



Teachers' Perceptions towards Barriers Affecting Academic Performance of Students with Specific Learning Disability in Inclusive Schools

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Abstract

Specific Learning Disability is a disorder in which a child has deficits in listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling, or performing mathematical calculations. This study aims to assess teachers' perceptions of the barriers affecting the academic performance of students with Specific Learning Disability. In the present study, a purposive sampling method was employed to gather information, with a sample consisting of 30 government school teachers and 30 private school teachers from inclusive schools in the Delhi-NCR region. A structured, self-developed close-ended questionnaire was used for data collection. Quality education is a critical component of child development and a means of self-empowerment, independence, and social integration. Children with Specific Learning Disabilities are no exception; they also deserve equal educational opportunities like other children. The inclusion of all children within the classroom has introduced many new challenges for teachers. Many general education teachers lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support children with Specific Learning Disabilities. The challenges faced by teachers that affect the academic performance of children with Specific Learning Disabilities include teachers' qualifications, experience, knowledge, and skills. It is suggested that teachers play a significant role in enhancing learning and developing effective teaching and learning strategies that contribute to equity and engagement for children with special needs.

Keywords: - Teachers Perceptions, Barriers, Academic Performance, Students with Specific Learning Disability.

I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (1948) declared that every child has the right to education. A major challenge is not only enrolling children in school but also ensuring the quality of education they receive. According to UNICEF (2001), children enrolled in primary education should complete their schooling and achieve expected learning outcomes in both quantity and quality. Children with Special Needs deserve equal educational opportunities like their peers. However, without adequate support, children with Specific Learning Disabilities face significant barriers in fulfilling their educational needs. It is essential to provide appropriate opportunities for their social and emotional development to ensure effective learning (UNICEF, 2003). The UNCRPD (2006) emphasizes that children with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system. Although these children may have average intelligence, they experience difficulties in academic performance compared to their peers. This gap between potential and achievement necessitates the support of special educators. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) promotes dignity and equal participation in social, cultural, and educational domains. Similarly, the Salamanca Statement (1994) advocates that all children should learn together in regular classrooms. Teachers play a crucial role in creating an inclusive learning environment by connecting prior knowledge with new concepts, applying effective teaching methods, and encouraging active participation. However, many children, including those with special needs, continue to face restrictive learning environments (UNICEF, 2003).

1.1 Research Objectives

To examine teachers' perceptions of barriers affecting the academic performance of students with SLD.
To compare teachers' perceptions based on:

- Age
- Gender
- Type of teacher
- Nature of school

1.2. Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of the barriers affecting the academic performance of students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) in inclusive schools, thereby contributing to the fields of Inclusive Education and Special Education. By identifying challenges such as limited teacher training, inadequate resources, and difficulties in implementing appropriate instructional strategies, the study helps bridge the gap between inclusive education policies and classroom practices. The findings can inform educators, administrators, and policymakers in designing effective interventions, professional development programs, and support systems aligned with approaches like Differentiated Instruction and Individualized Education Program. Ultimately, the study aims to enhance teaching practices, improve academic outcomes for students with SLD, and promote equitable and effective inclusion within mainstream educational settings.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Kamps, D.M Barbetta, J. Eds., (2017) Planning for mainstreamed Special Education. In this study an integration strategy was used to improve reading skills of the Children with Special Needs and promote the peer interactions among the students with Special Needs and General Education students. They trained all the students in the Classroom also promote peer tutoring. Each week students were assigns tutoring partner and they assigned either red or blue team. The participants consisted three male Students with Specific Learning Disability enrolled full time in General Education classrooms in three inclusive elementary schools. There findings indicated the class wide peer tutoring were efficient strategy for increasing the academic achievement of the Students with Special Needs. The positively affected academic achievement for majority of students by increasing their reading fluency and correct response to reading comprehension questions. An additional positive findings were the occurrence appeared for influencing children socially and increasing duration of social interaction for time during unstructured and free time activity sessions. This was survey method design. It was concluded that proper attention towards children can improve their performance.

