

Co Variants and Barriers in disabled children: A study in Elementary schools in Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

Children's education takes shape with his/her mother at home. Mothers at home know well, what kinds of adjustment are needed for a normal child to learn and grow. They have no idea, how to start educating a disabled child about environment, communication and understanding. Sometime they even don't know how to interact/communicate with differently abled child. Even society has no tested hands-on experience or knowledge on it. First and foremost area of interest for all is, how to make their daily life conducive, irrespective of different kind of barriers. It has been envisioned to identify different types of barriers, which hinder learning of disabled children at elementary level.

Children with special needs should be given priority. They have much in common with other children of their age. They have many common aspects of child's development like: personality, the ability to communicate, resilience and strength, the ability to appreciate and enjoy life and the desire to learn. Each child has individual strengths, personality and experiences so particular disabilities will impact differently to individual children. They have all right to be the whole child, develop physically, socially, spiritually and mentally. They have right to education and dignified life. They have educational need, which sometimes may differ from non-disabled peers. Barriers in education of such children may arise from disability i.e. Physical, Sensory, Mental health, and Learning disability or from financial, parental attitude, social attitude, public and school infrastructure, curriculum and teaching learning process.

Keywords: *Co Variants*, financial barriers, parental attitude barriers, social barriers, public and school infrastructure barriers, curriculum and teaching learning process barriers, *CWSN*, and *Elementary Schools In Uttar Pradesh*.

Introduction

Children with disability should be educated, in the inclusive educational environment as sometime child with disability may not require any special pedagogical need. These children are like other children in intellectual functionary, Humanity, realization and technology have opened new avenues of education for disabled children. Children with special needs should be given barrier free physical and educational environment to develop and organize their life. They are not mentally diseased, they do have physical, visual or hearing problems, but they are otherwise like any other children and may be educated if physically and academically barrier free environment is provided. Number of problem arise due to disability i.e. Attention disorder, Memory problem, Reading problem, Listening problem, Movement problem, Reading disabled (vision), Writing disabled (physical), Adjustment problems, social problem, emotional problem, parental attitude.

For this study the common operational definition of disability has been used "The persons with disabilities in India has been defined by PWD Act, 1995" Ministry of law, justice and company affairs, promulgated this Act to give effect to the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region, as adopted on 5th December 1992 at Beijing. India being a signatory to the said proclamation considered it necessary to implement the aforesaid proclamation.

Review of Literature

Jenny Morris: Disabled parents and schools Barriers to parental involvement in children' education: this paper draws on the experiences of disabled parents to set out some of the barriers they experience. It is a step further, in sense that these are the problems, today's children will face, when they will become adult. The report is about Task Force on Supporting Disabled Adults in their Parenting Role, which identified disabled parents' involvement in their children's education as an area of considerable difficulty. It talks about the questions that schools, governing bodies and local education authorities should address in order to tackle the barriers faced by disabled parents.

While the issue is all too apparent to disabled parents, they themselves seem to be invisible to schools, governing bodies and local education authorities, and indeed to the Government. Their access needs do not figure in the planning of school buildings, the writing of policies and procedures, the holding of meetings, the involvement of parents in the life of the school or communication between school and parents. Individual disabled parents too often faced with a literally or metaphorically closed door at their child's school. When they seek to do, what any parent wants to do at school like talk

to a teacher, go to a parents' meeting, they need special arrangement to interact freely. It is felt like an inconvenience and, at worst, places a burden on the school's scarce resources because disabled parent's access needs have not been sufficiently recognized by most of the stake holders.

This exclusion of disabled parents is in stark contrast to the philosophy of inclusion so admirably promoted by Government and local education authorities in relation to children, and the recognition of disabled children's access needs by both legislation (the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2000) and targeted resources (the Schools Access Initiative, etc.) The failure to recognize that some parents will come within the Disability Discrimination Act's definition of 'disabled' is a legacy of past prejudices. There was a time when it was assumed that disabled people could not be parents. That time should be long gone. If they are to be accorded the same rights, and are expected to accept the same responsibility, to be involved in their children's education, then schools, their governing bodies, local education authorities and the Department for Education and skills need to urgently address the barriers outlined.

Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Education, **Jayne Pivik Joan Mccomas Marc Laflamme**, University of Ottawa, Canada: this paper tries to examine how inclusive our schools are after 25 years of educational reforms, students with disabilities and their parents were asked to identify current barriers and provide suggestions for removing those barriers. Recommendations for promoting accessibility and full participation are provided and discussed in relation to inclusive education efforts.

This study provided a snapshot of the experiences of children with physical disabilities in integrated school settings. Based on this study, we recommend that government continue in their efforts to enforce their civil rights laws and provide resources to meet them. Similarly, school boards need to develop inclusive policies and procedures and direct resources. Principals need to ensure that their schools are fully inclusive and take a lead role in modelling inclusive attitudes and behaviours. Teachers need to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to adapt their teaching to include all children and the willingness to learn about the experiences of children with disabilities. Finally, we all need to stop and listen to students with disabilities to better understand their realities. With its structures, rules, and objectives, a school is like a microcosm of our world. We have the opportunity to provide schools that model the behaviour and attitudes that we want our children to take with them into the real world. In order to reflect our words into our action, we need to provide the necessary effort, educational policies, and resources to ensure that our values and principles are met.

Dr. Sadig Rasheed, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Office for South Asia, 2003: **EXAMPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION INDIA**: There are many obstacles faced by 10% of the region's young people who are estimated to have some kind of disability, the barriers are compounded. It covers barriers in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, on how such children are given schooling.

The minority of children with disability that do get places are often not sitting in the same classroom as other boys and girls because of a sense that they need to be separated and treated differently. Globally it is estimated that 70% of children with disabilities, including those with mild mental retardation, can attend regular schools provided the environment is designed to be accessible and the institution is willing to accommodate them.

UNICEF's Report on the Status of Disability in India 2000 states that there are around 30 million children in India suffering from some form of disability. The Sixth All-India Educational Survey (NCERT, 1998) reports that of India's 200 million school-aged children (6–14 years), 20 million require special needs education. While the national average for gross enrolment in school is over 90 per cent, less than five per cent of children with disabilities are in school.

In the past few years, focus on children with disabilities has resulted in greater awareness and increased sensitivity towards these children. The launch of the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) in 1994 provided further impetus to existing efforts. The Equal Opportunities and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 was comprehensive breakthrough legislation that provided educational and economic rehabilitation of people with disabilities. It states that free education for children with disabilities up to the age of 18 years must be provided in an appropriate and suitable environment. Inclusive education is an integral component of SSA, and promises to make 'education for all' a reality. Keeping in mind the large number of children whose needs must be addressed and the limited resources available, the best option is to promote inclusive education.

The inclusive education practices were drawn from five states (Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala) based on information available from officials and professionals working for the education of children with disabilities. The school practices were documented after discussions with teachers, parents, children with disabilities and their peer group. Based on documentation, field observations and data analysis, this study identifies positive

initiatives taken up by the government and NGOs, and suggests further measures that need to be taken to achieve the goal of UEE for all children including those with disabilities.

The good practices studied showed that these traits were not add-ons but an integral part of the culture. Such practices are possible only when they include appropriate teacher's training, provide accessible schools, child-friendly curricula, appropriate teaching methodologies and evaluation systems, and develop partnerships with families and communities. It was hard to find all these features in any single project.

Significance of the study

Individuals are assessed usually as disabled after we feel that they have problem in understanding, communicating and receiving instructions in their day-to-day life and in school. A variety of tests are administered to ascertain type of disability and special need of such children. These test are not only to ascertain, how the child is differently abled than his/her peer but to ascertain which kind or type of academic support he/she needs to adjust in their working, living and learning environment, what kind of process, material and teaching intervention are needed for his/her unhindered learning, so that he/she may live a dignified life and may contribute to the society.

In this study significant effort have been made to establish teachers related factors affecting education of disabled children. Efforts have been made to find out correlation between different following parameters with student attendance in school and their learning level in language, mathematics, art and music.

- Trained teachers availability
- Number of teacher in school
- Special teachers' Impact
- Frequently of special teacher visits

Data and Method

In order to know the teaching learning environment and the academic achievement of the children with special needs, visits were organized to see many bridge courses run by department of basic education of Uttar Pradesh. Schools were also visited, where children with special needs were studying in inclusive way. Some special schools run by non-government organizations were also visited to get a feeling of problems faced by these kinds of children in adjusting with routine daily personal work and education.

