

Teachers' Preparation For Imparting Education To PWD Students In Secondary Schools - A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

Teachers' role is very instrumental in facilitating necessary opportunities in the field of education to all students with disabilities. They help to enhance the optimum potentialities of those students in various aspects of their development by recognizing their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the academic progress of such students is greatly influenced by teacher preparation about imparting quality education, developing essential life-skills, and acquiring valuable experiences. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct a study to prepare teachers for teaching PWD students in schools. However, the number of research studies in this aspect is very limited. Thus, the present paper aims to review the various existing studies already published in different journals to comprehend the nature of teacher preparation and their teaching strategies for promoting practices of inclusive education at secondary level. The authors of the paper have retrieved about 37 articles from varied database where only 12 articles were chosen related to present study. Finally, the authors have tried to qualitatively interpret the major challenges identified and thereby recommend measures for bringing desirable learning outcomes of the students with disabilities through effective educational practices.

Keywords: Teacher Preparation, Status of Education for Students with Disabilities, Reviews on Teacher Preparation, Challenges, Suggestions

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I. Introduction

Initially, the PWD students received education through special education services that are exclusively designed to acquire the unique learning and basic needs of those students. However, gradually the idea of inclusive education has emerged that emphasizes on inclusion of PWD students in formal mainstream classrooms with normal students. The inclusive education approach aims to foster equality and full integration in educational spheres at all levels. Thus, this shift in the educational approach greatly influences the teaching-learning process, the skills and competencies required by the teachers who are responsible for imparting quality education to all PWD students in regular classrooms. Effective implementation of inclusive education strategies and successful participation of PWD students are not possible without adopting necessary accommodations, modifications in the existing curriculum and providing adequate access to relevant information to them. Teachers entrusted with the responsibility of imparting education to PWD students are required to follow some specific strategies and alternative modes of delivering instruction for enhancing students' participation in learning activities. Teachers are required to be well-trained and skilled capable of understanding students individual learning requirements. Teachers must acquire the necessary knowledge regarding the various issues of disabilities of the students, the strengths, and challenges in performing any task efficiently and independently. Teachers must pay great attention on the students' varied learning styles, their access to learning materials, opportunities for reasonable accommodations. Hence, teachers are required to play a very significant role in offering equal and better educational facilities and accessibility to all students with disabilities so that they may learn and gain meaningful experiences from regular classrooms. Therefore, preparation of teachers to teach students with disabilities is highly solicited at various levels of education.

However, at the secondary level of education, the students with disabilities usually confront various unique life challenges that hamper their academic progress. Such students basically require specialized support to receive quality and appropriate education for achieving success in academic as well as non-academic spheres. Effective teacher preparation may help to ensure best teaching practices for students with disabilities.

Objectives

1. To study the concept of teacher preparation and PWD students.

2. To study the status of education for PWD students in Indian context.
3. To review related literatures on teacher preparation for promoting inclusive education curriculum and their teaching strategies at the secondary schools.
4. To elucidate the challenges of teacher preparation for PWD students at the secondary stage of education.
5. To suggest measures for successful teacher preparation PWD students at the secondary stage of education.

II. Methodology

The authors reviewed various existing literatures, articles, journals, books, internet sources for the present paper.

Teacher Preparation

The concept teacher preparation for PWD students refers to the process of developing the necessary skills, knowledge attitude, and competencies of the teachers to support their learning process and thereby for bringing desirable learning outcomes of the such students. After reviewing several related literatures, it has been found that teacher preparation for students with disabilities mainly encompasses the following aspects which are discussed below:

- i. Understanding the different aspects of disabilities and becoming aware about those issues.
- ii. Identifying the unique needs and diverse learning experiences of PWD students.
- iii. Knowledge of utilizing inclusive education pedagogy to create an inclusive environment in regular mainstream classroom.
- iv. Ability to adapt instructions to identify and meet the varied learning needs of such students.
- v. Ability to use appropriate assistive devices to improve the learning activities of. PWD students.
- vi. Developing necessary skills for effective collaboration with other educational stakeholders about students learning.
- vii. Becoming responsive towards all students with disabilities coming from varied cultural backgrounds.
- viii. Instilling the essential life skills among students with disabilities for preparing them for higher studies and employment opportunities.

