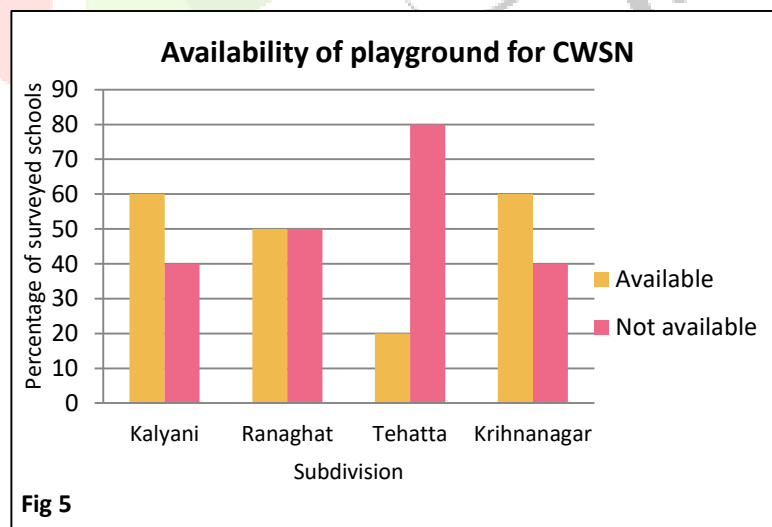


Figure 5 shows the availability of a playground for CWSN in the school campus area. All children including CWSN have a right to play. Different studies show that outdoor play may enhance a positive sense of self-esteem. Outdoor play can help children with special needs to develop fine motor skills as they use the muscles in their hands and fingers. It is seen from the survey that in Kalyani and Krishnanagar subdivision, 60% of headmasters stated that they have a playground in their school area. In Ranaghat subdivision, 50% of the schools have playgrounds which are also suitable for co-curricular activities for children with special needs. But few surveyed schools (20%) in Tehatta subdivision occupy suitable playgrounds in their schools.

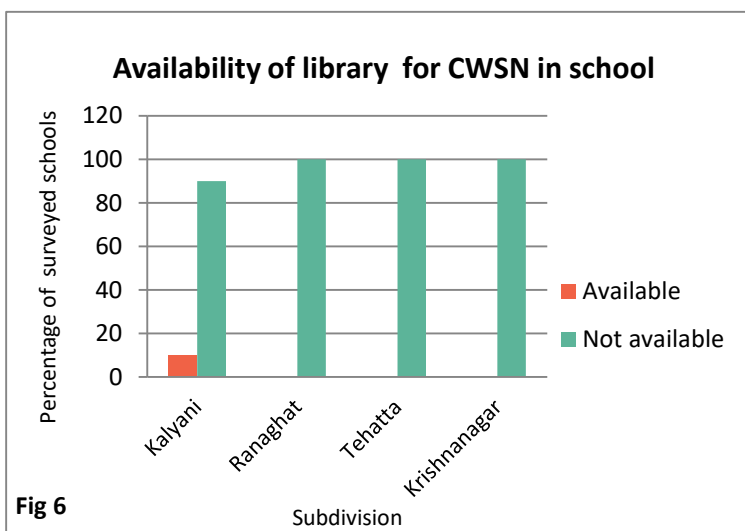


Fig 6

Figure 6 indicates the status of availability of libraries in elementary schools of Nadia district. Libraries have an important role in increasing the knowledge of young minds in school. It also develops the habit of reading books among school students. Children with special needs can do independent work, use computers and equipment in the library. It is cleared from the table that library facilities are not arranged by the school authorities in Ranaghat, Tehatta and Krishnanagar subdivision. Hence in these subdivision library facilities have not been provided to children with special needs. But in Kalyani subdivision, in few schools (10% of the surveyed schools) library facilities have been provided to all students including children with special needs.

