

**THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF SPECIAL
EDUCATORS TO EDUCATE SPECIAL CHILDREN –
A STUDY AT COIMBATORE**

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Abstract

Education is a powerful instrument of social change and often initiates upward movement in the social structure. There by helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. The educational scene in the country has undergone major changes over the years, resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices. Disability is an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, intellectual, mental, sensory, developmental, or some combination of these that results in restrictions on an individual's ability to participate in what is considered "normal" in their everyday society. A disability may be present from birth or occur during a person's lifetime. In India a learner with SEN (Special Education Needs) is defined variously in different documents. The Study focuses on disabled children's education improvements and their developments. SSA schools are located throughout India, the study focused on Coimbatore city Tamil Nadu state, it divided into 12 blocks in each blocks there is an SSA schools among that universe was selected. Interview method is used. The Study focused critical case studies also.

Keywords:

Education;
Disability;
Disabled Children;
Special Educator;

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1. Introduction

Since the early 1990s the movement to have education for all was launched at the World Conference that involved various international organizations such as UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank. The main plan for the conference was Education for all in the whole world. It has always been referred to as part of the global education for all scheme as a new education example and as an educational improvement goals to make our societies inclusive. The education should improve teachers who teach children with disability and also make awareness in the society to accept children with special educational needs. Therefore there is a need to introduce complete special needs education in all teacher expert development programs. However, children with disability need extra care in terms of curriculum adaptation, teaching methods, and availability of teaching and learning materials, assistive technology, assessment systems, as well as resources and funds for more assistance in adapting the school environment.

As a special educator will come in contact with and be responsible for the educational needs of children with a varied kind of disabilities. These children will also require a change of different services, modifications and accommodations in their educational experiences. Knowledge of each type of disability and the specific needs of the children with that disability are essential if they plan to be or are already involved in the field of special education. The various categories of disabilities are clearly defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. The Special Educators in today's schools plays a very critical role in the proper education of extraordinary students. The teacher is unique in that he or she can fit many different roles in the educational environment. However, each of these separate roles involves a variety of responsibilities and functions. Understanding these responsibilities can only help the special educator become more familiar with the role and increase the chances for success. For instance, the special education teacher can be assigned to a variety of different educational situations. The varying educational roles of a special education teacher are described in this course.

It further notes that the Rehabilitation Council of India takes the figure of 30 million children with disabilities as the best evaluation. There are noted differences related to education of children with disabilities. Singh (2003) reported 3 to 4 percentage of children with special needs

had contact to education with or without support facilities and Mukhopadhyay & Mani (2002) assumed that only one percentage of children with disabilities in the 5-15 age group had access to education. A Recent World Bank Report (2007) highlighted that 38 percent of the children with disabilities in the age group 6-13 years are out of school. Irrespective of the estimate, in India the fact remains that a majority of children with disabilities do not have access to education. This study focused on the education of children with disability by examining the challenges faced by teachers who teach disabled children and how they try to overcome these challenges. There have been faced many problems in teaching children with multiple disability in SSA Schools.

Statement of Problem:

This Research is on Role and Functions of Special Educator for developing the disabled children's education. It is a big challenge to Special Educator for developing the educational knowledge of different types of disabled children. Mainly Special Educator bias in their own schools. They are facing so many hurdles to provide them a good knowledge and good education.

Lack of Special Educator in city block SSA school at Coimbatore. They are being 1:15 in ratio. It shows that teaching the subject to differently abled children in different types in not so easy. Lack of time, Scheduling the periods are the big drawbacks for developing the education for disabled children.

Thus their right to access education is very often dishonoured and denied. Children with disabilities who wish to achieve financial and personal independence need to be able to access post-secondary education and overcome many academic barriers. Special Educators are service providers are currently attempting to understand and define their roles, certification requirements and responsibilities under changing and sometimes inconsistent regulations.

Therefore the above stated problem encouraged the researcher to study the contribution of Special Educators for the development of disabled children's education. As a result, the main objective of the study pursues to explore the role and functions of Special Educator to improve the education of children with disabilities

Objectives:

The present study focuses on the following objective

- To find out the challenges, approaches and methods of teaching used by Special Educators to Special children

Methodology:

Type of research

The present study is descriptive in nature and based on interview schedule method. The study involves both primary and secondary data.

Sampling design

SSA Schools are existing in all twelve blocks at Coimbatore City. Among that city block was chosen through lottery method for the study. Thirty two SSA Schools were situated under the City block and it consists Fourteen Special Educators. Three Special Educators selected randomly.

Sample Design Table 1**SSA schools selected in Coimbatore**

S.No	District	No of Blocks	Block chosen for the study	No of SSA Schools under City Block	Total No. of Special Educator
1.	Coimbatore	12	City Block	28	14

Field Work and Data Collection

The data collection was done by the researcher herself. She met each and every Special Educator in person to collect relevant information. The responses from the Special Educator were encouraging and they answered all the questions asked by the researcher. The respondent's extended whole hearted and complete co-operation as the interview method.

Limitations of the Study

- The Study not covered all Special Educators in city block.
- Special Educators are very busy with their Schedule. So interview time is very limited.

