

Chapter 35

Author

Voices of children with disabilities
and their parents on promoting
Inclusive Education

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Introduction

Education is a powerful instrument of social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure thereby, helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. The educational scene in the country has undergone major change over the years, resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices. In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) published a comprehensive report called the Sergeant Report on the post-war educational development of the country. According to this report, handicapped children were to be sent to special schools only when the nature and extent of their defects made this necessary. The Kothari Commission (1964–66), the first education commission of independent India, observed that “the education of the handicapped children should be an inseparable part of the education system.” The commission recommended experimentation with integrated programs in order to bring as many children as possible into these programs (Alur, 2002).

Article 21-A of the Constitution of India and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 makes elementary education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.

Inclusive Education-emergence

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (2000), brought out by the NCERT, recommended inclusive schools for all without specific reference to pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) as a way of providing quality education to all learners. Societal requirement is that learners with special needs should be educated along with other learners in inclusive schools, which are cost effective and have sound pedagogical practices (NCERT, 2000). The NCFSE also recommended definitive action at the level of curriculum makers, teachers, writers of teaching-learning materials, and evaluation experts for the success of this strategy. In the 1970s, the government launched the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). The objective was to integrate children with disabilities in the general community at all levels as equal partners to prepare them for normal development and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.

In India, integration was a major reform of the 1970s. The need for inclusive education became evident from the fact that despite complete financial support under the IEDC scheme, for integrating learners with special needs into the educational system, only 2–3% of the total population of these learners was actually integrated into the regular schools.

The constant use of the medical model of assessment, wherein educational difficulties are explained solely in terms of defects in the child, led to a re-conceptualization of the special needs (SN) task as requiring school reforms and improved pedagogy. This re-conceptualization at both the international and national level helped in the emergence of an orientation towards inclusive education. In the 1990s, inclusion captured the field after the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca in 1994, with the adoption of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education.

The Draft Scheme on Inclusive Education prepared by the MHRD (2003) uses the following definition: Inclusive education means all learners, young people—with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary preschool provisions, schools, and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services (Draft of Inclusive Education Scheme, MHRD, 2003).

Recent Efforts of State for Inclusive Education

1. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by Government of India in partnership with State Governments, is India's main program for universalizing elementary education. Launched in the year 2000-2001, SSA has achieved considerable success in universalizing elementary education. Today, there are 19.67 crore children enrolled in 14.5 lakh elementary schools in the country with 66.27 lakh teachers at elementary level.

The interventions under SSA include, building of school infrastructure, provisioning for teachers, periodic teacher training and academic resource support, making available learning resources for children like textbooks, computers, libraries; equity being the focus, residential schools for girls known as the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) have been set up, identification of children with special needs and providing them need based support including aids and appliances; monitoring and supervision for making schools effective and building local level accountability by engaging with community based organizations.

2. National Program of Mid-Day Meal in Schools covers all children studying in Classes I-VIII in Government and Government-aided schools, Special Training Centres (STC) as well as Madaras and Maqtabs supported under SSA with the objective to enhance enrolment, attendance and

retention of these children in the schools and simultaneously to improve their nutritional status. During the 2nd quarter of year 2015-16, 10.19 crore children in 11.54 lakh institutions were benefitted under the Mid-day Meal Scheme. 25.57 lakh cook-cum helpers are working in Mid-Day Meal Scheme, of which, more than 80% are women.

3. Secondary Education, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is set up to enhance access and improve quality of education at secondary stage, while ensuring equity. The scheme envisages enhancing the enrollment for classes IX-X by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of every habitation, improving quality of education imparted at secondary level through making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms, removal of gender, socio-economic and disability barriers, universal access to secondary level education by 2017, and universal retention by 2020.

Central Sector Schemes

1. Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS): The Scheme for opening of Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) was launched for catering to the educational needs of the children of transferable government employees including defence personnel. There are at present 1103 KVs out of which 1102 are functional including 03 KVs abroad.

2. Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti: The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) manages and runs the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs). The JNVs are pace setting fully residential, co-educational institutions, providing education up to senior secondary stage free of cost including boarding and lodging, text books, uniforms etc. to children predominantly from rural areas. As on date, 598 JNVs have been sanctioned in 576 districts of the country out of which 591 are functional JNVs, with over 2.50 lakh students on roll. Admission to JNVs in class VI is done through an entrance examination conducted by CBSE with 75% seats reserved for rural children. 1/3rd of the seats are reserved for girls. The Department intends to open 62 new Navodaya Vidyalayas in as many uncovered districts over the next two years.

