



THE PROGRESS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN DHARMAPURI DISTRICT – A STUDY

V. Hemalatha

Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of History, Government Arts College for Men's, Krishnagiri, Tamilnadu

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Abstract:

A major benefit of inclusive education is to give students and staff learning and teaching opportunities that reflect the wide range of contributions by and roles open to people similar to and different from themselves. Inclusion covers all students, including those with behavior problems, lower academic abilities, and health conditions. For inclusion to succeed Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) providing eight years of quality education to all children in the 6-14 age groups can only be realized if Children with Special Needs (CWSN) are also included under the ambit of elementary education. There is a lack of awareness in extending help to CWSN. So there is a need to enlighten the ignorant minds. The total numbers of CWSN identified in Dharmapuri district were 2877. All of them were taken care properly as 2235 were enrolled in Schools, 131 were observed by SRPs and the rest 511 were observed by HBE. This study attempts to study the progress of the CWSN children.

Key Words: Inclusion, Students, Disability, CWSN, Normalizing, Lack of Awareness, Enlighten, Ignorant Mind, Special Services & Additional Aids

Introduction:

Inclusion is an educational Philosophy aimed at "normalizing" special service for which students qualify. Inclusion involves an attempt to provide more of these special services by providing additional aids and support than by pulling students out rather for isolation instruction. Teachers are still having negative attitude towards the inclusion of students with disabilities, they are still not having proper awareness regarding inclusive education. Inclusion is actually a much stronger concept which refers to "the right to belong to the mainstream". The main objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) providing eight years of quality education to all children in the 6-14 age groups can only be realized if Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are also included under the ambit of elementary education. There is a lack of awareness in extending help to CWSN. So there is a need to enlighten the ignorant minds.

Inclusive Education:

Inclusive is a basic value that extends to all children. Inclusion gives a message that "Everyone belongs to the school; everyone welcome to the School". So every school should follow the principle of zero reject and admit irrespective of cast, religion, sex, socio economic status, disabilities, etc.¹ The Challenge of Inclusive Education is to meet the special needs of all the children with or without disability.²

SSA Framework on Inclusive Education:

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a flagship programme for Universalization of Elementary Education in India made an endeavour to provide eight years of quality education to all children in the 6-14 age group. Realizing the importance of integrating children with special needs in regular schools, SSA framework has made adequate provisions for educating Children With Special Needs (CWSN). Though SSA has been providing adequate facilities to make schools inclusive in the real sense, our teachers are not accountable in this regard.

Inclusive education programmes do not focus on the accommodation of these children into a general education setting, but are focused on the restructuring of schools to accept and provide for the need of all students. In inclusive education, mainstreaming and integration are viewed as intermediary steps to the ultimate goal of teaching all students together. In inclusive programme specialized instruction and support are provided to any student who is in need of support without labeling him as disabled or exceptional. In other words, no discrimination is made among the exceptional or non-exceptional children.

CWSN – Categories and Survey:

CWSN are categories as 1. Visually impaired, 2. Hearing impaired 3. Orthopedically handicapped, 4. Multiple disability, 5. Autism, 6. Cerebral palsy, 7. Mentally retarded, and 8. Down syndrome. The survey was presided over by district collector and with the existence and the guidance of district Additional chief educational officer and the District Coordinator of inclusive education. It comprises special teachers, BRTes in all blocks were engaged in the survey and the children with special need were identified habitation wise. With the great support of the seven District Coordinators, 119 Block Resource Teacher Educators, 1376 HMs, Teachers, many Anganwadi workers, Staff from four Residential schools, three RSTC centers and KGBV 37

special educators of SSA, satisfy 2877 special need children were identified between the age group of 6 and 14, in accordance with their needs and necessities.³

Findings:

The findings for this article restrict to the academic year 2014-2015. Thus, no comparative assessment and appraisal is made.

Admission:

Among the totally found out the children were admitted in regular schools (2235), 511 CWSN were home based in but they were admitted in regular schools and 131 CWSN who are looked after in Day Care Center in all 8 blocks of the district. Hence to fulfill the needs of the children who are in special needs, the higher officials of SSA come down to the field with emphasizes the BRTEs and monitor the regular school and Day Care Center.

