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Education in Chandigarh at elementary stage: Indicators and retention of CWSN

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Abstract

In the past few years, focus on children with disabilities has resulted in greater awareness and increased sensitivity towards these children. Children with disabilities /CWSN are categorized under physically handicapped, visually impaired, hearing impaired, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, learning disability, speech problems and multiple disabilities. 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 present study is focused on the education in Chandigarh at the elementary stage. The main indicators regarding the enrolment and retention of the Children with Special Needs are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Education, elementary, Indicators, retention

1. Introduction

Elementary Education in India had witnessed tremendous change in the past sixty years through central and state level initiatives. Universal Elementary Education (UEE) was one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set for the year 2015. UEE for All means providing universal enrolment, universal retention, equity and universal achievement of children (Zachariach, 2005) ^[6]. This MDG synchronises with the targets set by the government of India. Various programmes and incentives were initiated for universalizing and improving the quality of elementary education in India. The last two decades have shown incredible improvement in achieving the goals of UEE. The Right of children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 passed by the Indian Parliament in 2009 mandates free and compulsory education of all children of 6-14 years age until they complete elementary education in a neighbourhood school. Through a number of intervention and strategies, the states and centre governments are jointly working together to achieve the unfurnished goal of UEE in India. Innovative educational programmes like District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and ongoing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) had changed educational scenario a lot. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched to achieve the goal of UEE. This adopts a zero rejection policy and uses an approach of converging various schemes and programmes.

In the past few years, focus on children with disabilities has resulted in greater awareness and increased sensitivity towards these children. Children with disabilities /CWSN are categorized under physically handicapped, visually impaired, hearing impaired, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, learning disability, speech problems and multiple disabilities. 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. However, programmes launched in the recent past have been able to make only a limited impact in terms of increasing the participation of children with disabilities in formal education. This situation needs to change in the near future, and a focused effort is required. The present research will study the role of SSA in promoting inclusive education for children with special needs in Chandigarh. It is important to evaluate the performance and step taken by SSA for implementation of the Act for children with special needs in Chandigarh.

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In India, disability remains a welfare issue and is not seen as a development issue. This is evident from the fact that disability is under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (formerly the Ministry of Social Welfare) and not under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Education of children with special needs is a relatively new concept and requires a great deal of technical expertise to deal with the needs of children having different kinds of impairments. Hence, it is a dire necessity of the hour to know the status of implementation of RTE on education of children with special needs. It is important to remember about 90% Indian children are still serviced by government or government aided institutions Hence, India's future is still being shaped in poor classrooms in government funded schools at the hands of government recruited teachers. Attention needs to be focussed here (Mukhopadhyay, 2013) [2]. For better development and growth of child, quality education is most important aspect. Unfortunately, too many children in the world today grow up without this chance, because they are deprived of their basic right to even attend primary schools. The RTE Act became effective on 1 April 2010, and has a mandate to achieve targets including 100% enrolment, training untrained teachers in 1.3 million schools and better infrastructure ranging from classrooms to toilets and playgrounds by 31 March. As per analysis of DISE it has been found that boys outnumber girls both at the Primary and Upper Primary levels of education. Further analysis of state specific Gender Parity Index also showed that Chandigarh is a little low in Primary enrolment, indicating that the goal of UPE in these states is not likely to be realised unless all remaining girls are brought under the education system.

The current survey by National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) based on the DISE data, in Chandigarh the Composite Educational Development Index of primary and upper primary level of year 2012-13 had fallen to 0.597 with rank 17 which was 0.622 with rank 10 in year 2011-12. This fact brings out the status of inclusive education as it highlights that, even though disabled children enrol at the primary school, they dropout sooner or later and this trend is much more among girls. As a result UEE is able to more or less achieve the enrolment of disabled children, but not retention and achievement. Large amount of money have been allotted for education by the Government of India. Finance minister P. Chidambaram proposed that of the total education outlay, the flagship scheme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was allocated Rs.27,258 crore for implementing the Right to Education Act that promises education to all children in the 6-14 age group. The previous Union budget for 2012-13 had pegged an outlay of Rs.61, 427 crore for education, including Rs.25,555 crore for SSA. In spite of this huge allocation, there is paucity of data about the performance of the programme. The present research will study the scenario of inclusive education in the state of Chandigarh keeping in view the Government efforts for Universalizing the Elementary Education in the state.

What does NCFSE 2000, NCF 2005, RTE 2009 and NCERT Position Paper Say?

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2000) has recommended inclusive schools for learners with special educational needs by making

appropriate modifications in the content, presentation and transaction strategies, preparing teachers and developing learning friendly evaluation procedures.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (2000), brought out by the NCERT, recommended inclusive schools for all without specific reference to pupils with SEN as a way of providing quality education to all learners.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 speaks as below: "For teaching to serve as a means of strengthening our democratic way of life, it must respond to the presence of first generation school-goers, whose retention is imperative owing to the Constitutional amendment that has made elementary education a fundamental right of every child. Ensuring health, nutrition and an inclusive school environment empowering all children in their learning, across differences of caste, religion, gender, and disability is enjoined upon us by the Constitutional amendment."