Initiative of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Uttar Pradesh 2017-18

Inclusive Education for CWSN (Rs.6431.55lakh)

PAB estimated an outlay of Rs. 6431.55 lakh under inclusive education for 214385 CWSN identified at a unit cost of Rs.3000/- per child for indicative activities as given below:

S. No.	Intervention	Unit	Physical	Amount
1	Medical Assessment Camps at Block & Tehsil level	7000	455	3185000

2	Purchase of Aids & Appliances including Hearing aid & Other devices/appliances for CWSN of teacher's unit (40% share to ALIMCO)	7000	19100	133700000
3	Remaining payment to ALIMCO of last year distributed aids & Appliances	1	1125696	1125696
4	Measurement & Distribution Camp @ 25000 per camp.	30000	259	7770000
5	Accelerated Learning Camp 2017-18	1818960	95	17280120
6	Accelerated Learning Camp 2016-17 (actual cost)	289100	115	33246500
7	Exposure visit for CWSN of ALC	35000	90	3150000
8	Sports & Cultural meet / World Disability Day per District	110000	75	8250000
9	Itinerant Teachers Salary (Rs 14500X11 Months)	159500	590	94105000
10	Resource Teacher (Rs 14500X11 Months)	159500	101	16109500
11	Maintenance/Replacement of Aids & Appliances for VI& HI children (Braille paper, Types, Stylus, Cord, Ear tip and Ear Moulds etc.)	22000	75	1650000
12	5days teacher's training on Braille reading writing	1000	3365	3365000
13	5 days teacher's training on low Vision	1000	3489	3489000
14	5days teacher's training on Intellectual Disability	1000	5314	5314000
15	5 days teacher's training on curricular adaptation at primary level	1000	5238	5238000
16	5days teacher's training on sign language	1000	5169	5169000
17	3 days ICT training for Itinerant/ Resource Teachers	600	2207	1324200
18	Escort allowance for Blind ,Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy & JE/AES affected CWSN	5000	6357	31785000
19	Transport Allowance to CWSN	5000	1017	5085000
20	Hiring of Professionals for provide Therapy Services(Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy/ Occupational and Mobility Training) to CWSN	110000	75	8250000
21	Corrective Surgery (Cataract, Polio deformity and Cleft /Lip Palate)	20000	262	5240000
22	Documentation (Audio / Video Documentation)	25000	75	1875000
23	Development of early grade reading skills in to CWSN, focus on Hearing & Visually Impaired children.	5000	5000	25000000

Methodology

Sample

The sample comprised of Children with Disabilities (CwDs) (100 in Nos.) and their Parents (100 in Nos.), in various formal education system irrespective of the level, right from primary school to undergraduate courses in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The sample CwDs were in the age bracket of 12-21 years. The sample included 50 school going CwDs and 50 non-school going CwDs. Most of the participants were from urban slums of Lucknow who had migrated from other districts of Uttar Pradesh while few originally hailed from Lucknow where SPARC-India is working. The sample of CwDs has been selected irrespective of the type of disability.

Procedure

Data from participants was collected using a self-constructed Schedule / Questionnaire. The questionnaire had a structured consent section which required the participants to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement by putting their signature in the appropriate space. There was no fixed time to complete the questionnaire but respondents were encouraged not to think too much and respond with the first thing that comes to their mind. On an average, participants completed the questionnaire in about 15-20 minutes. Before they began answering the questions, they were asked to give consent. A brief orientation was also given to the participants who were unable to understand the context or difference of Inclusive Education and Special education.

Parents of CwDs from the same community, who were personally known to the researcher were contacted and requested to assist on data collection. After all the needed permissions / consent were taken, the schedule was administered to CwDs during their leisure time. After self-introduction by researcher, the CwDs were told about the purpose of the study. They were told that all the items were of utmost importance so they have to answer as honestly as possible. They were deterred from leaving any question unanswered. The participants were questioned on purely voluntary basis and participation did not entail any monetary benefit for the participants. Participants were also assured that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and would be used only for the purpose of this research / study.

Instrument

The schedules for CwDs and their parents consisted of 21 statements that reflected voices on Social, Psychological and Financial terms towards impact of Inclusive Education. To be specific, there were 6 statements that assessed the participants' opinion on general issues within the family, 5 statements measuring the domain of social, 5 statements regarding psychological, and 5 statements concerned with financial terms. Each question could be answered by 4 points scales (viz. Never, Sometimes, Frequently, Always). There was no right or wrong answer.

Results and discussion

Out of 100 CwDs, 50 were school going and 50 were non-school going. Additionally, 100 parents of the aforementioned CwDs were also being covered to understand their voices as well.

	Status of Participant	Hindus	Muslims
N-50	School going male CwDs	14	9
	School going female CwDs	20	7
N-50	Non-school going male	16	18
	Non-school going females	5	11

Table 1-Gender and Religion wise details of CwDs

Table 1 clearly expresses that out of all the school going CwDs considered in the study, Hindus (both male and female) greatly outnumbered the Muslims, while, Muslims (both male and female) outnumbered Hindus in the non school going category.