PWD Students Or Students With Disabilities

The **World Health Organization** defined disability as individuals suffering from impairments in their body, having limitation in performing specific task and to participate in various activities in their life. The students with disabilities are those students who are suffering from any kind of disabilities in their physical, sensory, or nervous system as mentioned in the disabilities acts of the country such as **Persons with Disabilities Act (1995) and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016)**. The students with disabilities are generally characterized by varied range of potentialities, interests, abilities, weaknesses that affect their different developmental aspects in the field of learning, development of social skills, communication skills and various core life skills.

The different kinds of disabilities suffered by the students may be categorized as follows:

- a. **Students with Physical Disabilities** limiting their physical functions of any organs of body like limbs, fine bones. These include disabilities such as locomotor disability, leprosy cured, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy.
- b. **Students with Neuro-muscular Disabilities** include Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, Parkinson's Disease, Mental Illness.
- c. **Students with Cognitive Disabilities** include intellectual disabilities, specific learning disabilities like Dyslexia, Dyscalculia.
- d. **Students with Disabilities in Sensory Organs** include visually impaired or hearing impaired, low vision or Blindness.

However, the students with disabilities generally possess their diverse strengths, weaknesses, and preferences in various aspects of their life. Hence, they require individualized support to develop their existing abilities and skills necessary to cope with the challenges of life. Hence, for ensuring the fundamental human rights to students with disabilities, the Government of India has adopted several welfare measures considering their different aspects of life like **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Gyan Prabha Scheme, Samagra Shiksha that is Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs, National Programme for Rehabilitation for Persons with Disability (NRPD)**.

Education For Students With Disabilities

According to **Article 14 of the Indian Constitution**, education is the fundamental right of every individual and **Article 45** of Indian Constitution mandates for the provisions of free and compulsory education for the children belonging to 6-14 years of age. For imparting quality education to students with disabilities, a

varied range of teaching strategies, approaches, learning materials, educational resources are being designed by the policy-makers, curriculum framers and different educational stakeholders to support and enhance their learning at different stages. Apart from the provision of customized instructional strategies for PWD students, in a special classroom, at present, the Government aims to emphasize on the implementation of inclusive education strategies. In inclusive educational settings, the students with disabilities may get equal access and opportunities for educational services with other non-disabled students. However, in inclusive classrooms, the teachers are required to prepare individualized education plans exclusively designed for the students with disabilities considering their strengths and weaknesses. For enhancing the participation in learning activities, the teachers may assist students with disabilities with various appropriate assistive devices and technologies according to the needs of such students. The Government of India implemented various teacher training programmes under the **Scheme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** to prepare teachers for the curriculum of inclusive education.

Hence, the Government of India aims to provide universal accessibility to all students with disabilities to regular schools. It has been mandated in various policies and acts of the government that the educational institutions must ensure proper inclusive strategies at all levels of education. The educational institutions must provide the students with disabilities with extra individualized support, reasonable accommodations, necessary modifications in the teaching-learning process for their better academic achievement. Equal opportunities may be provided to such students for both curricular and co-curricular activities with other normal students in regular formal schools. The Government of India has undertaken several initiatives and welfare schemes facilitating education for such students with disabilities which include the **Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS)**, **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)**, **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD) 2016**, **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) played a very significant role to enhance the number of special schools in India for the students with disabilities. However, it has been observed that the regular schools also got increased from **4 lakhs to 9.6 lakhs from 1961 to 2011**.

According to **Census 2011**, persons with disabilities comprised about **26.8 million** population in India where **54.5% were literate and 45.5% were illiterate**. But the persons with disabilities made significant progress over the years in the field of education.

As per the report of **Census 2011**, **61%** of the students with disabilities under age-group 5-19 years attended educational institution where **13%** of them had received secondary education in India. **In West Bengal, about 57.34%** of disabled population was literate, **22.01%** received primary education, **17.26%** received secondary education according to **Census report 2011 reported by Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India**.