Motitswe (2012) Ed., Learning disabilities related disorders According to Motitswe the negative effects on the education will effects the capability to perform, lack of appropriate content, lack of appropriate learning materials, resources and assistive devices, inflexible ways of teaching, inappropriate ways of assessing student. One of the most serious barriers to the learning was found within curriculum itself and relates primarily to its inflexible nature. These measures prevent them from meeting the diverse learners needs hence such curriculum should be adapted to suit all learner principle of learner-centeredness must also be taken into considerations. This was survey method design. The initial results obtained from data were reasonably accurate.

Fallon, Zhang and Kim (2011) Eds., Using course assessments to train teacher's behavior assessment technique. According to them the study focused on training of teachers to managed the behaviors of Children with Specific Learning Disability in the inclusive classroom in china. The study view that many general education teachers lack the skills and knowledge to manage these challenging behaviors. This was survey method research. It was concluded specialist can handle Children with Specific Learning Disability more easily.

Sucuogluo Akalin and Sazak-Pinar Eds., (2010) Classroom management in inclusive classrooms. The inclusive classrooms in the study have at least one or more students diagnosed Children with Specific Learning Disability. Teachers was not properly trained to provide accommodations or modifications to meet the need of the child. This was experimental method. Even though mainstreaming the student, few teachers was properly trained to meet needs of students with disability. It was concluded that teacher should use appropriate teaching method.

Friend, Cook, Chamberlain, & Shamberger Eds., (2010) Co-teaching complexity of collaboration in Special Education. The researcher talks about the gifted children, slow learners, intellectual disability, hyperactive, emotionally challenged children. The diverse learners, classroom management will focus in delivering differentiated instruction as per the need of the child the teacher will handle needs individually in the classroom and this will make a regular education teacher's job beyond difficult. This was experimental method.

Glat and Blanco Ed., (2009) Curricular accommodations for Children with Special Need. They argue that appropriate curricular adaptations and accommodations was given as per the need of the student through the general participation and learning in classroom the student will actively participate. They agree with those authors who said that curricular accommodations will be necessary for participation of the students, but if curriculum was not properly designed to meet the specific needs then exclusion of few students in the general classrooms was possible. This was survey method research. The results show that appropriate curriculum should be uses while teaching.

Jenny & Snell Eds., (2008) The depth and scope of the teachers training was critical in determining the academic performance of Children with Specific Learning Disability. According to Meese (2002), a teacher with sufficient professional training has the ability and capability to adapt curriculum that is best suited for Children with Specific Learning Disability. This could be turned to contribute the improved academic performance of Children with Specific Learning Disability. Concluded that method should meet the need of the students.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a survey method research design aimed at assessing Teachers perceptions towards barriers affecting academic performance of Children with Specific Learning Disability in inclusive school.

3.2. Sample & Sampling Method

The population of the study consisted of General Education Teacher and Special Education teachers from Inclusive Schools, Delhi NCR. For the present study total 60 teachers (30 from Government Inclusive Schools & 30 from private Inclusive schools of Delhi NCR were taken. Purposive Sampling were used to collect a data.

3.3. Variables

3.3.1. Independent variables:

- Teachers' perception
- Age
- Gender
- Type of teacher
- Type of school

3.3.2. Dependent variable:

- Academic performance of children with Specific Learning Disability

3.4. Data Analysis

Objective 1 Perception of the Teachers towards the barriers affecting academic performance for Students with Specific Learning Disability

Fig 1: Perception of the Teachers towards the barriers affecting academic performance for Students with Specific Learning Disability



A significant proportion of teachers (76%) reported facing barriers in educating children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), while 21% indicated no such challenges and 3% remained uncertain. This suggests that many teachers lack the necessary skills and training to effectively support these learners, which in turn contributes to their poor academic performance. Insufficient training in inclusive education limits teachers' ability to apply appropriate teaching strategies, thereby negatively impacting student outcomes. At the same time, the findings reflect a willingness among teachers to work toward inclusive goals, recognizing that children with SLD should be integrated into mainstream classrooms and actively participate in society rather than being excluded.

Differences were observed between government and private school practices. Private school teachers reported greater use of appropriate Teaching-Learning Materials (TLM) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools to support students with SLD, whereas only a few government school teachers incorporated such resources. In terms of assessment, private school teachers employed a wider variety of methods, including tests, quizzes, assignments, and portfolios, while government school teachers relied on comparatively limited approaches. It was also noted that older-generation teachers tend to prefer traditional teaching methods and are less comfortable with technology. Additionally, private school teachers acknowledged that workload and deadlines can affect their health. Encouragingly, most teachers from both sectors participate in professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, and conferences on inclusive education, which help enhance their knowledge and teaching practices. Both groups also agreed that a lack of teacher knowledge adversely affects student performance and emphasized the importance of using fun and creative techniques to motivate children with SLD.