Block Wise Enrolment⁴:

S.No	Name of The Block	No. of CWSN identified	No. of CWSN Enrolled in schools Only	No. of CWSN covered through SRPs	No. of CWSN covered through HBE
1.	Dharmapuri	473	356	20	97
2	Nallampalli	393	338	14	41
3	Pennagaram	456	352	15	89
4	Palacode	426	333	16	77
5	Karimangalam	310	248	15	47
6	Morappur	312	240	19	53
7	Harur	296	220	20	56
8	Pappireddipatti	211	148	12	51
	Total	2877	2235	131	511

Aids:

S.No	Name of The Block	No. of CWSN provided aids and appliances through ALIMCO	No. of CWSN provided aids and appliances through other sources.	No of CWSNs under gone Surgery	No. of CWSN provided Transport & Escort allowance	No. of RTs in place (IE Head)
1.	Dharmapuri	16	11	2	20	3
2	Nallampalli	27	9	2	20	2
3	Pennagaram	8	13	3	20	3
4	Palacode	11	4	2	20	3
5	Karimangalam	4	5	0	20	3
6	Morappur	14	4	3	20	2
7	Harur	12	2	4	20	3
8	Pappireddipatti	15	6	3	20	2
	Total	107	54	19	160	21

The above shown table surveys the different aspects of CWSN in Dharmapuri District. The total numbers of CWSN identified were 2877. Among 8 blocks of the District Dharmapuri block has identified 473 CWSN. Amongst the identified 2235 students were enrolled in schools. 131 CWSN were covered in SRPs. 511 CWSN were covered through HBE. Each block has conducted one functional Assessment camp for the year 2014-15. 107 CWSN were supplied with Aids and appliances through other sources. 19 CWSN have under gone surgery each block 20 CWSN are given transport and escort. 21 resource teachers in IE head serve CWSN students in the district.

Achievements:

IEPs developed for CWSN were 2745. All the schools were barrier free. 176 schools were with DFTs so far in the district. Totally 7 CWSN children were provided with Braille books. 283 CWSN are getting benefits in the resource room⁵

DRG Meetings:

The First District Resource Group (DGR) Meetings for 2014-15 was conducted in the Month of April. Discussed the issues related to household survey of Out of School Children and Children with Special Needs.

Identification of CWSN:

The household of survey of CWSN and Out of School Children was carried out in the months of April and May 2014. The survey was conducted on door to door basis which ensured identification of all CWSN within the district. Resurvey was conducted in the month of June 2014. By the end of the survey 2877 CWSN were identified between the age group of 6 and 14.

Government Disability Certificates:

A total of 298 CWSN were provided National ID cards through this camp for beneficiaries to obtain government assistance.⁶

Awareness Programme:

Dharmapuri District conducted one the awareness programme in the month of August 2014 to raise awareness and change the attitude of people.⁷ Students, teachers, supervisors, BRTEs, Special education teachers participated in the awareness rally.

Medical Assessment Camp:

8 medical camps are conducted one each in 8 blocks; 5 Assessment camps are conducted in collaboration with ALIMCO at each block to ensure that no CWSN is left for checkups and examination. The disability certificates were issued to the children at the medical camp itself. For this year 1421 children were benefitted out of the assessment camp. Children in need of assistive devices were ascertained. A total of 107 CWSN were identified for assistive devices and 54 CWSN were provided aids and appliances.⁸

Corrective Surgeries:

The children in need of surgical corrections such as Ortho survey, Tongue Tie, cleft lip, cleft palates were also recommended for further treatment. Ortho surgery was done in Dharmapuri Medical College. In Dharmapuri Taluk Hospitals, Tongue Tie surgery was done. In convergence with SMILE TRAIN ORGANISATION organized by Sri Ramachandra Hospital, Porur, Chennai, giving the chance to rise to their potential for children with cleft lip and cleft palate identified through survey and medical camps were recommended for surgery and performed 9 cleft lift surgeries.⁹

Aids and Appliances:

Has taken initiative to provide procurement of assistive devices from ALIMCO Which was purchased for Rs.3,00,000/- for 107 Beneficiaries. Also, measures have been taken to provide aids and appliances in collaboration with District Differently Abled Welfare Officer (DDAWO) from MLA fund.