S. No.	Dream of life	School-going CwDs (N=50)	%	Non-school going CwDs (N=50)	%	Parents of School going CwDs (N=50)	%	Parents of Non-school going CwDs (N=50)	%
(i)	Business	7	14	15	30	4	8	6	12
(ii)	Job	10	20	3	6	8	16	0	0
(iii)	Doctor	2	4	0	0	2	4	0	0
(iv)	Teacher/Special Educator	13	26	3	6	4	8	0	0
(v)	Govt. Job	4	8	0	0	4	8	0	0
(vi)	Self-dependent	10	20	13	26	25	50	21	42
(vii)	Singer/Dancer	2	4	3	6	2	4	0	0
(viii)	Sportsperson	2	4	0	0	1	2	0	0
(ix)	No aim in life	0	0	13	26	0	0	17	34
(x)	Vocational Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6
(xi)	Marriage	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6

Table 2- Choices of CwDs in their Life (CwDs and Parents): Dream of Life

Table 2- clearly shows that non school going CwDs do not have varied aspirations in regards to their future life. Their major choice is either business (30 %) or only to be self dependent financially by any means (26 %) while few have some limited choices like have a job, teacher or singer (6% each). School going CwDs had variety of aspirations for their future. Almost all wanted to become something in future while nobody was without any aim. Reaction of parents' of school going CwDs was quite similar to their children. However, parents of CwDs who are non-school going (34 %) were more

indifferent or have no vision or aim for their child's future life. While, about 26 % of non school going CwDs have no vision or no aim in life, which shows a lack of hope in their life or are unable to draw a picture for their future. The parents of non school going CwDs have more concern on their marriage and vocational training.

Voices of Children with Disabilities and their Parents

- Voices on Social Inclusion:** The social context of inclusion shows variable impact in terms of school going and non school going CwDs as given below through different questions:

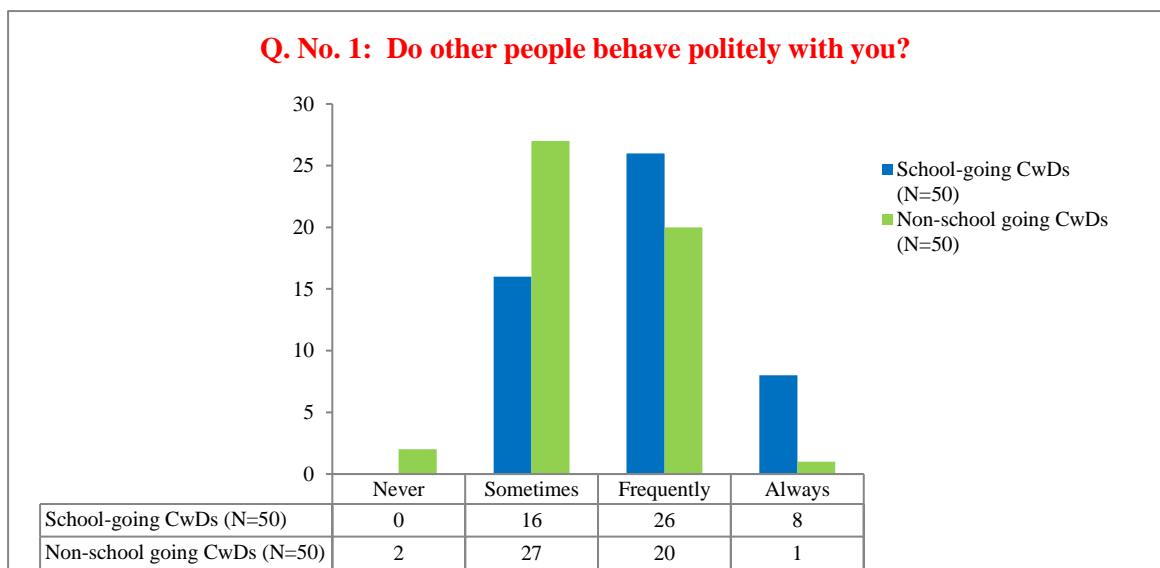


Chart 1: Voices- Polite behavior of others towards them

The above Chart 1 shows that non school going CwDs face less polite behavior than school going CwDs. Impolite behavior experienced by school going CwDs is decreasing towards the positive side (except for response in **Sometimes**), which shows a casual concern.

