

A Study on parents' awareness about Supporting Services for the Children with Special Needs at Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Attitudinal barriers prevent children with special needs from coming to schools. Unless these barriers are demolished, success in bringing children with special needs to school may be in question. Hence, it is important to undertake widespread awareness on the need, importance and potential of children with special needs. Various modes like ma-beti mela, bal sammelan print and electronic media, success stories etc. should be used. The training of community leaders and parents should also have an essential component on inclusive education. Mother Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Association (MTA/PTA) could be used as a powerful medium to inform the parents on the care, need, management and potential of children with special needs. Parents of children with special needs should receive counseling and training on how to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills. The present study is designed to know the parents' awareness about supporting services for the children with special needs at elementary schools.

Key Words: CWSN, Inclusive Education, Supporting services

Introduction:

Education is the fundamental right of all children. Universalization of Education is meaningful only when all the children in the age group of 6-14 are in school and get education. In this context the Children with Special Needs need to have different programmes to enroll and to retain them in schools. Equity –always remains an issue. The training of community leaders and parents should also have an essential component on inclusive education. Government has taken various initiatives to bring such children into school mainstream with certain interventions and it is essential to give orientation and training to the parents also about how to handle such children at home.

Definitions of Different Kinds of Disabilities

- ❖ **Blindness** – total absence of sight
- ❖ **Low vision** – a person with an impairment of visual functioning even after treatment
- ❖ **Hearing Impairment:** Difficulty in hearing sounds from behind or any other side
- ❖ **Mental Retardation:** Incomplete development of brain and uncommon social behavior
- ❖ **Loco motor Impairment:** Disability of bones, joint or muscles leading to substantial restriction in the movement of any part of the body
- ❖ **Learning Disability:** Marked difficulty in reading/writing/calculating or hyper activity

- ❖ **Cerebral Palsy:** Varying degrees of disturbance of voluntary movements caused by damage to the brain.
- ❖ **Multiple Disabilities:** A combination of two or more disabilities

Review of related literature

Jayachandran (2000) who is a pioneer in introducing successful integrated education in the State of Kerala, India states that 'Inclusive Education is an integral part of general education. Training regular classroom teachers in the area of integrated education, curriculum modification, parents' education, appropriate technology, awareness of parents and modification of positive attitude towards disability are the key points of successful integrated education.'

Chatterjee and Mishra (2004) his study revealed that parent-infant program specialists can help parents learn about hearing loss, guide them in learning their child's strengths and needs, and the educational options available. Once parents have this information, they will be able to make the best decision for their family.

Need and Importance of the Study:

It is important to undertake widespread awareness on the need, importance and potential of children with special needs. Various modes like ma-beti mela, bal sammelan print and electronic media, success stories etc. should be used. The training of community leaders in SSA should also have an essential component on inclusive education. Mother Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Association (MTA/PTA) could be used as a powerful medium to inform the parents on the care, need, management and potential of children with special needs. Parents of children with special needs should receive counseling and training on how to bring them up and teach them basic survival skills.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study necessary supporting services to the children with special needs in the elementary Schools.
2. To study parents' awareness about supporting services for Children with Special Needs.

Limitations of the study:

1. The present study is restricted to supporting services for CWSN Children only.
2. The present study is confined to Belgaum District only.

Design of the Study: Survey method is used for the present study.

Population and sample of the study:

The sample is drawn employing purposive sampling techniques. The parents who have special child were chosen randomly from Urban and rural schools of Belgaum and Bailhongal taluks consisting of 50 parent irrespective gender.

Tools used:

The researcher used self-developed “Awareness about Disability and supportive services” questionnaire as Instrument/tool to collect data. The characteristics of the tools have been well established.

Data Collection:

The data was collected by using purposive sampling technique. Parents were selected after going through the details given by DIET and BRC office of Belgaum district. Parents who have special child were the population for the present study. The investigator collected the data personally by giving a questionnaire, which was prepared based on supportive services given to the Children with Special Needs.

Statistical Techniques Used:

Percentage analysis is employed for data analysis. The collected data is systematically interpreted and graphs were drawn to check the percentage systemically.

Q: How much stipend is given by the government for the child having more than 75% of disability?

- A. 400 B. 1000 C. 1500 D. 500

Table: Stipend given by the government for the child having more than 75% of disability

Answer	A	B	C	D
Parents	0	46	4	0
Percentage	0%	88.00%	12.00%	0%

Most of the parents have given the correct response for the above question. The government gives financial support Rs.1000 to special children.

Q: The script used by the children having total blind.