Educational Placement:

The CWSN who were identified through household survey were placed in different Educational Placement such as School Readiness Camp and Home Based Education.

School Readiness Camp (SRC):

8 SRCs provide special education to the CWSN in life oriented activities which enable the children to lead an independent life. Thereby attain the main aim of SRC is to prepare the differently abled children with Special Education and therapeutic support directed towards the mission of mainstreaming that, allows a lot of flexibility for the CWSN. The BRTEs and special educators during their visit ensure that the CWSN mingle with normal children in school. The SRCs not only act as learning centre but also serve as physiotherapy clinics where physiotherapists give therapy exercise to the CWSN.¹⁰

Resource Room:

Resource rooms are class rooms where a special education programme is delivered to CWSN. Individual needs of CWSN are supported in these resource rooms. As far as Resource Room concern, one District Level Resource Room 8 Block Level Resource Room and 3 Cluster Level Resource Rooms are established. In district model resource center, daily one physiotherapist and special educator gives therapy and training to the children. In these center treatments given for CP Multiple disability, muscular dystrophy and hearing impaired etc. Resource rooms impart certain skills to CWSN.

Home Based Education:

Home Based Educations is given to children with severe disabilities who are not able to go to school. Instead of the child going to the school, the school comes to the child. The special educators appointed at block level visit the houses of this home based CWSN once a week & impart pre integration training to them. Training parents on appropriate physiotherapy intervention and develop necessary prerequisite skills needed for mainstreaming.¹¹

Main Streaming:

After training at SRCs for a period of 2 to 3 months, the special educators and BRTEs enroll these children in regular schools. 34 CWSN were mainstreamed into regular schools from DCC in this year.

Besides these provision and measures Management Information System, Monitoring the achievement level of CWSN through IEP, and Government Free Materials, Escort / Transport are also administered under inclusive Education. Under Escort and Transport 120 children have been provided transport facility in 2014-15 in which 87 MR children have been given transport. Escort Allowance have been provide to 40 children in 2014-15 in Dharmapuri district in which most of them are MR children.¹²

Infrastructure:

Barrier free access: Ramps & Handrails are provided in the school makes the CWSN to feel pleasant of the stay in school. It also raised their confidence to feel independent. Toilets have been modified and converted into Disabled Friendly Toilets for the benefit of CWSN.¹³

Suggestions:

- ✓ Helping the parents and family of the CWSN for rectifying the ills of the child.
- ✓ Discrimination of CWSN on the basis of their any short of background should be not been happened either in academic or in public environment.
- ✓ Compensatory pre- school
- ✓ Taking education to the doorsteps of the CWSN.
- ✓ Providing incentives and concessions to CWSN.
- ✓ Establishment of special school for the CWSN.

- ✓ Providing due recognition to CWSN'S strength and special abilities.
- ✓ More workshops, awareness and orientation programmes should be organized.

Conclusion:

The total numbers of CWSN identified in Dharmapuri district were 2877. All of them were taken care properly as 2235 were enrolled in Schools, 131 were observed by SRPs and the rest 511 were observed by HBE. The supply of Aid and appliances should be improved and monitored at regular intervals. Most of the parents are ignorant of the usage of the Aids appliances, thus proper services to appliances such as hearing aid were found necessary. Besides the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education is the affecting factor on the CWSN. Further most of the teachers and students are indifferent and are unwilling to help CWSN. Besides the infrastructural facilities, no special care is given to the special students for example facility of Total Communication method or Sign Language is not there. They do not get enough written or visual instructions. Teachers are not acquainted with the writing in the Braille form. Severe problem arises arranging writers during examinations. Among boys and girls, apart from Regular School, girls have more positive attitude towards inclusive education in Inclusive School than boys since girls are more adjusting in nature. According to the students there are both advantages and disadvantages of Inclusive School. Unless and until Inclusive School becomes self sufficient it is very difficult to do away with special Schools. Thus it demands more educational programmes to parents, training to teachers, administrators. Everyone together can make a difference in the life of the students and more in the life of CWSN.

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