Barriers to Inclusive Education : View of Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators

Shilpi Verma
Research Scholar, Faculty of Education,
BHU, Varanasi
Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education,
BHU, Varanasi

Abstract :

Indian constitution provided safeguards for the marginalized and vulnerable groups as early as in 1950s and these are being continuously executed and monitored. However inclusion of children and persons with disabilities is one of the priority areas as reflected in policy and plan documents. Free and compulsory education to all children up to age fourteen is a commitment of Indian government. But children with special needs constitute one of the largest groups that are still outside the fold of general education system. So, the present study made an attempt to identify barriers in implementation of Inclusive education programme in government elementary schools at the level of cluster resource centre coordinator of Kasganj district in Uttar Pradesh. Using purposive sampling technique, 30 cluster resource centre coordinators of government elementary schools were selected as a sample of the study. Applying descriptive survey method, mix ended questionnaire was administered on them. Data was analyzed using percentage (%) and frequency (%). As a result of the study, so many barriers like lack of awareness, lack of teachers, untrained teachers, negative attitudes, lack of fund, lack of support services, lack of assistive devices, unavailability of resource room, traditional examination system, unusable curriculum, low economic condition of child's family etc were found in implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools.

Keywords: Barriers, *Inclusive education*, *Elementary Schools*, Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators.

Introduction :

Inclusion expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he/she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students) proponents of inclusion generally favor newer forms of education service delivery. In India the goal of the inclusive education at elementary level is to reduce the gap in the enrolment, retention, completion rates and achievement levels of children with disabilities. There have been efforts internationally to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream. Government of India through various schemes and programme has been making special efforts in assuring the enrolment of children and youth with disabilities in the regular school system to the extent possible. The emphasis is therefore laid on inclusive education that uses the existing infrastructure/institutions and professionals to the extent possible and does not create a plethora of completely new institutions which are expensive and take time to come up.

In India, the shift of the educational model from *integration* of children with disabilities to *inclusion of all* can be observed in the National Curricular Framework (NCERT,

2005), the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (MSJE, 2006), and the National Curricular Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE (NCTE, 2010), which emphasised the need of making learning environment appropriate not only for children with disabilities but also for all children with diverse backgrounds and needs.

In order to achieve truly inclusive education, we need to think about and incorporate children with special needs into regular schools. Especially, because these kids face some sort of barriers to learning and participation in the classroom. As general education classrooms include more and more diverse students, teachers realize the value of accepting each student as unique.

Review of the Study :

Pandey (2009) conducted a study to identify the barriers in implementation of inclusive education policies in Delhi. Findings of the study focused lack of awareness and understanding of inclusive education, lack of physical infrastructure, lack of basic equipments, aids and appliances for children with special educational needs. Das (2010) conducted a research titled as 'Educating children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms'. The study focused that teachers were not trained for handling children with special needs. Children with special needs were vulnerable. Kaur (2010) conducted a research to study the implementation of inclusion of children with special needs in primary schools. The findings of the study emphasized the importance of implementing strategies and not 'dumping' students with disabilities into general education classes. Tara, Kumar and Ramaswamy (2010) conducted a study named 'study of effectiveness of BRCs & CRCs in providing academic support to elementary schools'. The study reported that BRCs were overloaded with administrative work, had inadequate infrastructure and were burdened with the jobs of conducting too many training programmes. Some of the perceived problems at the CRC level included insufficient capacity building of CRC coordinators, lack of job knowledge, unwillingness of teachers to adopt innovate teaching methods and low confidence of teachers' capability of CRC coordinators. Areas in which training was relatively less effective or deficit according to respondents was education of children with special needs.

Review of the literature in this aspect shows that very few researches have tried to identify barriers faced by cluster resource centre coordinators in implementation of inclusive education.

Need of the Study :

Children with special needs are causing much concern today in the educational world, their personality include some characteristics which are parallel to the normal. Every child rather than ability or disability should be helped to attain the maximum and to develop their potentialities, no matter what their capabilities or limitations may be. Review shows few empirical studies have been done on the situation of these children with special needs in schools. Many questions arise about the children with special needs as what is there actual position in the school and classrooms? In the present context, this study is a worthy attempt to find out the situation of children with special needs in government schools and explore the barriers faced by cluster resource centre coordinators in implementation of inclusive education in government elementary schools.

Objective of the Study :

To identify barriers faced by cluster resource centre coordinator in implementation of inclusive education.

Methodology :

Descriptive Survey Method was adopted to conduct the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique :

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Purposively three (3) blocks out of seven blocks of kasganj district were selected than thirty (30) Cluster resource centre coordinator of thirty clusters of elementary schools (parishadiya vidyalaya) were selected for the study.