III. Review Of Related Literature

Studies related to Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education Curriculum at the Secondary Schools

Ashby (2012) conducted a study on disability issues and teacher preparation for creating inclusive environment in classrooms. The basic goal of the paper was to recognize the prevailing advantages and varied hindrances of the teacher preparation programmes in the light of disability studies. In the paper, the author tried to figure out the fundamental characteristics of teacher preparation programmes for setting inclusive classrooms exclusively at the elementary level of education. The author also highlighted on importance of integrating special education for teacher education programmes encompassing the crucial aspects related to integration of technologies into the existing curriculum, accepting population from diverse backgrounds, stressing on continuous professional development courses, effective strategies for teachers' reflective practices. However, the study findings explicated that students were benefitted from disability study approach following inclusive strategy than the conventional model of special education method. The findings of the paper also prioritized on need-based perspective, formulation of education plans individually by teachers to bring readiness in them. Thus, the author opined that these initiatives may enable the teachers to execute the inclusive teaching and learning process in a viable manner.

Das et al. (2013) carried out research in Delhi, India to investigate the skills of teaching students with disabilities among the school teachers of both primary and secondary level of education. About two hundred twenty-three school teachers and one hundred thirty school teachers teaching at both primary and secondary level of education respectively were surveyed by the researchers to study their perceived level of skills. The data gathered from the study were analyzed by employing descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The study findings elucidated that about seventy percent of school teachers teaching in regular schools had no training related to special education. Moreover, it has been revealed from the findings that about eighty-seven percent teachers claimed to have no proper access to educational support services to facilitate inclusive education for PWD students.

Omar (2014) authored a paper on the needs of in-service training programmes for all teachers. The basic objectives of the paper were to elucidate the in-service training needs and to interpret the effectiveness of such

programmes. The author tried to explicate some important findings related to the prevailing literature reviews. The study result demonstrated that the effectiveness of any training programmes was dependent on the teacher's attitude in relation to their teaching profession. It has been observed in the findings that teachers with positive attitude were capable enough to develop their skills and necessary competencies for adapting innovative teaching strategies for all students.

Stodden et al. (2015) developed a paper to examine the preparation of high schools for establishing inclusive education environment through necessary initiatives. The primary goal of their paper was to assess the importance of secondary school preparation regarding standards driven curriculum and instructions, preparation of content-based inclusive curriculum and learning resources, essential strategies to develop fundamental life-skills among the students. The study findings elucidate that teacher from both the general as well as special education required adequate collaboration and coordination to impart quality education and necessary life-skills among the students with disabilities.

Ghosh (2021) developed a paper highlighting on teacher training programme for incorporating effective practices on inclusive education in various schools across the country India. The primary objective of the paper was to focus on the varied hindrances of inclusive learning in schools from the standpoint of teacher-training programmes. The author of the paper also tried to provide some purposeful and relevant suggestions for upgrading the existing teachers' training programmes. Qualitative research approach and techniques had been used by the author to throw light on the several significant aspects of the curriculum of teacher-training programme and the relevant inclusive practices. The study findings revealed that the prevailing teacher training curriculum needed enough refinement and modifications thoroughly to promote inclusive education at all levels in India. However, the findings of the study also exposed that sufficient training with respect to special education must be provided during pre-service training so that the teachers may manage inclusive classrooms judiciously for better learning outcomes of all students.

Akuh (2023) carried out research to analyze the job performance of school teachers teaching in secondary schools influenced by in-service training in Gwagwalada of the Abuja FCT. Descriptive survey research design was employed by the researcher and the secondary school teachers constituted the population of the research. Data obtained through administering structured questionnaires on the teachers were analyzed by employing percentage as well as inferential statistical methods. The study findings exposed that the job productivity of the Secondary teachers was highly determined by their in-service training which greatly impacted the educational outcomes of any institutions. Moreover, the findings of the research revealed that the teachers who had undergone training courses were more efficient and expertise in managing classrooms, understanding of domain knowledge, assessment of works done by the students.