As far as children with special needs are concerned, the Office of the Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities stated that not more than 4% of children with disabilities have access to education. Despite of the efforts, many children with disabilities are still denied access to education. It is believed that not more than 2-3 per cent of children with disabilities have access to education (Draft National Policy on Special Education 2002). The Rehabilitation Council of India estimates that 30 million disabled children are in need of education; it aims to educate 10 per cent of all disabled children by 2020. As under Children with Special Educational Needs 29.57 lakh children identified while only 24.77 lakh could enrol in schools in 2009-10, (MHRD 2009-10). Children with Special Needs (CWSN) are subjected to negligence, segregation, deprivation and discrimination because of physical and mental characteristics, and the wide-scale negative social attitude towards them. Girls with disabilities suffer a double disadvantage. The targets of achieving gender parity in education are going to be impacted seriously over the next five years as significantly fewer girls are going to enter the system. The 2011 World Report on Disability indicates that female disability prevalence rate is 19.2 per cent whereas it is 12 per cent for men. Women and girls with disabilities are three times more likely to experience gender-based violence compared to non-disabled women (Fifth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2012). The question this reality raises is how education is addressing both learners and the community on the value of girls and in ensuring empowerment of girls with disabilities through education.

The key focal areas for inclusive education of CWSN in the 12th Plan are identification of 'hidden' CWSN, development of human resource for support services, and infrastructure and material support for inclusive education.

Interventions Proposed In the 12th Plan: In the 12th Plan the following interventions are made for universalizing access and retention:

1. In the 12th Plan the key thrust of SSA will be on inclusive education to children with special needs in general schools.
2. SSA will also support Special Training for school readiness of CWSN, education through open learning systems, and home schooling, wherever necessary,

community based rehabilitation (CBR) and vocational education. The involvement of Resource Institutions will be encouraged.

3. The following activities will form components of the programme:
 - Identification of children with special needs.
 - Educational placement in general school, school readiness programmes/ home based education
 - Provision of aids and appliances, as needed
 - Resource Teacher/ General Teacher Training
 - Individualized educational plan
 - Community mobilization, parental training, and peer sensitization.
 - Involvement of NGO in CWSN related activities
 - Engagement of resource teachers
 - Engagement of volunteers/care-givers for severe-profound CWSN

The percentage of CWSN identified under SSA seems to be low, being only 1.54 % the total child population in comparison to Census 2001 data, wherein 2.1% of the population has been found to have some disability. The SRI-IMRB report (2005) estimates that 38 % of CWSN are out of school. Therefore adequate measures for identification of CWSN have to be taken up by training teachers, involving Primary Health Centres/ panchayats, community based organizations and NGOs. Data collection methods and parameters need to be evaluated and refined, so as to ensure complete and scientific data that can form the basis of planning and implementation, of provisions for all children identified.

Educational Indicators of Chandigarh, UT

Chandigarh is known in the north India for its well developed and varied educational infrastructure. The city has well-built facility for primary, secondary and tertiary education and training in almost all spheres of learning. In fact, the city is a recognized hub of higher education in social science, arts, science, commerce, medicine, paramedical health care, engineering, fashion technology

Table 2: Performance related indicators of All Schools in Chandigarh of year 2012-13 and 2013-14

Year	App. By road	Playground	Boundary wall	Girls toilet	Boys toilet	Drinking water	MDM	Electricity	Ramp
2012-13	100%	93.80%	98.90%	100%	100%	100%	93.2%	100%	-
2013-14	100%	95.20%	99.50%	100%	100%	100%	100 %	100%	95.20%

Table 2 data highlighting the performance related indicators of all Schools in Chandigarh showing an increase in all the indicators in the year 2013-14 than the year 2012-13.

c) Teachers related indicators (Source DISE)

Table 3: Showing Pupil Teacher ratio, student classroom ratio and Average teacher per school as per state elementary education report card 2013-13

Year	PT Ratio	SD CR Ratio	Average teacher per school
2012-13	21	43	40
2013-14	19	42	44.6

From the above table 1, 2 and 3 it have been cleared that the enrolment number, performance related indicators i.e. school approachability by road, Playground, boundary wall, Girls toilet, boys toilet, drinking water, mid day meal,

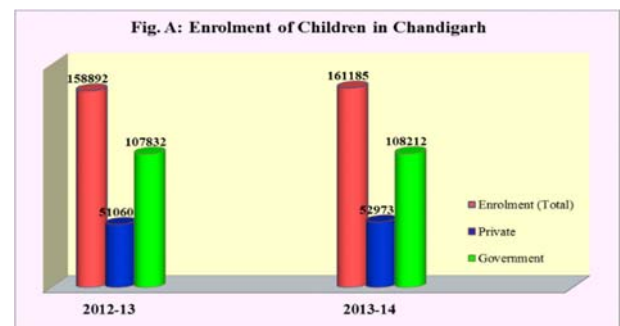
etc. and attracts students not only from adjoining states but also from far away north-east. The higher educational standard of Chandigarh is reflected in the fact that in 2011 around 86.43 per cent of the total population of the UT was literate.