Description of the Special Educators:

Special Educators of City block SSA Schools were selected. Among fourteen Special Educators three have been chosen for the study. The Study describes the cases as follows.

Special Educator A1:

Special Educator A1 had been teaching the longest with twenty years of experience in Special Education at SSA School of Avinashilingam University. A1 finished her B.Ed and M.Ed in Special Education at Indira Gandhi College for Special Education at Coimbatore. A1 felt powerfully the recently implemented inclusive education in school was leaving many students with special needs behind. In teaching side, IQ level of Visual Impairment student has high when compared to other Special Children. A1 has to prepare charts, diagrams of animals, shapes etc for learning. Maths is very difficult to teach. For HI is little bit easy to teach by sign language. But for VI A1 has to teach step by step by preparing shapes for Graphs and Geometry by using Terrain sheets. There are no difficulties and problems while teaching because they know about the job and did training for this Special Education. Before teaching has to understand ability, IQ level and problem Special Children facing while learning. According to special children need teaching method will differs. Assistive technology used rarely because of less time and more children. Some of the parents are co operating for teaching and made their homework in home also. In the school there are two Special Educators for twenty students in the ratio of 2:20. Teachers are less in number to handle multiple disabilities. A1 marked that Special Educator can handle both normal and Special children. But normal teacher can't do it. Special Educator has to recognize by government and others private and private aided schools.

Special Educator A2:

Special Educator A2 had been a teaching experience for twelve years and working at Thondamuthur SSA School. A2 finished her B.sc and B.Ed double major in Special Education at Avinashilingam University. While compared to maths theory is easy to teach the Special

Children, particularly differentials and Integrations in maths are difficult. Subjects and their lessons are equally allotted to both Special Children and Normal Children. By handling multiple disabilities for teaching time consumption is not enough to take each subject. A2 make the Special children to get 50 marks out of 100 is easy and make them to obtain more than 50% is little difficult. All Disabled Children have given additional 30 mins for finishing up their exams. In A2 School Assistive Technology devices are least. Government providing free Braille book for Visually Impaired Students, at the same time they stopped providing notebooks and books to the Special Children. Mostly Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired Special Children attaining degree level and government allotted Special quota for the Special Children. Mentally Retarded children taught basic skills and Vocational training to lead the life. In normal School they are having Separate teachers for each subject, but in SSA Schools one Special Educator handling multiple Subjects for multiple disabilities. Parents have the equal rights in their children Education but some the parents are not accepting the problem of the children. Diploma holders do not have ability to teach multiple Special Children and its leads to lack of education. A2 described the Students as being more aggressive and physically active than those in previous years.

Special Educator A3:

Special Educator A3 had been teaching for ten years. A3 is handling the students of primary education (1st to 8th STD) in SSA school at T.E.L.C Coimbatore. A3 finished her B.Ed and M.Ed and extra two years training course for Special Education at Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University Coimbatore. First A3 fix the problem of the students whether the problem in the class or problem with being bullied or problem at home. A3 use different methods for multiple disabilities. In a week A3 has to handle ten SSA Schools by shift wise. A3 is handling twenty Six Students in T.E.L.C SSA School alone. Because of shift duties Special Educator have more hurdles and pressures to teach the children. Due to lack of time Special Educator asked the parents to guide their children for preparing objects, diagrams. For A3 have eight years experience in same school and because of the government rules Special Educator has facing so many hurdles to teach the Special Children. If A3 went to another SSA School in afternoon means the Special Children have to sit along with normal Children. It may create

absence and routine Special Educator in School even though Inclusive Education is followed by the School. It is a big drawback to provide a valid education to Special Children, this what the Special Educator feels. For this problem each School wants 1:8 ratios in Special education. Assistive Technology devices are available in limited. Government have to provide separate devices, resources for each Student. Government have to introduce separate schemes and policies in Special education for both Special educator and Special Children.

Table 2: Characteristics of the Respondents

Special Educator	No of Students handling by SE	Working hours per day	Teaching Experience
A1	20	8	20
A2	18	9	12
A3	23	8	10

Table 1 summarizes characteristics of the Respondents. All three were women ranging in age from 27 to 40 and had earned a Master's degree in special education. They had been teaching a minimum of 8 years as a Special educator. Collectively they had a caseload of 61 students described. Working hours are similar to normal and Special Education teachers

Findings:

The Study reveals the findings are

- Lack of support,
- Lack of Special Educator,
- Lack of parental involvement,
- Lack of resources,
- Excessive paper work.

Suggestions:

- Roles and responsibilities of special education teachers should be clearly defined and these roles should explain the difference among being a common education teacher and a special education teacher.
- The special schools can improve the effective climate by increasing the learning equipment and other resources
- Special Educators should be motivated with good or sufficient income and encouragement or career development
- The student-teacher ratio should be reduced to 1:4 or 1:5.

Conclusion:

The present study was concluded that “Special Educators Role and Functions for Developing the Education Disabled Children – A Study in City Block SSA Schools Coimbatore”, Government gives job opportunities to Special Educator and considered them for better improvement of society well being.

- Special Children future are decided by Special Educator
- Special Educators are the back bone of the Disabled Children.

Education for all is mandatory. Special Education are also carried out with better improvement through Government support

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