Tools :

A mix ended questionnaire named 'Questionnaire to identify the barriers in implementation of inclusive education' was constructed to conduct the study. It contained 33 questions regarding the role and responsibilities of cluster resource centre coordinators in implementation of inclusive education. Content validity developed by C.H. Lawshe was calculated by using the formula Content validity Ratio (CVR) = $(n_e-N/2)/(N/2)$

n_e = number of subject matter expert panelists indicating "essential", N = total number of subject matter expert panelists. Content validity index of questionnaire = 0.912653

Analysis of Data and Interpretation :

Data was systematically analyzed with the help of percentage (%) and frequency (f).

The analysis is presented and discussed below-

Barrier – 1 : Lack of awareness about Policy :

24(80%) Cluster resource centre coordinators were aware about the goal of inclusive education; while 6 (20%) coordinators were unaware about the goal of inclusive education. 6(20%) coordinators reported that lack of awareness is the reason that inclusive education is not being implemented properly. 19(63.5%) coordinators reported that awareness raising about inclusive education policy among people as well as stakeholders is the best way of effective implementation of inclusive education programme.

Barrier – 2 : Lack of implementing strategy :

15 (50%) coordinators mentioned that inclusive education has lack implementing strategy to be successful. 6 (20%) coordinators reported that the reason is lack of standard/ norms of inclusive education. 10 (33.3%) coordinators said that efforts (actions) should be increased for effective implementation of inclusive education policy.

Barrier – 3 : Untrained teachers :

Cluster resource centre coordinators reported that out of total 909 teachers only 177 (19.47%) teachers were trained in inclusive education training programme. On further analysis it was found that teachers were trained in three types of training. 160(17.60%) teachers were trained in 5 Days Integrated Education Programme, 12(1.32%) teachers were trained in 5 days Braille and Sign language Training, and only 5(0.55%) teachers were trained in 90 days foundation course while 732(80.53%) teachers were untrained i.e. they did not get any type of training regarding teaching of children with special needs.

Barrier – 4 : Inadequate teachers' training programme :

23 (76.7%) coordinators said that their teachers don't have necessary capabilities to teach children with special needs and the reason behind this, 8(26.7%) coordinators reported that their training of inclusive education is ineffective. 8(26.7%) coordinators reported that teachers don't have skills to teach children with special needs. 25(83.3%) coordinators said that some changes are required in inclusive education teachers' training programme. 10(33.3%) coordinator said that quality should be enhanced of inclusive education teachers' training programme.

Barrier – 5 : Overloaded teachers :

23(76.7%) coordinators were agree that teachers are not fulfilling their responsibility towards education of children with special needs were disagree with this statement, and the reason they reported behind it is that teachers are highly burdened with lot of extra work.

Barrier – 6 : Insufficient Fund :

All coordinators 30(100%) said 'No' that provision of enough fund allocation has been made to inclusive education programme. Further analysis reveals that when they were asked to report the area which require more fund, 15(50%) coordinators gave first priority to the area awareness raising, and 4(13.3%) coordinators to the area physical resources. 4(13.3%) coordinators reported to early identification and intervention. 3(10%) coordinators to assistive aids and appliances, 3(10%) coordinators to teaching learning material and 1(3.3%) teachers training. All 30 (100%) Cluster resource centre coordinators reported that fund should be received in the starting of the each session i.e. in the month of April, but real time of fund arrival is undecided. 10 (33.3%) coordinators reported that besides fund, children don't get educational resources like books, stationary uniform at the starting of the session.

Barrier – 7 : Lack of Facilities and resources :

27 (90%) coordinators reported that they require trained teachers to fulfill the special educational needs of children with special needs. 1(3.3%) coordinator reported that assistive aids and appliances are required and 2(6.7%) coordinators reported that teaching learning material is required for the children with special needs. When coordinators were asked to the area in which resources should be increased, 13(43.3%) coordinators reported that resources should be increased in teachers' training area. 5(16.7%) reported that resource should be allocated in the area of medical assessment. 9(30%) respondents reported that resources should be increased in the area of assistive aids of medical assessment and 3(10%) reported the area of barrier free environment. All 30(100%) respondent reported that they don't have any resource room in their cluster to serve the children with special needs.

Barrier – 8 : Large Class Size :

Coordinators reported that total 38,785 students enrolled in their clusters and total 909 teachers were appointed for them. Teacher student ratio was 1: 43. 26(86.7%) respondents reported that large class size affects the teaching learning process negatively. Further analysis reveals that 12(40%) respondents said that large number of students decreases the quality of education, while 7(23.3%) said that large class size creates problem in discipline maintenance. 7(23.3%) respondent reported that accessibility to each child is not possible in large class size so quality of education decreases.