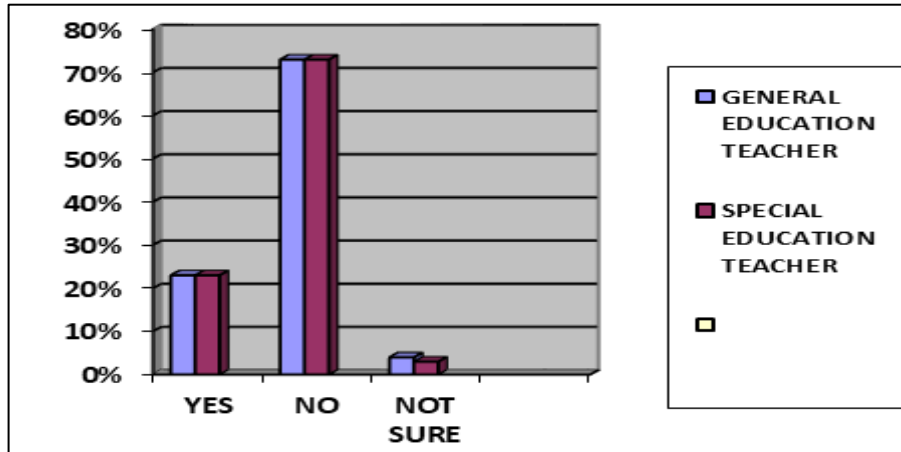
Objective 2 To compare the Perceptions of Teachers towards barriers affecting the academic performance for Children with Specific Learning Disability with reference to

- Age
- Gender

- Types of teachers
- Nature of school

i)Types of Teachers -General Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers

Fig 2. Perceptions of Teachers towards barriers affecting the academic performance for Children with Specific Learning Disability w r t General and Special Education Teachers



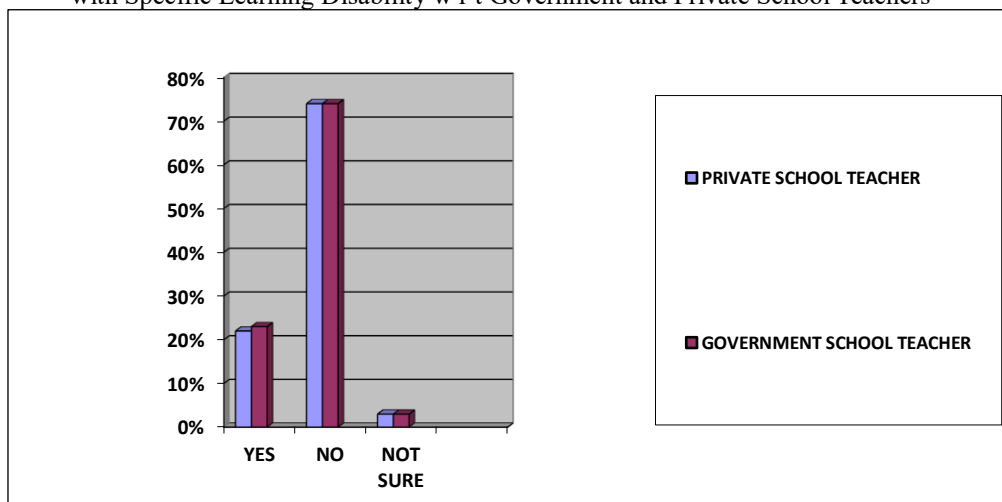
About 73% of teacher General Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers were not ready to integrate Children with Special Needs in an inclusive setup. The 23% of General Education Teachers and 24% Special Education Teachers are ready to include Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive setup and 3% General Education Teachers and 4% Special Education Teachers are not sure.

It displayed that both General Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers has a very few differences in teaching Children with Specific Learning Disability they use more or less the same technique in an inclusive setup. They do not agree with the statement of including Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive setup. The majority of General Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers are familiar with parallel teaching and co-teaching.