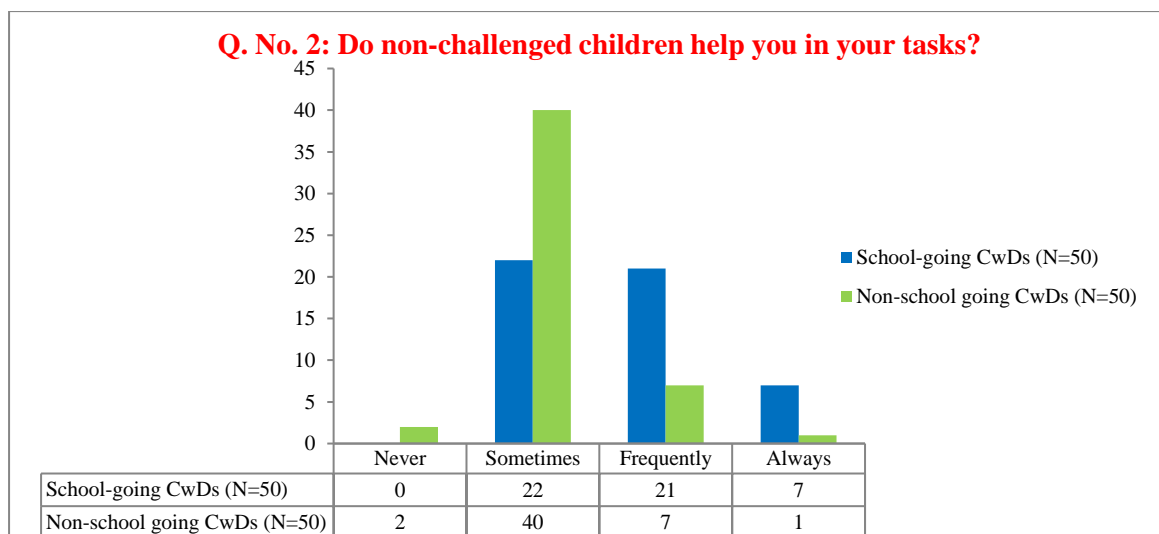


Chart 2: Voices- Reaction of Non-challenged Children towards them

Chart 2 indicates a slight positive response of non-challenged children towards their peer CwDs who are going to school when compared to non school going CwDs. It grows towards positive side (except for **Sometimes**).

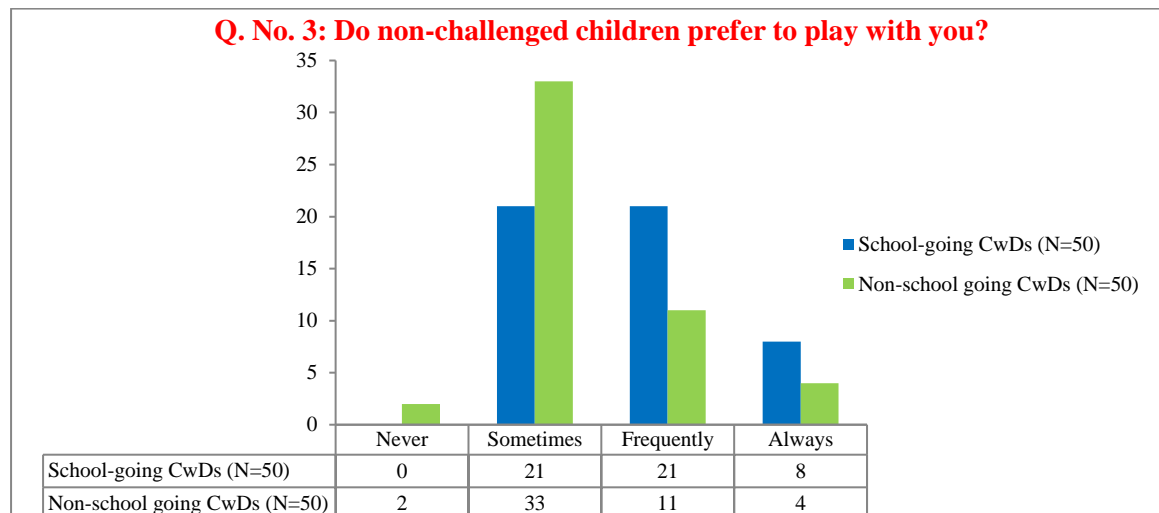


Chart 3: Voices- Preference of non challenged children to play with them

Chart 3 shows that school going CwDs were preferred over non school going CwDs by non challenged children while playing which shows that in some way they felt compatible towards their day friends in positive side.

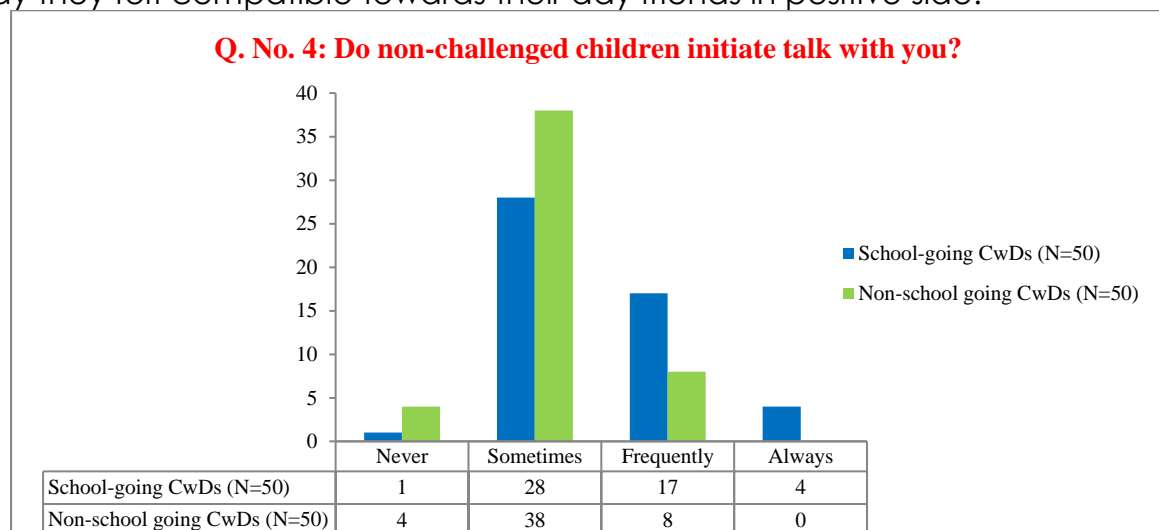


Chart 4: Voices- Initiation of Talk by Non-challenged children with them

Chart 4 reiterates that the school going CwDs were preferred over non school going CwDs by the non-challenged children in regards to initiating a talk, as they were found to be more liked and favored.