Teachers and warden of bridge courses, inclusive schools and special schools were consulted before making any research design. Their interaction was helpful in figuring out areas, which have greater impact on elementary education of children with special needs. On the basis of that research objectives and hypothesizes were constructed.

Research Design

The research design followed in the study is descriptive (survey) and evaluative. In this research the focus of the study is to test certain hypothesis regarding elementary education of CWSN at present. The descriptive survey method has been adopted primarily due to the fact that it facilitate in collecting general information and its one of the most commonly used method of investigation that attempts to describe and interpret what exists in the present conditions.

Sampling: Sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a predetermined number of observations are taken from a larger population. These processes simplify the learning about the population on the basis of a sample drawn from it. Thus in the sampling technique instead of studying every unit of the universe, we study a sample drawn on some basis from the entire universe. The methodology used to sample from a larger population depends on the type of analysis being performed, but may include simple random sampling or systematic sampling. In this study researcher has used stratified and purposive sampling. The sample should be a representative of entire population to get a representative sample, it should be ensured whether all elements are equally represented or not. For the selection of population the criterion followed was easy access to data, convenience in conducting survey, social structure and level of literacy. As per guidelines of Ministry of Human resource development all 20 blocks of district Allahabad are educationally backward, and being diverse in the sense of culture and education, it was selected for the purpose of study. Literacy rate of district Allahabad is 68%. It has homogeneous population of all section of society.

Sample has been taken carefully, so that results obtained from study of sample may be faithfully applied to the whole population. Following things are considered while selecting the sample.

- There should be no partiality while selecting the sample.
- All major sub group of population should be sufficiently represented.
- It should be manageable for completion of study.

As we have read in literature there are 13-14 different types of disability in children. During visit of special schools, inclusive schools and bridge courses run by Government of Uttar Pradesh, it was apparent that majority of CWSN falls in category of Orthopaedic, Visually Impaired, Hearing impaired, and Mentally retarded. So for the purpose of study only these four types of CWSN have been taken in sample. In order to collect valid and reliable data about education status of CWSN a sample size of 500 (approximately 5% of population) was set for the purpose. Size of sample for four different types of speciality is Orthopaedic – 171, Visually Impaired – 103, Hearing Impaired – 114, and Mentally Retarded – 107. In sample both the gender are adequately represented, Male- 252, Female – 258. In sample all social categories are sufficiently represented as- Scheduled caste- 187, Other backward classes-199, General- 115. For this almost proportionate number of children were selected randomly from each kind of specially and population, to see effect of different kind of specialty on hypotheses.

In this study different types of barrier in disabled children's education have been studied.

Tools used for the study

A format was developed for collecting data and information from different sources, Format has following elements for different kind of information.

- Interview Schedule with child (CWSN).
- Interview Schedule for the members of family.
- Interview Schedule for the teachers of school (for students' academic competencies).
- School Information with head Teacher or teacher (about infrastructure at school).

The Structured Information Schedule for all was developed by the researcher in order to assess the educational problems with respect to different types of CWSN. Observation of residential bridge course, primary school, kasturba gandhi balika vidhyalaya, special school for disabled children was done.

Results, Findings and Discussion

The present study examines the different type of barriers in elementary education of children with special needs on the basis of the responses of the children, parents, teachers, Head teacher on various issues. Frequencies of the responses of the different stake holder was grouped and analysed. Objective is to figure out common barriers in the development and learning for disabled children. This is most important aspect in the study, because most of the time, even teacher doesn't know, why children are not taking interest or learning the things, which they are willing to inculcate. It is difficult condition as children don't share their problems or unable to express. Since there is a culture of not talking in front of elders, children don't share their problems, and are unable to raise the issue. They tolerate without expressing it.

During study, we encountered a number of barriers which students, parents, teachers expressed. Some Barriers are common for all disabled children, some are disability wise and faced individually.

Financial Barriers:- family of disabled children outlined, following barriers faced by children and parents in elementary education due to financial condition of family:

1. Physical resources
2. Medical care and treatment of child
3. Availability of adjustable equipment
4. Availability of books and other learning material
5. Children's birth mode (at Hospital or Home)
6. Redesigning home as per need of child
7. Choosing suitable school
8. Arranging caretaker in case of need
9. Providing nutritious food.