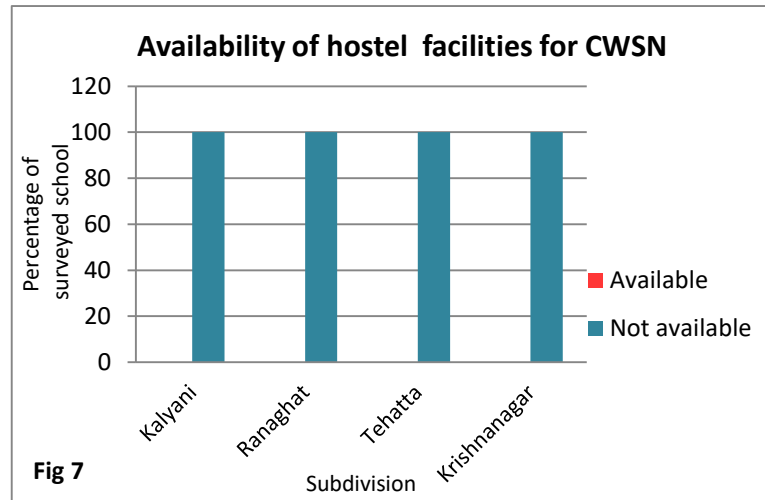


Fig 7

Figure 7 indicates the availability of hostel facilities in elementary schools of Nadia district. School hostels indicate those places where the students live, spend time with their friends. In inclusive education, schools must have to provide hostel facilities to their students with different abilities as per their needs. It is revealed from the table that there are no hostel facilities for student including children with special needs in elementary schools in Nadia district. All of the headmasters (100%) stated that hostel facilities have not been arranged for any of their school students including children with special needs.



Fig 8

Figure 8 indicates the status of availability of escort facilities in elementary schools of Nadia district. For facilitating the education of CWSN in formal schools, escort facilities should be provided to CWSN. It is clear from the table that only 30 % of schools provide escort facilities for children with special needs in Kalyani subdivision. In Krishnanagar 10% of schools provide escort facilities for children with special needs. But there are no provisions of escort facilities for children with special needs in elementary schools of Tehatta and Ranaghat subdivision in Nadia district.

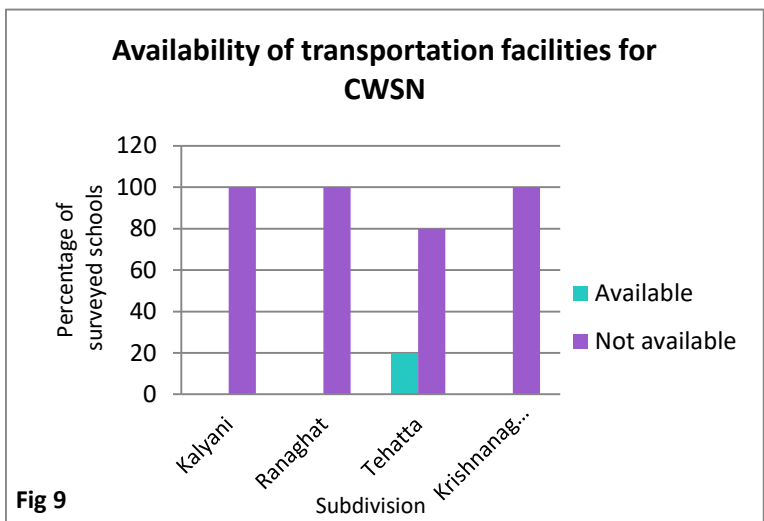


Fig 9

Figure 9 discovers the availability of transportation facilities for CWSN in elementary schools of Nadia district. To receive education in formal school, it is important to have a transportation facility. Transport facilities must be provided to CWSN to ensure their access to a neighborhood school. The school transportation facilities should be the plan and organized in such a manner that it provides adequate support to CWSN. It is cleared from the table that only 20% of headteachers in Tehatta subdivision replied that transport facilities are available for children with special needs. But in other subdivisions, all of the headteachers replied that there are no provisions of transportation facilities for children with special needs in their schools.