2. **Voices on Psychological inclusion:** The psychological context of inclusion too shows variable impact in terms of school going and non school going CwDs as given below through different questions:

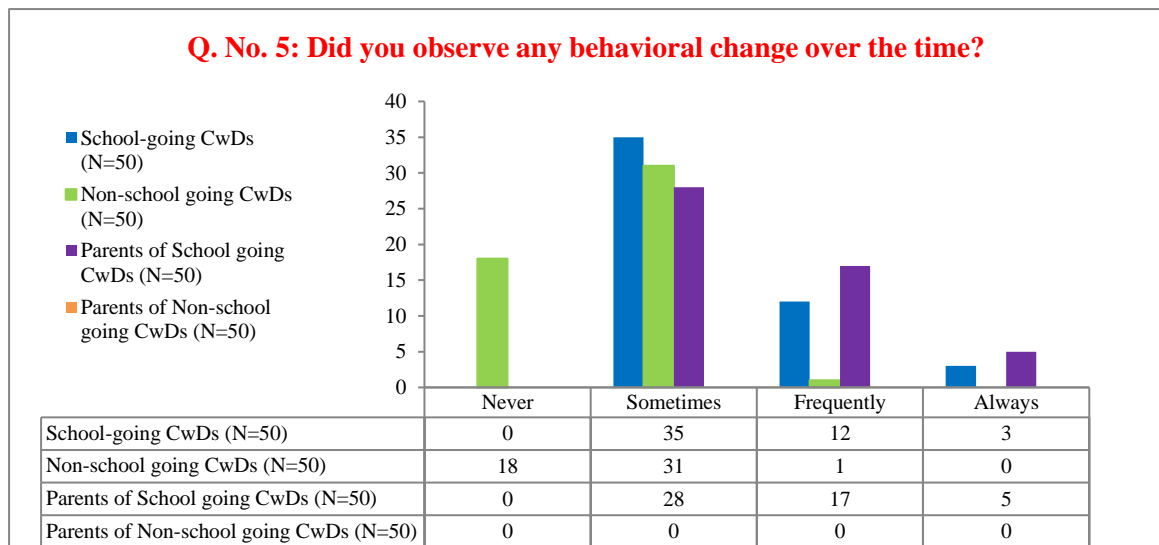


Chart 5: Voices- Opinion on behavioral changes within them over the time

Chart 5 clearly expresses that school going CwDs always feel positive behavioral changes in their life, while about more than one third non school going CwDs do not find any change in their behavior in life. Additionally, parents of all the non school going CwDs do not find any change in them.

Q. No. 6: What are the changes you observe in behavior?	School-going CwDs (N=50)	Non-school going CwDs (N=50)	Parents of School going CwDs (N=50)	Parents of Non-school going CwDs (N=50)
Obeys elders	2	7	0	0
Became self dependent	16	9	0	0
Remains happy	11	0	20	3
Decrease in aggressive behavior	6	0	0	0
Understands everything easily & talks without hesitation	10	8	0	0
No behavioral change	5	26	1	30
Does his/her works by their own & understands them	0	0	14	8
Goes outside	0	0	2	0
Studies & teaches others	0	0	2	0
Helps in household works	0	0	4	2
Don't use abusive words	0	0	2	0
Obeys & respect elders and talks very politely	0	0	5	0
Slight behavioral changes	0	0	0	7

Table 3: Voices- Type of behavior Changes arisen over the time

Table 3 shows that variety of behavior changes take place in school going CwDs as compared to non school going CwDs. Non school going children simply prefer to obey elders to avoid the conflict as they have no choice in life since they are totally dependent on their elders.