They use TLM for teaching Children with Specific Learning Disability. They variety of assessment methods used in classroom. The teacher does not consider themselves technology friendly. They also believe inclusion will increase their workload. There school does not provide OT, PT, Speech therapy. They do not have accessible classroom, disabled friendly washrooms, proper drinking facilities, ramps, tactile paths, proper signage for Children with Special Needs.

ii) Nature of school -Government School Teachers and Private School Teachers

Fig 3: Perceptions of Teachers towards barriers affecting the academic performance for Children with Specific Learning Disability w r t Government and Private School Teachers



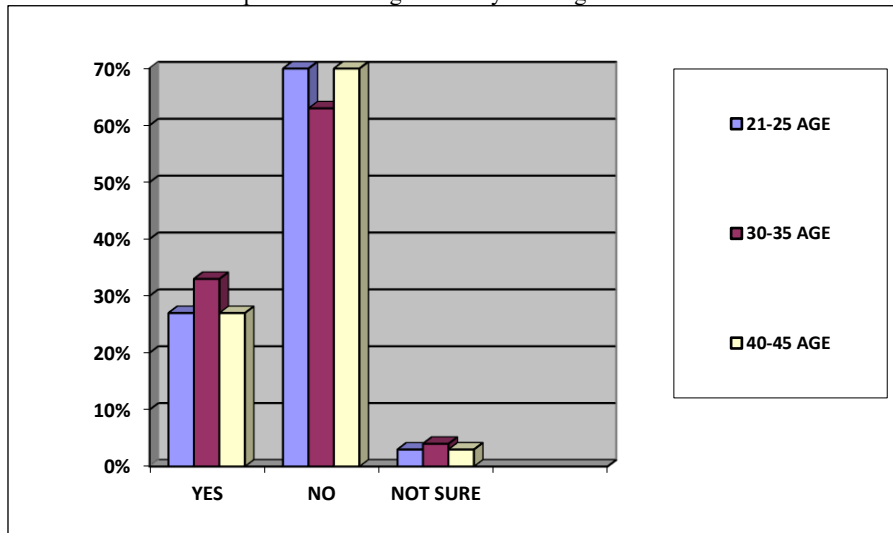
The 74% of Government School Teachers does not have accessible classroom, disabled friendly washrooms, proper drinking facilities, ramps, tactile paths, proper signage for Children with Special Needs. 23% agree with statement they follow ICT tools in the classroom. For their continuous professional development attend workshops, seminars and conferences and 3% are not sure.

The 74% Private School Teachers respond no for including Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive setup. 22% of Private School Teachers does not have accessible classroom, disabled friendly washrooms, proper drinking facilities, ramps, tactile paths, proper signage and 3% are not sure. Teachers were familiar with parallel teaching and co-teaching. They are not ready to integrate Children with Special Needs. Both teachers apply fixed curriculum to all students. They use TLM for teaching Children with Specific Learning Disability. They variety assessment methods used in classroom.

They agree with statement they follow ICT tools in the classroom. For their continuous professional development attend workshops, seminars and conferences. The Government School Teachers and Private School Teachers use fun, creative technique to motivate the children. The Both provide opportunities for students to participate actively in classrooms. They do not agree with statement that General Teachers should be included with Special Educator while planning IEP. The Regular Teachers feel comfortable in approaching Special Educator for help when they teach Children with special needs.

iii) Age

Fig 4: Perceptions of Teachers towards barriers affecting the academic performance for Children with Specific Learning Disability w r t Age