Studies related to Teaching Strategies of Teachers for Students with Disabilities

Singh (2012) prepared a paper highlighting different teaching strategies for effective inclusion in classrooms. The basic objective was to recognize the different teaching strategies to be adopted by teachers for fostering inclusive education. Based on related literatures, the study findings exposed those opportunities for guided practice, adequate students' participation, peer support, group teaching, multi-sensory learning approach, modifications of instructional materials into suitable learning means, phonetic analyses were some of the identified teaching strategies that helped the teachers imparting quality education to all learners.

Anila et al. (2020) prepared a paper by conducting a case study in mainly the teacher training institutes located in Kerala, India. The objective of the case study was to examine the preparation of teachers towards imparting education to visually challenged students. Purposive sampling method was used by the researchers where in-depth interviews were taken from the Head of the selected institutions, their faculty members, and students. Based on the study findings, the researchers of the paper identified about four important themes which encompassed details related to course, curriculum, pattern of examination and development of skills. Moreover, according to the study findings, the researchers elucidated that the teacher trainees acquired necessary skills regarding utilization of assistive devices, curriculum modifications, formulation of IEP to facilitate the learning process of visually challenged students. However, the study findings exposed that besides such students with disabilities, the training programmes of the teachers benefitted the abled students by supporting mainstream students' education in regular classroom.

Joshi (2020) authored a paper on teacher education programme to facilitate the execution of inclusive education across India. The main objective of the paper was to delve into the existing approaches of teacher education programmes for educating both abled and disabled learners in mainstream general classrooms. The author, in this paper, analyzed different national policy-programmes that basically focused on teacher preparation to bring effectiveness in inclusive teaching and learning methods. The findings of the study highlighted some important recommendations such as professional growth by development of skills, human resources, technopedagogical approaches, adaptations in curriculum for both pre-service as well as in-service teacher training programme.

Johansson et al. (2021) executed a study in Government schools across India on inclusive education practices for children with disabilities. The primary objectives of the study were to identify the teaching strategies practiced by teachers in regular classroom, their overall perceptions towards implementing inclusive environment and their responses regarding fulfillment of the basic needs of children with disabilities. The researchers gathered data from teachers of six selected primary schools located in three districts of the state of Haryana. The findings of the study pointed out that a slight readiness among teachers were found for teaching such disabled students in mainstream education. It has been also observed that the teachers' attitude was not favourable to accept the responsibility of adopting inclusive educational practices. Moreover, it was also noticed from the findings that teachers of those government schools were not confident enough to prepare themselves for imparting need-based education to such students. This might be due to lack of teacher's necessary pedagogical knowledge and experiences. How, the researchers of the study expounded that in-service teacher training programmes improved the knowledge and understanding of inclusive education content, curriculum among the teachers.

Subarna et al. (2022) carried out a study to address the significant teaching strategies of teachers for the disabled students in regular classrooms. The objective of the research study was to recognize the notable teaching strategies to create full inclusion successful in classrooms. The researchers of the study investigated several literatures to identify varied approaches of teaching and employed a qualitative observation method to obtain the required information. The researchers had chosen convenience sampling method to observe the classrooms. The obtained data were then analyzed by researchers through thematic analyses. According to the study findings, creation of regular classroom routine, individual plans, provision for different instructional set, collaboration with parents and teaching assistants were very much crucial in implementing inclusive set up in mainstream education. However, the researchers concluded that attitude as well as willingness of the teachers to teach disabled students might improve by developing their understanding about necessary accommodation, mainstreaming, tactics of instructions, need for managing behaviours of such students.

Mofield et al. (2023) developed a paper to discuss the various teaching strategies for students with disabilities. The primary aim of the paper was to analyze the different types of teaching strategies for promoting inclusive education practice in Melbourne, Australia. The authors of the paper carried out extensive reviews on relevant literatures to draw the conclusion. The study findings explicated that differentiated instructions based on students' learning needs, preparation, and review of IEPs on regular basis, utilization of assistive technologies, acceptance of diversity in classrooms, establishing strong interactions with peer groups, on-going training opportunities for teachers, sufficient allocation of support services may help to increase awareness about implementing inclusive education in Australian context.