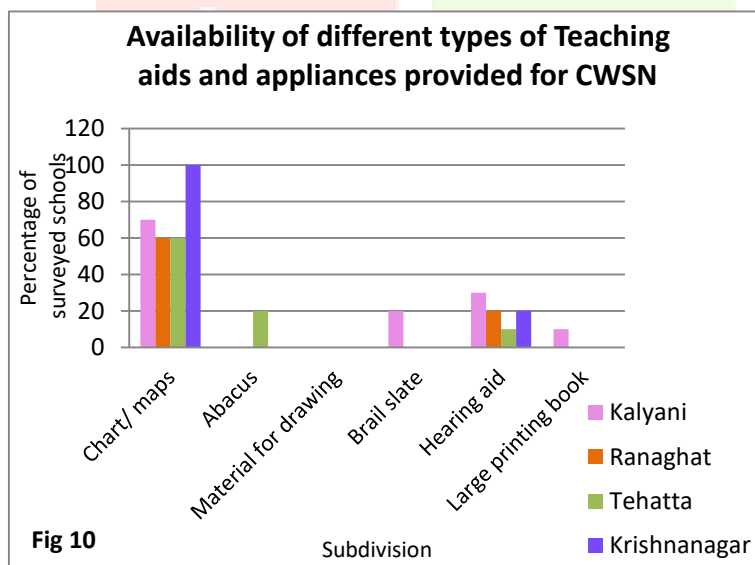


Fig 10

Figure 10 indicates the status of the different types of teaching aids and appliances provided for CWSN in elementary schools in Nadia district. It is clear from the table that in Kalyani subdivision, 70% of surveyed schools get charts and maps, 20% of surveyed schools get Braille slate, 30% of surveyed schools get hearing aids and 10% of surveyed schools get large printing book for children with visual impairment. Whereas in Ranaghat subdivision 60% of surveyed schools get charts and maps and 20% of surveyed schools get a hearing aid for children with hearing disabilities. In Tehatta Subdivision, 60% of surveyed schools get charts and maps,

20% of surveyed schools get abacus and 10% of surveyed schools get hearing aids. In Krishnanagar subdivision, all surveyed schools (100%) get the chart and only 20% of schools get hearing aids for children with hearing disabilities

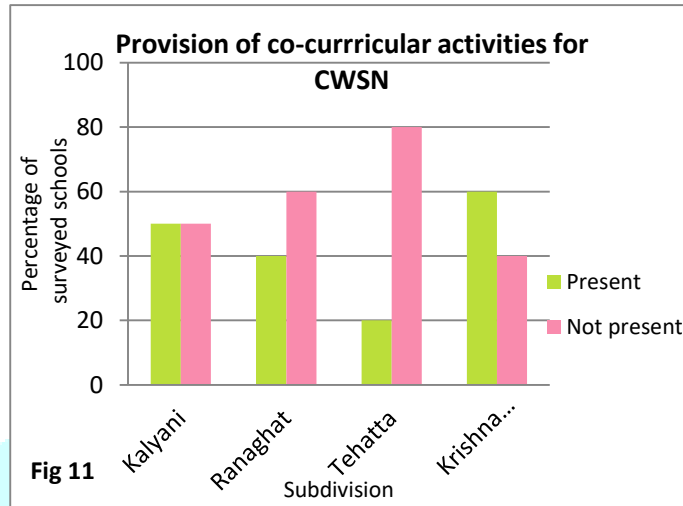


Figure 11 indicates provision of co-curricular activities for children with special needs in Nadia district. Co-curricular activities refers to those extracurricular activities which fall outside the regular academic curriculum and are a part of school life. Co-curricular activities improve the learning experience of students, help them sharpen their communication skills and develop their inner creativity and leadership qualities. Table-11 shows that provision of co-curricular activities for CWSN is very low in Tehatta subdivision i.e. 20% of the sample schools. In Ranaghat subdivision 40% of headteachers agreed that there are provision of co-curricular activities for CWSN in their school. In Kalyani 50% of the survey schools have provision of co-curricular activities for CWSN. And the highest percentage of provision of co-curricular activities for CWSN is shown in Krishnanagar subdivision i.e. 60% of the surveyed schools.

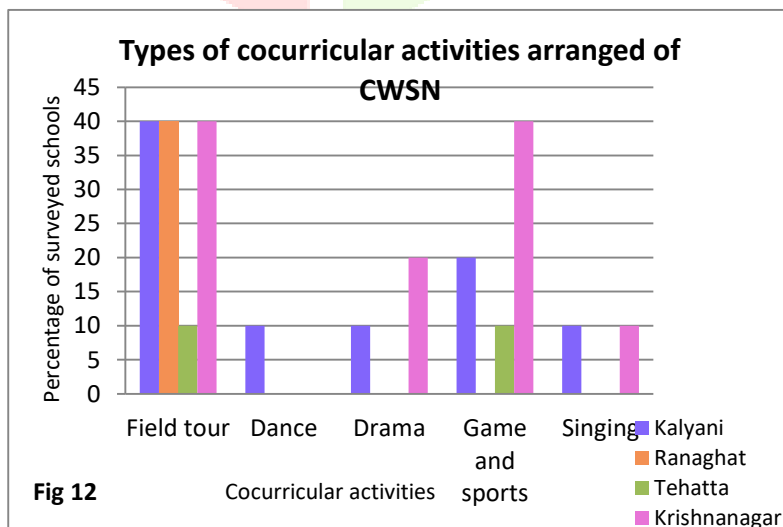


Figure 12 indicates provision of different co-curricular activities for CWSN in elementary schools of Nadia district. It is clear from the table that field tours for children with special needs have been organized by