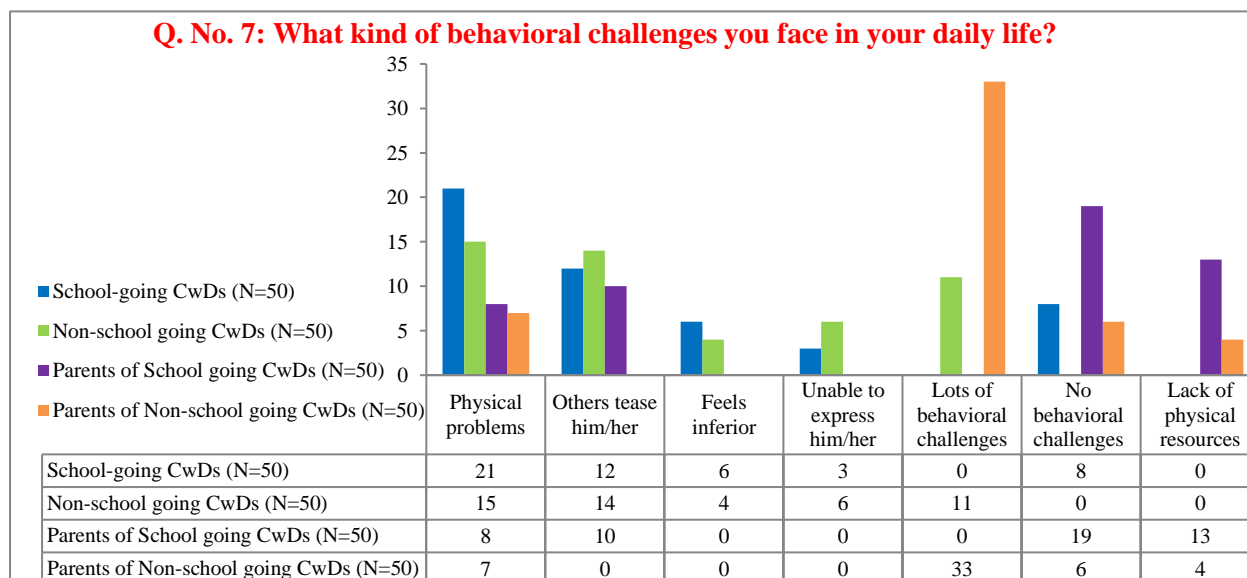


Chart 6: Voices- Behavioral Challenges faced by the CwDs

Chart 6 clearly shows that the behavioral challenges faced by non school going CwDs are varied in nature. The school going CwDs also face same type of challenges that others tease them irrespective of education shows that society has yet to change and social stigma yet to be removed. Although some school going CwDs felt more inferior in schools as the school mechanism is not so well prepared to handle them, qualitatively.

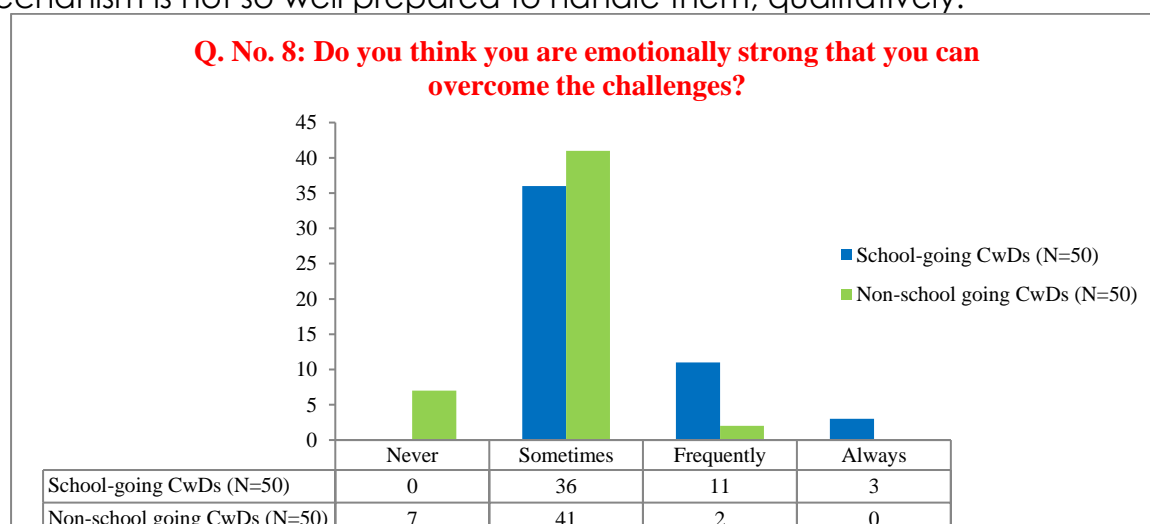


Chart 7- Voices- Emotional ability to overcome the behavior challenges

Chart 7 shows that the school going CwDs have better emotional abilities in handling the challenges than non school going CwDs which is slightly towards the positive side. Non school going CwDs never find themselves emotionally

capable in handling their challenges. Majority of both the groups have responded that they **Sometimes** can handle their challenges but are not able to drastically change the overall situations in life.

3. Voices on Financial Inclusion: The financial context of inclusion too has variable impact which can be observed through different questions given below:

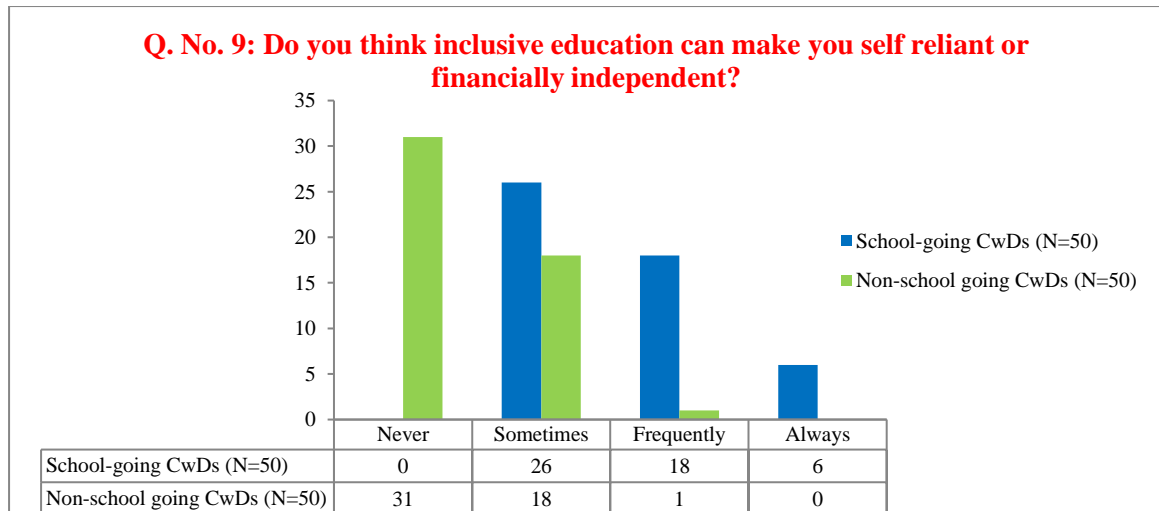


Chart 8- Voices- Impact of Inclusive Education on becoming self financially independent

Chart 8 clearly expresses that school going CwDs have firm conviction most of the times with decreasing order qualitatively (as minimum response is **Always** and maximum is **Sometimes**). Majority of non school going CwDs do not think that there is any impact of such linkages.

Q. No. 10: In what way inclusive education is helping? (in financial terms)	School-going CwDs (N=50)	Non-school going CwDs (N=50)	Parents of School going CwDs (N=50)	Parents of Non-school going CwDs (N=50)
Loan	0	3	9	3
Occupation	0	0	5	4
Scholarship	9	0	30	10
Vocational Training	7	5	6	7
Pension	10	11	0	4
Literate	8	0	0	0
Equipment	8	5	0	0
Job	4	0	0	0
No help	0	26	0	22
Multiple Responses (Scholarship or pension, Equipment)	4	0	0	0

Table 4: Voices- Types of financial Inclusion expected through Inclusive Education

Table 4 states that non school going CwDs and their parents do not think that inclusive education can provide any help in their financial inclusion while majority of school going CwDs and their parents were found to be availing variety of support like pension, vocational training, Financial Literacy, assistive equipments, scholarship, job etc.

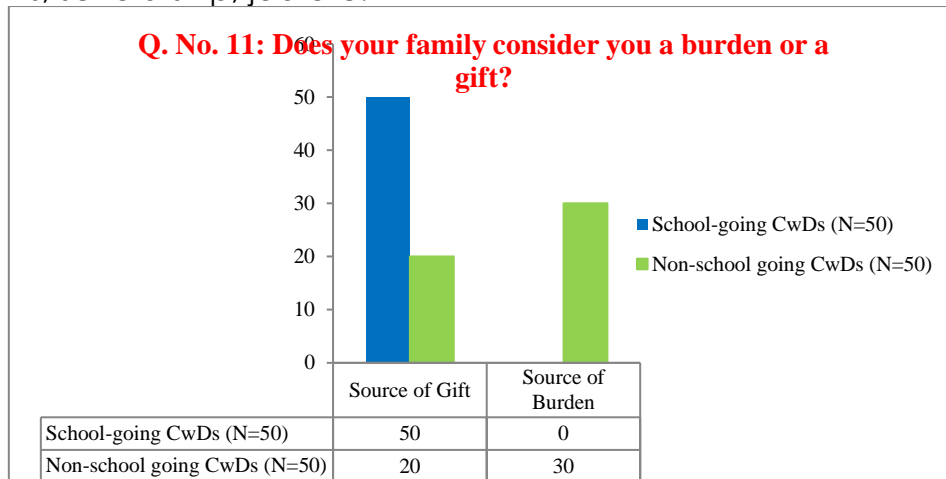


Chart 9: Voices- Does your family consider you a burden or a gift

Chart 9 clearly shows that family of about all the school going CwDs, who have any financial linkage or social support system linked with them, appreciated them as a gift while only 40% non school going CwDs were appreciated as gifted children and rest 60% felt as a burden by their families.