Challenges Of Teacher Preparation For PWD Students

Teacher preparation for PWD students faces several multi-faceted challenges at the secondary level of education. some of these challenges are discussed below:

a. Challenges related to Pre-service Training:

- i. Lack of sufficient training of teachers regarding disability specific aspects and issues.
- ii. Improper training to work with students with disabilities.
- iii. Inadequate knowledge and exposure to utilize various assistive devices according to students' needs and preferences.

b. Challenges related to In-service Training:

- i. Inadequate opportunities for teachers for professional growth and development to support learning of PWD students.
- ii. Insufficient educational resources and necessary infrastructural facilities hampering the learning strategies of students with disabilities in regular schools.

c. Challenges related to Policies, Educational Systems:

- i. Improper implementation of inclusive education policies, teaching strategies due to lack of comprehensive policies at national level.
- ii. Lack of fund hampering the availability and access to educational resources, infrastructural facilities.
- iii. Presence of socio-cultural barriers limiting proper access to educational opportunities of PWD students in regular schools.

d. Challenges related to Institutional Set-up:

- i. Presence of large-size classes often hinders teachers to frame and implement individualized educational plans according to the learning requirements of the students with disabilities.
- ii. Low engagement of parents of PWD students limits the effective execution of inclusive education practices in regular schools.

- iii. Presence of stereotypes and negative attitudes create unfavorable conditions towards adoption of essential teaching approaches for students with disabilities.

Therefore, such challenges are required to be addressed effectively through implementation of appropriate existing Government policies, fostering of teacher training programmes for pre-service as well as in-service teachers, enhancing greater involvement of parents and community.

Measures For Addressing The Challenges Of Teacher Preparation For “PwD Students” At The Secondary Level Of Education

After reviewing several related literatures on teacher preparation for students with disabilities, measures for addressing the challenges of teacher preparation for students with disabilities are summed up as follows-

1. Greater emphasis is required on provision for pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. This may help the teachers to acquire the essential skills for their professional development for teaching students with disabilities in regular classrooms at the secondary level.
2. Providing opportunities for continuous professional development programmes for teachers every year through workshops, seminars, refresher courses.
3. Establishment of a greater number of proper teacher training institutes for ensuring opportunities to the teachers to become trained and gain knowledge in various aspects on disabilities.
4. Creation of appropriate inclusive learning environment by ensuring equal access and effective participation of students with disabilities at the secondary education level. This may help the teachers to get better acquainted with the learning necessities of the students with disabilities.
5. Development of necessary infrastructural facilities to promote accessibility of students with disabilities in secondary schools across the country such as provision for ramps, signage facilities, wheel-chair friendly classrooms.
6. Fostering collaboration among different educational stakeholders so that the teachers may obtain necessary resources and devices to assist the learning activities of students with disabilities. Moreover, proper collaboration and cooperation from educational stakeholders may also promote equal educational access and opportunities to students with disabilities.
7. Protecting the rights and interests of students with disabilities from negative and unfavorable behavioural attitudes, stereotypes, harassment at the secondary level of education through proper and necessary means. This may ensure more enrolment and low drop out of students with disabilities at this level of education. thus, teachers must possess adequate awareness about such disability issues, their existing fundamental human rights in various aspects of life.

IV. Conclusion

The present paper discusses the various issues related to the status of teacher preparation for students with disabilities. The key areas of discussion encompass studies related to preparation of teachers for inclusive education curriculum, teaching strategies of teachers for students with disabilities, status of teacher preparation for students with disabilities at the secondary level of education. However, this comprehensive review on teacher preparation for students with disabilities also highlights several approaches for teacher preparation, the varied challenges, and measures for overcoming such challenges. Hence, after reviewing the related literatures, it may be concluded that teacher training programmes are highly required for effective implementation of inclusive teaching-learning strategies. Such training may equip the teachers with the essential skills, experiences, and knowledge about disability issues and on the adoption of appropriate pedagogical strategies for imparting quality education to PWD students in regular secondary schools.

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