Poverty is one of the biggest barriers as it not only reduces chance of development of CWSN but also is root cause of many other barriers. Parental poverty is responsible for difficulty faced by disabled children in life.

Parental Attitude Barriers:- following barriers faced by children in elementary education were outlined by teachers and head teachers of disabled children's school, resulting out of parental attitude.

1. Education of father, education of mother, education of sisters, education of brothers.
2. Parent's ability to teach such children.
3. Parental awareness of educational status of children.

4. Parental wish to educate such children.
5. Parent's readiness to send such children to hostels.
6. Parental support in completing school/home work.

Social Barriers:- Some of the most common affecting barriers are as follows-

1. Religion/Cast and gender of children with special need.
2. Children's participation in social activities, marriage or other family function.
3. Participation and children's interaction with neighbouring children for play and fun.
4. Children communication with fellow students.
5. Children communication with teachers.
6. Children' interest in extracurricular activities.

Resources Barrier

Infrastructural poverty is related to facilities we have at public places. Our public transport is not compatible for CWSN, our public toilets are not compatible for them, our market places are not compatible for them, and most of the public offices, courts, bus stops, railway stations are not suitable for them. Even our pathways are not built in such way that CWSN may walk without any problem on them.

1. Unavailability of equipment, like callipers/WC/TC/baisakhi for physically disabled, hearing aid for hearing impaired, braile kit/cane for visually impaired.
2. Pathway to school.
3. Toilets and drinking water at school.
4. Trained teacher.
5. Adjustable learning material like book, TLM, interactive devices.
6. Security at school.
7. Cleanliness at school, classroom, toilet facility and drinking water facility.

Emotional Barriers:-

1. Communication at home.
2. Communication with other children at school.
3. Communication with his/her teachers at school.
4. Children interaction with neighbourhood peers.
5. Children participation in marriage functions.
6. Communication with whom children are comfortable and living.

Adjustment Barriers:- It is very difficult for CWSN to adjust with different kind of environment. Adjustment with physical, educational and social environment is most important factor for learning. So it is important to see whether such children know, how to use equipment, how to adjust with whom children lives, how to adjust with whom children play, and how to adjust with whom child communicate.

Common Barriers of disabled children education:

- Social construct about disability is biggest barrier, due to some religious believe of rebirth based on their Karma (work), such children are seen as if they have done curse in their previous life, so society as a whole see them as a cheap or inferior soul. Even parents think that they have done some sin in their previous life that's why they have got such a son/daughter/grandson/granddaughter at their home.
- Social evil of taunting such children with bad name based on their disability or specialty
 - Visually Impaired children – Andhara (vU/kjk), Surdas (lwjnkl), Batti gull(cRrh xqy), kana
 - Hearing Impaired children – Gunga (xwaxk), Behra (cfgjk)
 - Orthopedically impaired – Langara (yaxM+k), Lula (ywyka)
 - Mentally retarded – pagala (ixyk), gadhaa (x/kk), Moti buddhi (EkksVh cq)h)

Such kind of derogatory remarks at public places force such children to confine themselves at home, stop social interaction, not attend social functions, and not use public parks and play grounds. Social exclusion is biggest barrier:

- Social construct that such children are burden and have no capacity to contribute. This construct is basically framed because such children lack one or more specific ability, but people forget that they still have other capacity and abilities. Since such children have limited abilities to focus on, if trained in those ability, may beat everyone in

those abilities. So anything which is not ideal from our prospective, we frame it as useless, such social attitude is one of the biggest barrier.