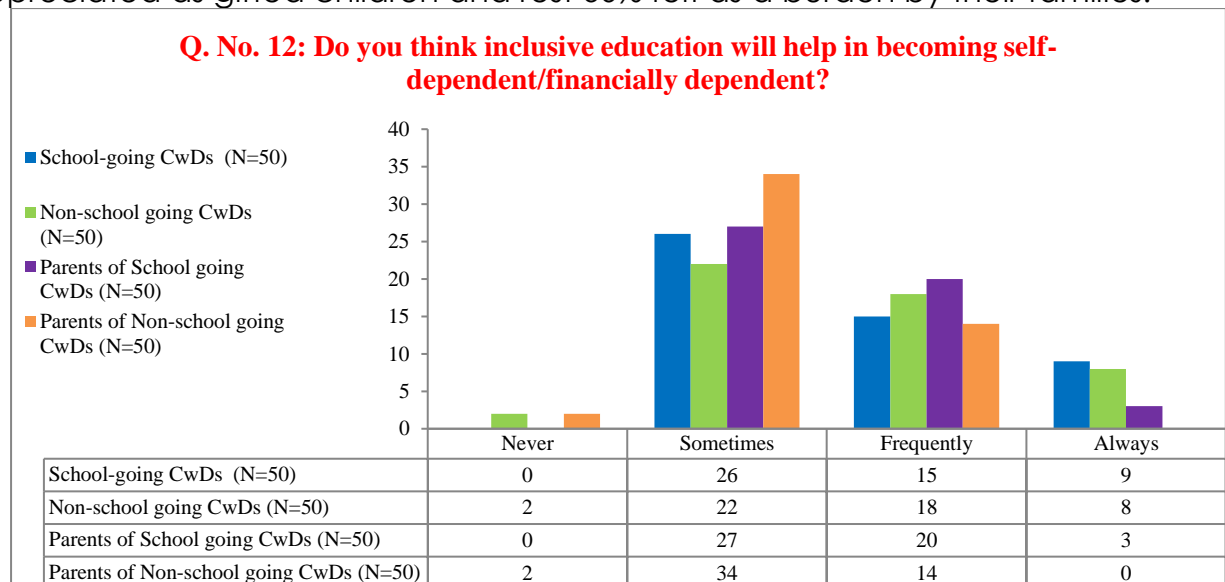


Chart 10: Voices- Earning livelihood on their own after study

Chart 10 clearly shows that non school going CwDs are not confident about earning their livelihood on their own after getting Inclusive Education while

school going CwDs were more confident in doing so which shows that education is important in an early stage rather later in life.

Limitations of the Study

In the current study, the voices of CwDs and their parents does not entail different types of disabilities, as Inclusive Education is not the process for any specific consequence or set of developmental pattern but a systemic universal reaction for all of the disabilities so voices of all the available categories of disabilities must be considered for further exploration of statements for enriching the context / findings. Further, RTE Act 2009 and various flagship programs on Inclusive Education Like SSA and RMSA of Govt. of India cover different categories of schools viz. govt., aided and non aided private institutions, but the voices in this study were not categorized according to the school type. The voices do not cover impact of school type so the exact deliveries of the school could not be responded by the CwDs and their parents. Inclusion details and representation of CwDs in the schools is also not available so such impact could not be further studied.

Suggestions

Suggestions for improving Inclusive education in the state of Uttar Pradesh in light of Voices of CwDs and their parents are given below:

1. The regular teacher has to understand their roles as teachers for all, including CwDs, the itinerant teachers/ resource teacher / special educators has to simply facilitate them to “**Deliver for All**” to realize maximum social acceptance of CwDs.
2. The teachers of all the schools not only govt. primary schools should be covered under 5 days training program for regular teachers on inclusive educations for different type of disabilities, concerned as per the requirement (real house hold survey ie HHS). Presently even regular teachers of govt. primary schools are not being saturated on this training due to lack of resources and expertise. This will help the teachers to understand the scholastic and psychological needs of CwDs.
3. Qualitative Inclusion would be possible only when all types of CwDs shall be welcomed by the school and when the schools are accessible in every possible way (curriculum, pedagogy, physically, financially through scholarships, pre vocational support etc) along with National flagship program like Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan), National Livelihood Mission (NLM) etc would be effectively linked with SSA / RMSA etc.
4. The backlog posts of all the staff viz. itinerant teachers, physiotherapist, special educators, speech therapist should be filled immediately and created according to the need assessment to avoid the burden felt by the teachers due to CwDs.
5. Medical assessment camp should be intensively done in coordination with the Angan Wadi Workers of AW Centres (under ICDS program) and NHM (DEICs) should also be involved effectively.
6. The House Hold Survey to identify out of school children should be done in a coordinated manner with grass root staff of major programs like ICDS and NHM to get real and exact number of CwDs after proper training.
7. To eliminate social stigma for CwDs within the community, **SMCs** should be motivated by the school to bring out of school CwDs.
8. Accelerated Learning Camps (ALCs) under SSA should be either effectively linked with Primary school or should be regularized in nature as CwDs who attend these ALCs have worst experience when they are back to their respective places to maintain their internal psychological support that they received during the camp.

Additionally in light of Right to Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (Section 16, 17, 18) the following modification could also be suggested:

9. Specific arrangements / measures to ensure the completion of education of all the CwDs admitted with all the best possible services.
10. Transportation facilities to CwDs (that need high support) for attending the school.

11. Regular intensive survey, so that every CwDs must be counted properly. The first survey shall be conducted within two years from the commencement of the Act.
12. Establishment of adequate number of teachers training institutions.
13. Provide adequate number of books, modified teaching learning material, assistive subject content that would help all types of disabilities in providing best learning environment for them.
14. Local govt. will create such an environment to promote, protect and ensure participation of CwDs in the best possible way (through continuing education / adult education program equally with others).
15. Appropriate research and demographic interventions to provide and update day to day quality living of CwDs.

Summary

The voices as expressed by the CwDs and their parents in light of the impact of inclusive education, undoubtedly shows that there is a positive impact on their lives but not in a greater extent as expected or claimed by the state. There are various mechanisms within the coordinating departments but delineated structures or modification which can make the overall thematic basic services delivery mechanism more accessible and qualitatively strong, is still a big dream for all of us. The Inclusive education context is not only important for CwDs and their parents but equally important for other children to provide developmental opportunity to them to understand the value of a diversified life and their hidden potential.

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