40% of surveyed schools in Kalyani, Ranaghat and Krishnanagar subdivision; 10% of surveyed schools in Tehatta subdivision. Sport activities for children with disabilities have been organized by 10% schools in Tahatta; 20% schools in Kalyani; 40% of surveyed schools in Krishnanagar subdivision. It is also seen that in the Kalyani subdivision, children with different disabilities participated in dance, drama and singing in 10% of sample schools. Whereas in Krishnanagar subdivision, children with special needs participated in drama in 20% of sample schools and participated in singing in 10% of sample schools.

Findings:-

- The data reveals that the majority of teachers opined that CWSN are provided equal opportunities for those students who have been admitted in their school irrespective of physical and mental status.
- In Krishnanagar subdivision most of the teachers (50%) opined that classrooms are arranged properly for CWSN. Children with various disabilities are sitting together with normal children without any differentiation regarding their different disabilities. But a few headteachers in Ranaghat, Tehatta and Kalyani subdivision claimed that they arrange the classroom with special provision for CWSN.
- The analysis of data reveals that more than 50% of schools have ramp facilities in Ranaghat, Krishnanagar, Kalyani subdivision. And in Tehatta subdivision ramp facilities are not sufficient, less than 50% of the surveyed schools have arranged ramps which is also noticeable.
- The study discovers that most teachers (above 50%) expressed that their toilets are suitable for CWSN in Kalyani subdivision. They opined that the space inside the toilet is adequate. But remarkably in Krishnanagar subdivision below 50% of schools (40%) agreed that they have proper toilets for CWSN.
- The analysis of the data infers that in Tehatta subdivision, most teachers (80%) opined that they have no playground in their school, but in other subdivisions, most teachers (above 50%) responded that they have a playground in their school.
- It is found from analysis that teachers reported that they have no library for their school students including CWSN. They keep some books in bookshelves so that children can get books as per their need.
- The study reveals that all sample schools (100%) do not have any hostel facilities for their students including CWSN.

Suggestions by the researcher:

- More teachers should be appointed in all elementary schools with skills in special need education.
- Modification of curriculum should be made carefully by an expert group which includes special teachers.
- In-service training programs should be arranged for general teachers.

- Necessary learning material such as Braille, large printing books should be made available in all elementary schools.
- Families with children with disabilities should develop their relationship with school.
- Parents should develop their involvement in the education process of their children with or without disabilities.
- Provision of ramp should be ensured in all elementary schools.
- The government should give financial support to children with special needs.
- Children with disabilities should be treated as normal children instead of looking at them in sympathy.

Suggestions for further research:-

- ❖ A study could be conducted on the status of inclusiveness in secondary or higher secondary schools on Nadia.
- ❖ A comparative study may be conducted to understand the status of inclusive education in Nadia district and other districts of West Bengal.
- ❖ A study may be conducted to know the attitude of parents towards inclusive education.
- ❖ A study may also be carried out to know the effectiveness of teaching strategies used by the teachers in an inclusive education system.
- ❖ A study may be taken up to discover the status of inclusiveness in a rural and urban area.

Conclusion:-

Present Status of RPWD Act- 2016 Guidelines for Inclusiveness in Elementary Education in Nadia District has been investigated in the present research. It can be concluded that findings of the study proved that the inclusiveness in elementary education of Nadia district has not reached the expected level. Finding of the study indicates that elementary schools in Nadia district tries to follow RPWD guidelines, but many of reasons (like financial deficit, lacking a special trained teacher) schools have not reached the desirable level of inclusive education. This study reveals that elementary schools in Nadia district provide education to all children with or without disabilities, but infrastructure for setting up inclusive environments should be improved in those schools. The study also reveals that teachers are using different teaching methods but some methods of these are not suitable for children with special needs. It is also observed that instructional materials are also not suitable to children with special needs. Some necessary efforts of schools should be done to improve the quality of education at elementary schools. Interaction and correlation between schools and parents of children with or without disabilities should be needed more to improve the standard of education in elementary level.

The government should take some steps to improve the school infrastructure by giving financial support. The government should also sensitize teachers regarding inclusive education through some refreshers courses.

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