In this section, a variety of school and facility-related indicators of year 2012-13 and 2013-14 of Chandigarh has been highlighted which includes Total enrolment of children in Private and Government Schools of Chandigarh, Performance and Teachers related indicators.

a) Total Enrolment of Children (Source state report card, 2013-14)

Table 1: Total Enrolment of Children in year 2012-13 and 2013-14 in Private and Government Schools of Chandigarh

Year	Enrolment (Total)	Private	Government
2012-13	1,58,892	51,060	1,07,832
2013-14	1,61,185	52973	1,08,212



Results in Table 1 and Fig. A show comparative data of total enrolment of children in year 2012-13 and 13-14 of private and government schools. An increase of 2239 in total enrolment with 1913 and 380 Increase in private and government school respectively.

b) Performance related indicators (Source state report card, 2013-14)

electricity and Ramp, Pupil Teacher ratio, student classroom ratio and Average teacher per school increased from year 2012-13 to 2013-14 indicating that a lot of efforts are being taken by the government to universalize the primary education.

Enrolment of Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

In view of the constitutional commitment of providing free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years irrespective of the abilities of children, SSA Chandigarh is striving hard to achieve this aim. Undeniably the Abhiyan extended various facilities to the children with special needs. A lot of emphasis is given to include and integrate children with special needs into the education system.

Sex and Grade Wise Enrolment of CWSN in Year 2012-13 AND 13-14

- CWSN (BOYS)

Table 4: showing comparative data of enrolment of CWSN (boys) in all Primary and Upper Primary schools of Chandigarh in year 2012-13 and 2013-14

CWSN Boys	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	PRY.	UPPER PRY.
2012-13	90	153	187	266	341	450	453	467	1037	1370
2013-14	99	199	312	431	480	505	459	339	1521	1303
								-114		-67

The comparative picture of data given below related to enrolment of CWSN (boys) in grade I to VIII of years 12-13 and 13-14 showed that though the number of CWSN in the each grade and successive years increases but a close analysis of data shows that the number of children enrolled in class VII in year 2012-13 was 453 and the number of

children enrolled in class VIII in year 2013-14 was 339, which has reduced by 114 which is an alarming state of affair.

- CWSN (GIRLS)

Table 5: showing comparative data of enrolment of CWSN (Girls) in all Primary and Upper Primary schools of Chandigarh in year 2012-13 and 13-14

CWSN Girls	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	PRY.	UPPER PRY.
2012-13	63	63	123	180	250	368	413	444	679	1225
2013-14	54	100	151	224	308	294	340	204	837	838
							- 28(drop out)	-109(drop out)		-67

The above table shows the enrolment of CWSN (girls) in all Primary and Upper Primary schools of Chandigarh in year 2012-13. The enrolment data of year 2012-13 and 2013-14 shows the steady improvement in each grade. The total enrolment number of girls with special needs in primary level was 679 in year 2012-13 and 837 in year 2013-14 shows an increase of 158 girls with special need. However, the enrolment number of girls with special need in upper primary level in year 2013-14 shows a downfall to 28 in grade VII and 209 in grade VIII, which is extremely high in number. The total number of enrolment in upper primary level among girls with special need in year 2012-13 was 1225 which has decreased to 838 in number.

One of the other important indicators that are essential to achieve UEE is a high transition from primary level to upper primary level of education. From the above data related to enrolment of children with special needs (boys and Girls) in year 2012-13 and 13-14, it can be concluded that despite enhanced inputs and special efforts made by SSA in Chandigarh, UT – the enrolment number of children with special needs (more girls as compared to boys) has decreased by the time they reach to upper primary, which showed that the children with special need left the school before even completing upper primary education.

The current survey by National University Of Educational Planning And Administration (NUEPA) based on the DISE data brings out the status of inclusive education as it highlights that, even though disabled children enrol at the primary school, they dropout sooner or later and this trend is much more among girls. “The share of girls’ enrolment in Chandigarh is low at 45.04 percent in Primary and 44.81 percent in Upper Primary classes (exert from Elementary Education in India: Analytical Report).

Conclusion

There are number of parameters that need to be taken into consideration for developing schools as learning communities addressing the needs of all children. These could be physical or psychological dimensions of the school environment that are interrelated and affect the child’s learning in a significant way. Although government of India over the years initiated and implemented a number of programmes such as Integrated Education for Disabled

Children (IEDC), Project on Integrated Education for Disabled (PIED), DPEP, Janshala, SSA etc which has led to increased enrolment and retention but only a miniscule of children with disabilities have been integrated in mainstream institutions. The members of the society should try to understand that these children are not burden on the nation rather they are the assets of the nation, which can be proved by giving them equal opportunity in every field. This attitude would lead to transform the regular education system in order to respond to different learners in a constructive and positive way.

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