- Poverty is one of the biggest barriers as it not only reduces chance of development of CWSN but is also in root cause of many other barriers. Parental poverty affects in form of medical aid, consulting appropriate doctors, arrangement of adjustable equipment, redesigning home as per need of child, choosing suitable school, arranging caretaker in case of need, providing nutritious food.
- Infrastructure at public place is barrier for development and growth of CWSN. Our public transport is not compatible for CWSN, our public toilets are not compatible for them, our market places are not compatible for them, and most of the public offices, courts, bus stops, railway stations are not suitable for their need. Even our pathways are not built in such way that CWSN may walk without any external support on them.
- Educational institution infrastructure is a barrier in accommodating CWSN. Schools don't have infrastructure, which may ensure free walk in campus for CWSN. Schools doesn't have trained teachers, who may understand such children, and may plan educational assistance according to their need. Schools don't have required equipment and material needed for teaching learning of such children. Teachers even don't know, how to manage an inclusive classroom with diverse group of normal and disabled children. Unavailability of equipment and material is a barrier
- Special need children in most of the cases need some extra aid or equipment to adjust with the nature or environment. Such aid if provided in time with basic training, children become independent and start living normal life. But in study we find that due to financial problem or others issues children don't get proper equipment in time, which make their life and break their confidence. Sometime even if children get equipment from some government/donor agency it needs to be replaced with grade and age, which normally doesn't happen naturally.
- Teacher are mostly engaged with students of their own comfort. Teachers are confident that their fund of knowledge will construct learning, so they don't innovate. They feel, who ever do not respond to their already proved way of teaching, is not worthy of learning, as there is no other way to teach better than they know. This kind of teachers attitude toward teaching-learning process is a barrier
- Social construct is against disabled children, so normal student thinks them as inferior. Sometime even parents suggest to keep away from such children. It is also learnt that student think that such children are not capable enough to support them or compete with them, so no need to have any kind of relation with them. Sometime even peer students start teasing such children out of jealous or for fun, as they presume such children have limited strength to protest. Such behaviour of peers break moral of disabled children. Students' attitude and behaviour towards such children is sometime a barrier in inclusion and learning.
- For barrier free access of school, schools needs to be compatible for all type of disabled children, to ensure their inclusion in every activity of school: We have found that only ramps are constructed for taking care of orthopedically disabled children, that too only for main building of school and some extra classrooms. Need is to make whole campus barrier free. We found in study that some toilets were made on such height that physically handicapped students cannot use it. During study we noticed that no toilet has handle to support physically challenged children inside toilet. Most of the connecting path ways are not flat enough to facilitated independent movement for visually impaired children to walk even with cane. So school physical infra-structure like: approach roads, school buildings, kitchen, head teacher's room, class rooms, playgrounds, drinking water, notice boards, toilets, library, play material are most effective barrier.
- Teachers and management of school mostly prefer to include normal children in extracurricular activity, they feel disabled child will be a burden, even though capable of participating, as they have to put extra care for him. Such exclusion break moral and confidence of such children.
- Most of the curriculum we deliver at school talks about effort, acts, success, works, contribution of normal human being, it hardly talk about contribution of disabled persons. This curriculum bias has given an impression that disabled persons are only for mercy and support, and they cannot contribute for society. So curriculum in this light is also one of the barriers in education of disabled children.
- Government and public organization should try to make public facilities adjustable to them like: bus riding, rail riding, public toilet, parks, market places, ATMs, Public booths etc.
- Parents due to their educational and resource barrier, doesn't know, how to arrange proper equipment for their children.
- Parents should be encouraged to take such child to family function, so that he may devise his way to adjust himself in different social setting. Parents should try to socialize and project him.
- Parents should be counselled to allocate some house hold work for such child so that he may feel responsible.
- Parents should encourage children to learn new skill and knowledge, taking care of the children's interest.
- Parents should be counselled not to compare such children with other children. He should be compared with himself and should be appreciated, the way he is learning and performing.

- Most of the disabled children are not sent to school, because parents think that even if they get some education, they are not going to be productive member of family.
- Parents are not willing to send such child to school due to some anticipated problems, like: derogatory words at school or on the way, taking such child to school daily and receiving him from school, arranging books, dress, stationary etc.
- If parent feel, child is not getting adequate attention at school or he is not learning the thing he is supposed to, he stops motivating him to go to school, which mostly results in early dropout.
- Parent and grandparents are very protective towards such child. Sometime grandparent wilfully takes such child to live with them. In such a situation parents has to be counselled not to be over protective for child's self-development. Parents should be counselled to let child adjust to daily routine himself, it will give him confidence and learning.
- Disabled child should be given opportunity to interact with peers and elders, in such interaction his specialty should be discussed in appreciative way that will make him communicative and expressive.
- Parents should be encouraged to reorganize the household things best suited to disabled child and should be adjustable to other children.
- Parents should be asked to promote children's academic learning in specific areas of their interest, this will translate their learning into action and will give meaning to their learning.
- Parents should be counselled to celebrate children's specialty and abilities rather than feeling as a curse of the God on them and children.

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