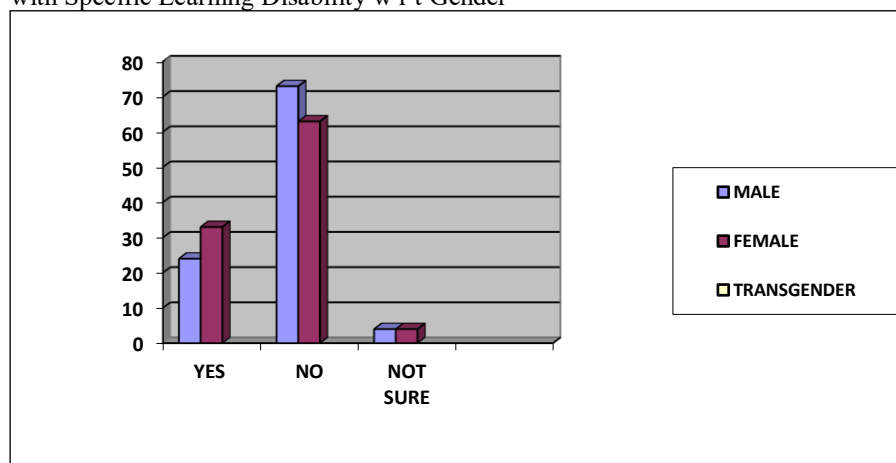
The age (21-25) about 70% of teachers faced barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability in inclusive setup. 27% of teacher do not faced barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning and 3% are not sure.

63% of teachers age (30-35) are not ready to integrate Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive setup. 33% teacher are familiar with parallel teaching and co-teaching and ready to integrate Children with Special Needs in an inclusive and 4% are not sure. 70% of teachers age (40-45) faced barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability in inclusive setup. 27% teacher do not faced barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability and 3% are not sure.

According to the teacher age group majority of teacher are not ready to integrate them. They faced barriers in dealing Children with Specific Learning Disability. Fixed curriculum applied to all the teachers. Majority of teacher do not use ICT in the class. They feel inclusion will increase their workload.

iv) Gender

Fig 5: Perceptions of Teachers towards barriers affecting the academic performance for Children with Specific Learning Disability w r t Gender



24% of Male Teachers are ready for inclusion. 73% faced barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive setup and 4% are not sure. 33% of Female teachers do not faced any barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability. 63% teachers faced barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability and 4% are not sure. No transgender had fill the survey.

According to gender majority of teacher faced barriers in including Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive set up. They do not have accessible classroom, disabled friendly washrooms, proper drinking facilities, ramps, tactile paths. They feel inclusion will increase their workload. They follow traditional method of teaching. Less teacher feels comfortable in approaching colleagues for help to teach. They do not use variety of assessment methods in the classroom.

IV. RESULTS

- In the first finding perception of the teachers towards the barriers affecting academic performance for Students with Specific Learning Disability is taken out and find that teacher proper knowledge, qualification, experience, skills, attitude become barrier in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability.
- In the second finding General Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers seen less teacher is ready to integrate Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive setup.
- In the third finding Government School Teachers and Private School Teachers faced barriers in including Children with Specific Learning Disability in an inclusive setup. They do not have accessible classroom, disabled friendly washrooms, proper drinking facilities, ramps, tactile paths, proper signage for Children with Specific Learning Disability.
- In fourth finding teacher age shown according to age group which age group teachers are more flexible to integrate Children with Specific Learning Disability.
- In the fifth finding Gender is researched according to gender male and female teachers faced barriers in handling Children with Specific Learning Disability

V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The academic performance of children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) is significantly influenced by teachers' knowledge, skills, and training. Inadequate preparation and the use of teaching methods that do not align with the individual needs of these learners can negatively impact their progress. Teacher-related factors such as qualifications, experience, and the appropriateness of the syllabus play a crucial role in shaping outcomes. When teachers possess the necessary expertise and practical experience, students with SLD tend to perform better academically. Conversely, an unsuitable or overly theoretical curriculum, combined with a lack of teaching aids, can hinder their development. Furthermore, insufficient school infrastructure including limited access to resource rooms, ramps, tactile paths, disabled-friendly facilities, and proper signage creates additional barriers that affect their learning experience.

Both general and special education teachers, in government as well as private schools, face challenges in effectively supporting children with special needs. A notable proportion of teachers remain hesitant to integrate students with SLD into inclusive classrooms, often citing increased workload and lack of resources. Barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, inaccessible classrooms, and insufficient facilities persist across school types. However, younger and middle-aged teachers tend to be better trained and more capable of addressing the needs of these students. While some teachers, regardless of gender, demonstrate awareness of inclusive teaching strategies, the overall lack of preparedness and institutional support continues to limit effective inclusion. Strengthening teacher training, improving infrastructure, and implementing a more adaptable and practical curriculum are essential steps toward enhancing the academic performance and inclusion of children with SLD.

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