- A. Stenograph B. Seismograph C. Brail Lippi D. Dark Writing

Table: Script used by the children having total blind is Braille.

Answer	A	B	C	D
parents	0	0	50	0
Percentage	0%	0%	100%	0%

The above table shows that all the parents have given the right answer for the question on Braille script which is a gift of Louis Braille for Blind children. It helps them to read and right without doing any kind of mistake.

Q: Kit given to mentally retarded children under SSA is.

- A. Braille kit B. M R kit C. Hearing Instrument Kit D. Medical Kit

Table: M R kit is given to mentally retarded children under SSA

Answer	A	B	C	D
parents	0	42	0	8
Percentage	00%	84%	00%	16%

It is interesting to know that many parents have given right response for the above question M R kit is specially meant for mentally retarded children given under SSA but this is not used properly by them.

Q: Which instrument is used to measure Hearing impaired?

- A. Nanometer B. thermometer C. decibel D. none of the above

Table: Instrument used to measure Hearing impaired.

Answer	A	B	C	D
Parents	4	0	46	0
Percentage	12.00%	0%	88.00%	0%

Parents are not clear about which aid or instrument is used for hearing impaired children. The above table clearly gives picture of their response. Most of the parents have given option C as right answer and very few parents have different options.

Q. No: The response of providing Mid-Day meals and uniforms for HBE children.

- A. School Headmaster B. Food Inspector C. Subject Inspector D. DIET Lecturers

Table: The school headmaster is responsible for providing Mid-Day meals and uniforms for HBE children

Answer	A	B	C	D
Parents	48	0	0	2
Percentage	96.00%	0%	0%	4.00%

The above table shows that almost all the parents have agreed that the school headmaster is responsible for providing Mid-Day meals and uniforms for HBE children. In the absence of the headmaster the other teachers will take this responsibility.

Q: SSA provides multiple disordered children the following instruments.

- A. Wheel chair & Tricycle B. Hearing aid C. M R Kit & Optical D. All the above

Table: Aids provided under SSA for multiple disordered children

Answer	A	B	C	D
parents	45	0	1	4
Percentage	90.00%	0%	2.00%	8.00%

90% of the parents have agreed that wheel chair and tricycle is given for children with multiple disorders and the remaining parents have different views about the kits provided for such children.

Q: Home Based Education will be given twice in a week by.

- A. Teachers. B. Volunteers. C. Block Education Officer. D. Education Coordinators

Table: Home Based Education will be given twice in a week by volunteers.

Answer	A	B	C	D
Parents	5	45	0	0
Percentage	10.00%	90%	0.00%	0.00%

All the parents have agreed that volunteers are selected to teach home based education for children with multiple disabilities. SSA will provide incentives for Volunteers under HBE intervention.

Q. No: The response to organize training programme for parents on inclusive education at District Level is.

A. DIET & SSA B. Zilla Panchayat C. Women and Child Welfare department D. All the above

Table No: organizing training program for parents on inclusive education at District Level.

Answer	A	B	C	D
parents	47	0	3	0
Percentage	94.00%	0%	6.00%	0.00%

DIET and SSA have taken it seriously to make inclusive education compulsory in all schools parents are given orientation in this area. Most of the parents have given option A as their opinion.

Major Finding of the study:

- Most of the parents have agreed that if learning disabled children are put into regular schools they can be improved with some extra classes or special care by the teachers.
- Parents are aware of the interventions and incentives for children with special needs at elementary schools.
- Integrated Education of Disabled programme is observed to have little success in meeting its objectives because of the limited roles played by the special educators.
- SSA will provide incentives for Volunteers under Home Based Education intervention.
- DIET and SSA have taken it seriously to make inclusive education compulsory in all schools parents are trained in this area.
- Wheel chair and tricycle is given for children with multiple disorders.
- The school headmaster has been made responsible for providing Mid-Day meals and uniforms for HBE children. In the absence of the headmaster the other teachers will take this responsibility.
- Most of the parents have given the opinion that for this kind of children special and flexible curriculum is essential.
- Parents have been given orientation and training at DIET to handle such children at home but most of the parents especially in rural area think that it is because of their fate.

Conclusion

The educational needs of children with special needs are unique in nature. Teachers who are working in schools should have adequate knowledge and training on how to handle these children's problems. Without specific training in this area they may not be able to teach effectively. Certain remedial programmes confirm that with concentrated instructional skills on reading comprehension, these children will return to the regular class-room instructions and apply these skills on learning and eventually begin to improve their learning skills.

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