Barrier – 9 : Inappropriate curriculum and evaluation :

22(73.3%) respondent reported that existing curriculum is not equally beneficial to children with special needs as other children. On further analysis it was found that 3(10%) coordinators reported that curriculum should be easy and according to level of CWSN. 6(20%) coordinator reported that necessary modification/adaptation should be done in existing curriculum to meet the unusual need of children with special education. 6(20%) coordinator reported that vocational education should be provided to children with special needs and 7(23.3%) reported that curriculum of CWSN should be useful in their life and connected with their daily life. 28 (93.3%) respondent reported that there should be a change in traditional examination system for children with special needs. Further analysis reveals that 22(73.3%) coordinators reported that CWSN should be exempted from traditional exam system and an opportunity should be provided to them to express in their own way. 5(16.7%) coordinators reported that exam evaluation of children with special needs should be done with sensitivity. 9(30%) coordinators said that no comparison should be made with other children while evaluating children with special needs. 4(13.3%) coordinators reported that question paper should be according to the level of children with special needs and 4(13.3%) coordinators reported that continuous and comprehensive evaluation should be done to children with special needs.

Barrier – 10 : Lack of Guidance :

All 30(100%) coordinators reported that they need the guidance of an expert for effective implementation of inclusive education in their cluster. On further analysis it was found that 8(26.7%) coordinators reported that they need the guidance of special area expert. 3(10%) said that they the guidance of a counselor and 19(63.3%) coordinators reported that they need the master trainer.

Barrier – 11 : Lack of Efforts :

When coordinators were asked about their efforts to ensure the accessibility of education to children with special needs, only 12 (40%) respondent reported that they are doing their efforts towards increasing the enrollment of children with special needs by identification. 1(3.3%) respondent reported that he motivated the teachers and parents at different occasions. 2(6.7%) coordinators reported that they aware parents to send their children school on daily basis. 15(50%) cluster resource centre coordinators reported no specific response. 18 (60%) coordinators said that they are doing no efforts for accessibility of education to children with special needs.

Barrier – 12 : Lack of Inspection and evaluation :

27(90%) coordinators reported that they don't do any inspection of itinerant teacher working in their area. Only 3(10%) coordinator reported that they do the inspection of itinerant teacher once in a year but gave no specific response about the point of inspection. All 30 (100%) coordinators reported that they don't do any evaluation of inclusive education programme.

Barrier – 13 : Lack of Basic infrastructure facilities in schools :

22(73.3%) respondent reported that lacking of basic infrastructure facilities in schools is the biggest barrier in full inclusion. 4(13.3%) respondent reported that lack of coordination with teachers is the biggest barrier. 4(13.3%) respondent reported that schools are not fulfilling the special educational needs of children with special needs this is the biggest barrier in achieving the goal of inclusive education.

Barrier – 14 : Family factors :

20(66.7%) coordinators reported that poor economic status of child's family is the main reason behind the non attendance of children with special need from the school. 9 (30%) coordinators reported that lack of awareness about education among parents is the main reason of dropout of the child. 1(3.3%) coordinator reported that neutrality/insensibility of parents is the main reason.

Suggestions from coordinators :

When cluster resource centre coordinators were asked for any suggestion, plan or strategy 15(50%) coordinators said that there should be appointed one special teacher at each school where children with special need is enrolled. 6(20%) coordinators reported that there should be constitute a team of expert members to implement and monitor the policy at different level. 9(30%) head teachers did not reported any specific response.

Conclusion :

Policies for promoting inclusion are often difficult to enact in field and may be unrealistic in their expectations if based on international creeds without due consideration for local contexts. Issues of providing quality with equity are challenging when basic educational premises of well-established pedagogies and curricula are reluctant to change. To ensure that inclusive educational approaches actually address the needs of learners and that implementation ideas through policy development are manageable and practicable, a proactive systemic approach is needed that is supplemented by local input and involvement. Policy needs to be firmly embedded and informed by local research that addresses the specific needs of a region

by considering urban and rural situations, fiscal constraints, support structures, and the capabilities of those who are to implement it. To enact an inclusive approach requires appropriate preparation of all stakeholders. To simply adopt the wording from international declarations into local policies, without considering the implications for implementation based on regional needs, will not produce an effective inclusive approach to education. India is unique in its requirements and thus it requires policy that reflects this and above all else is manageable by those who are going to be required to implement it.

References :

1. Das, A. (2010), Educating Children with Disabilities in Inclusive classrooms. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.
2. Kaur, J.(2010). A Study of Implementation of Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Delhi Primary Schools. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi.
3. Pandey, Y. (2009). A Study of barriers in the implementation of inclusive education at elementary level. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi.
4. Singal, N. (2006). Inclusive Education in India: International concept, national Interpretation. International Journal of Disability, 53(3), 351-369.
5. Singal, N. (2008). Working towards inclusion: Reflections from the classroom. Teaching and Teacher Education, 24, 1516-1529.
6. Tara,S.N., Kumar,N.S.S., Ramaswamy, S. (2010). Study of effectiveness of BRCs & CRCs in providing academic support to elementary schools. EdCIL's Technical support group for SSA, MHRD, India.